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VET-ADVANTAGE BLOG

YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE WHEN IT COMES TO VETERINARY PRACTICE REVIEWS

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If you're the type of veterinary distributor representative who takes pride in being a true partner to your customers, you're always looking for ways to help them grow their businesses, right?

This means you not only introduce new solutions that will help practices increase their per-visit invoices and in-clinic purchases... you also offer them important news about marketing.



We can assume that you often walk into practices and find that they're struggling with their online reviews and ratings. Some of them may even ask you, "Do we really need to bother with practice reviews? Can you help us?"

Of course, you want to help your customers. But what can you do? How can you influence the success of your customers' online reviews and ratings?

First, know the current facts about online reviews, and bring these facts to the attention of your customers.

The following important statistics and study findings may surprise you:¹

- 70% of consumers consult online reviews before making a purchase
- 88% of consumers say they trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.
- 72% of buyers will take action *only* after reading a positive review.
- 40% of buyers form an opinion of a business after reading just 1-3 reviews.
- 89% of users will make a purchase within one week of reading reviews.

This is powerful proof that reviews are extremely important for veterinary practices. In fact, reviews are affecting pet owner choices regarding veterinary care, on a daily basis.

In addition, positive (4+ star) ratings are a BIG DEAL when it comes to new appointments and practice revenue. Each star can make a massive difference.

- A study published in the *Harvard Business Review* reported that **each ratings star added on a Yelp review translated to anywhere from a 5 percent to 9 percent effect on revenues.**²
- **Other sources report that a 4-star average rating is better than a 5-star rating**, because people don't expect a business to be perfect (and they're suspicious of all-perfect ratings). But also, there's a significant drop in business for companies having an average review rating below 4 stars. (A Cornell University study even goes so far as to suggest that, in the eyes of consumers, the numerical ratings are seen as an objective measure of a business' quality.)³

Wow, that's significant! You can certainly see that if "you snooze, you lose," when it comes to reviews and ratings.

Now comes the fun part, where you can save the day.

During your sales calls, ask customers about their current review system... or if they even have one.

The biggest challenge most practices have is getting clients to write reviews. Even happy customers.

Getting even one review is a big hurdle, and it matters so much.

We know that clinics have been trying to ask clients for reviews. The problem is, most of the time, clinics simply request, "Please write a review on Yelp or Google+," but then the effort is all in the hands of the client (who can't be bothered to hunt down the links, etc.).

We do know of one review system — Review Retrievers — that guides clients through the entire review process, all the way through to the review sites themselves (Yelp, Google+, and Facebook — which has surged ahead as the top review site⁴). This makes it easier to ensure that clients will actually complete and submit a review.

Plus, this particular system allows clinics to "screen" client feedback before it goes public on review sites. So if a client reports that he/she had a negative experience, the practice can reach out and try to resolve it before the client goes public with a negative review.

We asked Review Retrievers co-founder Robbie van Mullem how it works.

He said, "A clinic will run a report in our system from the day's interactions. The clients from that day will get an email or text (their preference) in the evening, asking them to review their experience in the Review Retrievers system. (It's important to mention that an article on Review, Inc. reported that 70% of surveyed consumers said it was OK for professionals to ask for reviews via email or text.)⁵

If the clients agree, they follow a link to post a rating (1-5 stars).

- If they rate it with a low star, the clinic and Review Retrievers are alerted so they can try to resolve the situation with the client before anything goes public.
- If they rate it with 3-5 stars, clients go to a different page where they're prompted to post their reviews directly on Facebook, etc. Super easy. And finally, the clinic owns all the reviews. They're not tied to a marketing system that maintains/owns the reviews."

Your customers are looking to you for this kind of help. You can serve them well by checking out the various review systems available to the veterinary industry, including Review Retrievers (the system we described in this post).

Sources:

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