

# Marketing talk

Why do we talk about marketing? What do we have to sell? Why marketing is not just selling food or worming tablets?

Generally there is the idea that the only things that vet sell are food, anti parasitic treatment or toys in the reception area.

Veterinary clinics have a huge competence on those areas with pet shops, supermarkets... that can sell at a better price. Services is what will bring the clients through the door and when it happens we can use that moment to sell the food...

The modern veterinary clinics do sell services and together with them they can also sell food, anti parasitic treatment or goodies in reception...

That is why marketing is needed on the XXI<sup>st</sup> Century veterinary clinic.

What I want to do on this talk is go through very basics marketing concepts and adapt them to the veterinary clinics. People spend years studying marketing, so let's have a starting point by defining marketing.

How would you define marketing??? (Ask people about it)

*“Marketing is the ability to create relations base on the trust with different sectors of the public”*

This sentence just says that we need to be trusted by the target public and this will bring the “relations”, which in this case can be understood as visits.

The traditional view of the company would be something like this:

Company produces something	→ Look for employees
	→ Look for buyer

The new company must focus on the clients, because of this, we could say:

**Company has intellectual ability → Generate an offer → Identify needs**

In our case, our ability would be to treat pets, so we generate the offer of providing excellent vet care. But at the same time, we need to identify needs, for example, if we live in an area with loads of cats, we need to create offers for them, but if we are in the middle of the country side, in a hunting area; we will need to know more about hunting dogs, for example.

This produces what it is known as the marketing cycle...

Now I am talk a little bit about the importance of the relation between a company and their clients.

The aim of every company can be divided on three:

1. Produce benefits
2. Keep employees happy
3. Satisfy the clients

To do so, we will start with what is called client focus:

### Client Focus

The products change the life and not the other way around... How many of you own a mobile phone? How many of you have a land line? How many of the phone calls, outside working hours, that you receive or make on the mobile phone could have waited until you get home?

The phone companies decided that it was needed that everybody was located all the time and convince us that we needed mobile phones.

How is this relation between a client and a company:

1. We integrate habits in our life (mobile phones)
2. We build up empathy ties with certain companies for their ethics (Nike boycott for their work policies in their factories in South-eastern Asia)

### 3. Buyers do contribute to change the buying habits (Environmental issues)

As a vets we can change our clients, making them need to visit the vet every so often for checks, buying food, advise... We need to show that we care, they need to feel that we empathise with their worries relating to their pets and we need to listen to what they do demand from us.

The key to a good client service is to know what clients want, but not only that, but to know what do they not want... How many of you do you know what is why clients complaint? And I do not mean specific cases, but in general, waiting times too long, prices too high,... How many of you do you have a feedback questionnaire?

The client focus is based on knowing your clients needs, what do they value and what would you have to do to get them satisfy. Communication is key in this case.

There is a huge competence in the veterinary business at the moment and it is not going to get any better, so we need to identify what our potential clients want and be the first ones to offer it.

It is important to know what pushes a client to choose you over the clinic down the road and it could be things that we do not think of, like parking space, friendly reception... It is also known that certain clients would choose us because we have an eco-friendly practice or we help the local charity.

We can not wait for them to approach us with a complaint, we need to ask them. A complaint is nothing but an opportunity to improve our service. We all make mistakes, but if the problem is dealt in an appropriate manner, the client will return to us. If we have a questionnaire and we see that a few people is complaining about waiting times, then we should do something, talk to your vets and find if they are OK, make longer appointments and not just be surprised if some day a person explodes in the consult because has been waiting for 30 minutes.

Once we do the changes, we have to inform people about it by using our newsletter, so our clients see that our service improves with their feedback.

Obviously, this bring us some challenges:

1. We need to get the whole team involved on client focus, we need to provide training for them
2. We need to create the tools to get the feedback from our clients, to keep up-to-date of what they want and need
3. Work together with our providers to get a consistent and efficient relation that benefits both parts

It is important to understand where our clinic is base. It is easy to assume that residents from similar areas would have similar life styles and similar consume habits. It is not the same that or clients are from a city, from a rural area or from a small town with loads of OAP.

People sharing the same park for their dogs would share their vet experiences.... so let's make the experiences worth.

If we know well our clients, we will learn their needs, we will adapt our offer and the more accurate the offer, the higher chance of selling.

It is important to get faithful clients and get the most of the current ones. This is more profitable, than using the efforts, many times unrewarding, than trying to steal the clients to the competence.

Many studies show that is 5 times cheaper from the marketing point of view to retain a client, than to get a new one and up to 10 times than to try to get back somebody than left.

We need to find our reference market, finding the need to satisfy with the right technology and the adequate client.

Everybody knows IBM, can anybody tell me what IBM does know???

- Beginning of XX Century : Company TRC that makes industrial clocks
- 1911: mergers with another company and forms CTR

- 1914: Thomas Watson starts as manager director
- 1917-1924: IBM is born and in the sixties begins to make computers
- Now: IBM provides business solutions

This is a clear example of how companies need to adapt to what the market is demanding. In the same way a veterinary clinic needs to adapt to what clients demand. It is important not to take the clients for granted. "They have been coming to us for many years, so we do not need to give them any attention".

We have to identify our client base:

1. Searched advantage by clients: price, opening hours, services...
2. Social demographics: age, income...
3. Life style: OAP, DINKY's... if you have elderly people as clients, you know they will have more cats, but in a younger families area will be a higher incidence of hamsters, rabbits...
4. Shopping habits

Everybody should be aware of where their clinic is base and what their clients are, but still, the difficult thing is to know what do the look for. The advantage searched should be focus in four aspects:

1. Priority of election criteria: what do we offer?
2. Competence analysis: what do they offer:
3. Finding of niches: what is missing, a good surgeon or a small animal vets?
4. Competitive advantage evaluation: use everything above to find it

To understand the competitive advantage and what is called the brand personality, the best example we can choose is the fizzy drinks. The difference between Coca Cola and Pepsi is very clear, while the first it is always politically correct, the second gives a more rebel image.

It is important that we create that brand personality in our clinic. Clients need to know what differentiate us, so they know why they are choosing us. We will talk about types of clients and practice branding it in another talk in more deepness.

To find what is our competitive advantage we could use a tool known as “SWOT matrix”. In a table we can put our Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats.

The aim of using this is to find the external and internal factors that affect the most to our business and gives an scenario to determine our competitive advantage.

In any business, the key decision on marketing any business is to convert our differences from the competence in our competitive advantage.

The competitive advantage can be:

- External: consumer can sense the difference and finds the benefit for him (price, location...)
- Internal: the company has a superior ability on production or management. It is vital the role of human resources to choose the right employees (diploma holders, vets with knowledge in specific areas...)

The competitive advantage is what makes our business different and hopefully makes us superior to the competence. This advantage is important to last on time and not to be circumstantial. This advantage is what we have to deliver to our clients through the marketing.