

in the Veterinary Clinic

Digital Marketing in the Veterinary Clinic

eBook
available



This comprehensive guide will take the reader on a journey of discovery and learning through the world of digital marketing applied to veterinary practices. Its multiple examples will help the reader understand and implement the latest digital tools within the veterinary field. Veterinary surgeons can progress through the basics of digital marketing, take a closer look at Google or Facebook, and learn about the use of artificial intelligence applications in veterinary marketing.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

- * Small animal practice managers
- * Veterinary practice personnel
- * Veterinary students

FORMAT: 17×24 cm

NUMBER OF PAGES: 208

NUMBER OF IMAGES:
100 aprox.

BINDING: hardcover

ESTIMATED
RETAIL PRICE
€65



Author

ENRIC FERRER DE MIQUEL

Veterinary surgeon with over 28 years' experience in his own practice. He holds a master's degree in veterinary clinic management as well as a master's degree in digital marketing. Former deputy secretary (2014–2017) of the Spanish Association of Veterinary Management (AGESVET). He is a regular speaker at digital marketing conferences and workshops.



KEY FEATURES:

- Comprehensive review of digital marketing techniques available to veterinary practices.
- Contains the most up-to-date information about the latest digital tools and strategies available.
- Includes annexes about online security and how to promote veterinary services to other vets.

Presentation of the book

Do I need to change my website or would a blog be better? Can SEO and SEM affect veterinary surgeons?

The veterinary clinic staff responsible for websites or social networks ask themselves these sorts of questions every week, akin to an airline passenger taking on the role of pilot and attempting an emergency landing. Actually, they are veterinary clinicians or assistants taking on the role of community managers.

This book, the first publication dedicated exclusively to digital marketing from a veterinary perspective, aims to fill this information gap. It is a manual to help readers understand how digital marketing works, which digital media are available to veterinary practices, how to follow a digital strategy, and which professional tools can be employed to attract and retain clients. The reader can read, learn, and easily put the content into practice.

The first part deals with digitalisation of veterinary practices, and discusses new millennial clients and employees and future trends.

The second section is concerned with digital media and strategies. It addresses websites, blogs, search engine optimisation, and takes a detailed look at marketing through social media and video.

The third part is dedicated to the various digital tools that can be used to educate clients about animal health, while also promoting veterinary clinics through paid advertising. It covers advertising on Facebook and Google, and delves into email marketing and the use of messages in marketing.

The fourth part addresses how to manage a veterinary clinic's digital environment. New forms of marketing are described that adapt to our ever-changing society. It also explains the functions of the community manager, how statistical analysis works, and how to manage reputation and obtain a return on investment. This section closes with essential legal information and a vision of artificial intelligence, connected devices, and telemedicine in veterinary practice.

The book includes two practical annexes, one about digital promotion as a self-employed vet, while the other concerns online security.

A glossary of digital marketing terms and references are also provided at the end of the book.

The author

Enric Ferrer de Miquel

Enric Ferrer de Miquel is a veterinary surgeon with over 28 years' experience treating animals in his own clinic in Cornellà de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain.

He has always had a keen interest in the professional management of his clinic, completing the first master's degree in veterinary clinic management, organised by AVEPA (Spanish Small Animal Veterinary Association) and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, followed by a master's degree in digital marketing at the EAE business school.

He was the deputy secretary (2014–2017) of AGESVET, the Spanish Association of Veterinary Management. Enric frequently writes posts about marketing on Twitter and has his own blog with information specifically about digital marketing and communication for veterinary clinics (www.enricferrer.com)

He has given talks across Spain, France, Romania, and Portugal, in both conferences and workshops for veterinary clinicians and nurses.

Enric has published various articles about marketing in veterinary magazines (2015–2016) and is coauthor of the book *Gestión de la Clínica Veterinaria: Marketing* (Management in Veterinary Practices: Marketing), for which he wrote two chapters: Digital Marketing and Community Management (2017).

Dr Ferrer is well known for his digital marketing workshops, he is an excellent communicator who combines everyday experience in the clinic with his technical training in online marketing to unravel the secrets of digital marketing for the veterinary public.



Table of contents

The world is digital

1. The digital transformation
2. Databases, big data and permission marketing

Media, strategies and marketing plans

3. The website, your centre of operations

Why is a website necessary?
Domain and hosting
Basic platform (CMS), content, architecture
Design, usability, and user experience
Selling online
Promoting your website
Website FAQs

4. Blogs

Features
Attract navigators with content

5. SEO

How search engines work
Which keywords should I use?
Web and blog optimisation
The Google universe

6. Marketing in social media (SM)

What is social media?
Types of social media
User profile
Social media for veterinary clinics
Social media strategy: the conversion funnel
What can I achieve using social media?

7. Facebook

Basic concepts and configuration
Posts
Content strategy
Groups
Events
Competitions
Facebook Live
Statistics
Recommendations and opinions

8. Learn more about Facebook

Advertising
Retargeting
Facebook Business Manager
Messenger and chatbots
Profitability (ROI)

9. Other social media

Instagram
Twitter

Pinterest

LinkedIn

10. Video marketing and YouTube

The power of video
The technique
Video editing
YouTube

11. Podcasts

12. Digital strategy and marketing plans

From marketing 1.0 to 4.0
Different strategies
Designing and creating a digital marketing plan
Attraction marketing: advertising that does not look like advertising

Digital tools and digital advertising

13. SEM

What is SEM?
Advantages and disadvantages
Search and display networks
Google Ads

14. Advertising on Facebook

Targets
Public and segmentation
Structure of a campaign
Design of the advertisement
Example
Optimising advertisements

15. Advertising in YouTube

16. Email

Permission marketing
Databases and user permissions
Email deliveries
Digital newsletters

17. Marketing through messages (sent to mobiles)

Text messages
WhatsApp

18. Mobile apps

19. Webchats and chatbots

Managing the digital environment

20. The digital ecosystem

21. New forms of marketing

Blended marketing: online & offline marketing combined
Relationship marketing
Conversational marketing
Cause and green marketing

22. The veterinary clinic's community manager

What is a community manager?
Profile
Training
Functions
Community manager tools

23. Analysis

Website analytics and Google Analytics
Facebook and Instagram statistics
YouTube statistics
Pinterest statistics
Indicators, KPIs, profitability, ROMI
Digital surveys
Analysing the competition (benchmarking)

24. Digital image and reputation

Digital image and branding
Digital reputation
Referral marketing
Managing digital image and reputation
Controlling your own content

25. Legal considerations

EU GDPR
Using images and materials
Opinion from the Spanish College of Veterinarians

26. The future

Artificial intelligence in veterinary medicine
IoT and IoA: wearables and "insideables" for pets
Virtual and augmented reality
Voice assistants and voice marketing*
Telemedicine

Digital Marketing

in the Veterinary Clinic

Enric Ferrer de Miquel




SERVET

MEDIA, STRATEGIES AND MARKETING PLANS



MEDIA, STRATEGIES AND MARKETING PLANS

- 3. The website, your centre of operations

- 4. Blogs

- 5. SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)

- 6. Marketing in social media

- 7. Facebook

- 8. Learn more about Facebook

- 9. Other social media

- 10. Video marketing and YouTube

- 11. Podcasts

- 12. Digital strategy and marketing plans

6

Marketing in social media

Pet owners go through a complicated process that tends to follow certain criteria before deciding which veterinary clinic to visit. Convenience, and therefore the distance from their home, plays an important role, particularly in the case of routine consultations, but there are other factors upon which marketing strategies can have a strong influence.

Social media (SM) comes into its own when the owner has time to decide and get to know your clinic and even recommend it if it is attractive enough.

Using SM:

- You can present your clinic to potential clients, even if they do not live close by or pass by your veterinary practice on a regular basis. The familiarity a veterinary clinic established through its digital communications, even before a first visit, is a key factor in persuading the potential client to choose that clinic.
- You can obtain recommendations through opinions and reviews, as well as the posts your followers share with their friends. Recommendations only used to spread by word of mouth, but now they also travel digitally, 24 hours a day.

In social media, having a presence is not enough, you need to know why you are present.

Obtaining affordable online visibility is always a challenge, especially when most clinics offer practically the same services. Hence the importance of making yourself stand out through SM, because, as we shall see later in the book, clients who use the internet spend at least 60 minutes a day connected to SM (IAB Spain study, 2018).

What is social media?

Social media already forms part of our lives, it corresponds to the way we structure our personal and group relationships in the digital world.

The first websites available on the internet were for viewing only, the so-called web 1.0. With web 2.0, browsers could also write and share content, which marked the beginning of digital social media.

This desire to share experiences and belong to a group stimulates a huge collective activity. Thanks to software applications, these everyday actions occur on a website and therefore at a remote distance. In the past, we sent a postcard to a few friends, now we upload a photo in real-time and strike up a group conversation. These are online social media.

DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE VETERINARY CLINIC

Types of social media

There is a wide range of different SM and it is hard to find someone who only uses one of them. The number of social media users keeps increasing every year (Fig. 1); the most

popular social media platforms are shown in Figure 2. Given their high visibility, many companies use them as a customer service channel (e.g. Facebook and Twitter).

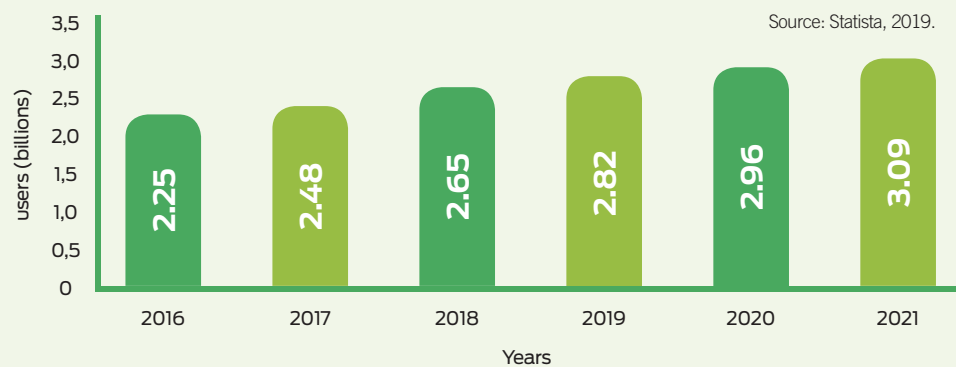


Figure 1. Evolution of the number of social media users in the world and future predictions (2016–2021).

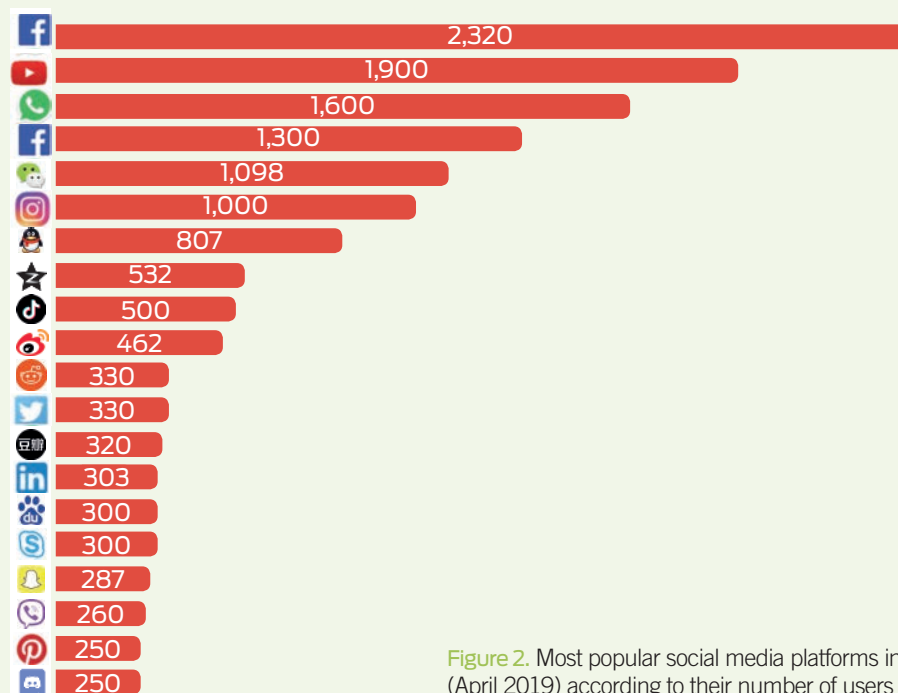


Figure 2. Most popular social media platforms in the world (April 2019) according to their number of users (millions).

MEDIA, STRATEGIES AND MARKETING PLANS

They are generally classified as:

- **Horizontal SM.** The subject matter is undefined, the audience is generic, and they are based on contacts. Examples include Facebook, Badoo, Instagram, and Twitter.
- **Vertical SM.** These channels focus on just one topic, whether it is health, a hobby such as videos (YouTube), travelling (Trip-Advisor), professional relationships (LinkedIn), or presentations (SlideShare).

Several generic (horizontal) media currently allow users to establish groups within the application concerned with a specific theme; this can even include private groups.

Social media optimisation

In the same way as a website can be optimised to appear higher in Internet search results (SEO), it is possible to optimise a business's social media presence to gain visibility. This is called social media optimisation (SMO).

The veterinary practice's community manager (CM) is in charge of social media optimisation and of keeping in regular touch with the practice's community of followers.

One of the advantages of digital media is that everything can be measured much more

easily than with traditional media (press, radio, television), including in real time. Knowing, measuring and analysing data and ratios helps to gradually increase audience engagement in posts. A CM should be familiar with metrics such as Social Reach or Sentiments and know the statistics provided by each social media platform (see Chapter 24).

Social media optimisation is an ongoing activity to which you should pay frequent attention. Some platforms may lose impact in favour of others, as has occurred with Facebook and Instagram. In addition, the CM should follow changes in how these media are used closely. The trends for the next couple of years seem to be as follows:

- Live videos will gain more importance, as they receive higher engagement than recorded videos.
- Users prefer brief contents, which are also increasingly short-lived.
- Good positioning in SM is taken into account by Google to improve SEO.
- Importance should be given to microinfluencers.
- The use of chat-bots will increase (see Chapters 8 and 20).

The 5 basic rules of SMO

The five basic rules of SMO are cited by the influential marketing guru Rohit Bhargava in his blog (www.rohitbhargava.com), and can serve as a brief guide to any CM, since they improve positioning. These are:

1. Create shareable content and make sharing easy.
2. Share the content of your blog in your social media profiles and vice versa.
3. Reward and thank your followers, because they help share your contents. Link your posts to these users' or companies' profiles as a way to say thank you.
4. Adapt your content and style to each social media platform.
5. Promote interaction with users to gain virality.

DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE VETERINARY CLINIC

- Stories will remain a preferred type of content, with new successful formats such as Instagram Stories (see Chapter 9).

User profiles in SM

In 1929, the Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy created the concept known as the “six degrees of separation” in his short story *Chains*.

The theory of six degrees of separation

According to this theory, on average everyone knows around 100 people, composed of friends, family, and work or school mates. If each of these friends or close (first-degree) acquaintances are linked to another 100 people, any individual can make a piece of information reach 10,000 people (second-degree) by just asking their friends to spread the message. Accordingly, the message could reach anyone in the world through six degrees of contact.

While this theory appears to hold true in a mathematical model, reality has superseded it with the theory of “**three degrees of influence**”. This rule states that any influence dissipates when stretched beyond the third degree of contact. To increase our influence we need to enrol the help of an “influencer”, as we shall see later in the book.

In Spain, although over 25 million people use SM, each subscribing to an average of 4.7 channels, not all users have the same level

of activity (IAB España study, 2018). So we can differentiate two groups:

- Active users or “prosumers”: they use, contribute, comment, participate, and elaborate content. These are in the minority.
- Passive users or “obsumers”: they rarely participate, but instead search for and view information. The majority of users.

The most active users with a large number of followers are called influencers because of their capacity to influence others through their online contributions. They may have hundreds of thousands of followers and major brands pay them to diffuse information about their products and services. Other SM users regard the information as a recommendation from a friend rather than advertising, so they give it maximum credibility. It is actually an extension of the recommendation.

In veterinary clinics, vets cannot afford to hire internationally renowned influencers, but they can work with “microinfluencers” who operate at a more local level. These have less followers but are expert users in a given topic and, by sharing their passion, opinions, and knowledge, they manage to create five times more engagement in publications than the brand alone.

Additionally, and according to the aforementioned “Annual study of social media 2018” by IAB Spain (Fig. 3):

- Some 27 % place more trust in brands with a SM presence.
- The average user connects to SM for 58 mins/day, younger users for 70 mins.
- Around 95 % connect from their mobile phones.

MEDIA, STRATEGIES AND MARKETING PLANS

How many people use social media?

85 % of internet browsers aged 16–65 years use social media. In Spain, this represents over 25.5 million users.

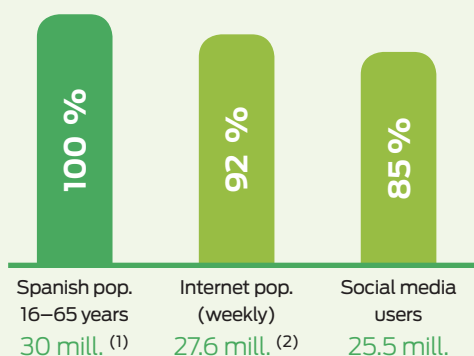


Figure 3. In Spain, there were 25.5 million social media users in 2018.

(1)(2) Source: ONTSI. “Sociodemographic profile of internet users, analysis of INE 2017 data”

- They do not have any objections to personalised advertising in SM.
- As many as 72 % of users follow influencers, especially on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Social media for veterinary clinics

Avoid being too ambitious when choosing the social media channels where you wish to create a presence for your veterinary clinic (Fig. 4). It is better to operate one, wellmanaged channel rather than several poorly supervised media. In any case, you should manage it professionally and with sufficient know-how.

A veterinary clinic’s digital image and income can depend on the professional management of its SM.

Ideally you should carry out a survey of your clients to help with the decision. You can use surveys conducted by other companies as a practical guide and opt for Facebook, YouTube, and/or Instagram. The professional network LinkedIn is covered in Chapter 7.

While the characteristics or use of each SM will be explained in Chapter 9, here we highlight the most distinctive features of some of the leading channels (Table 1).

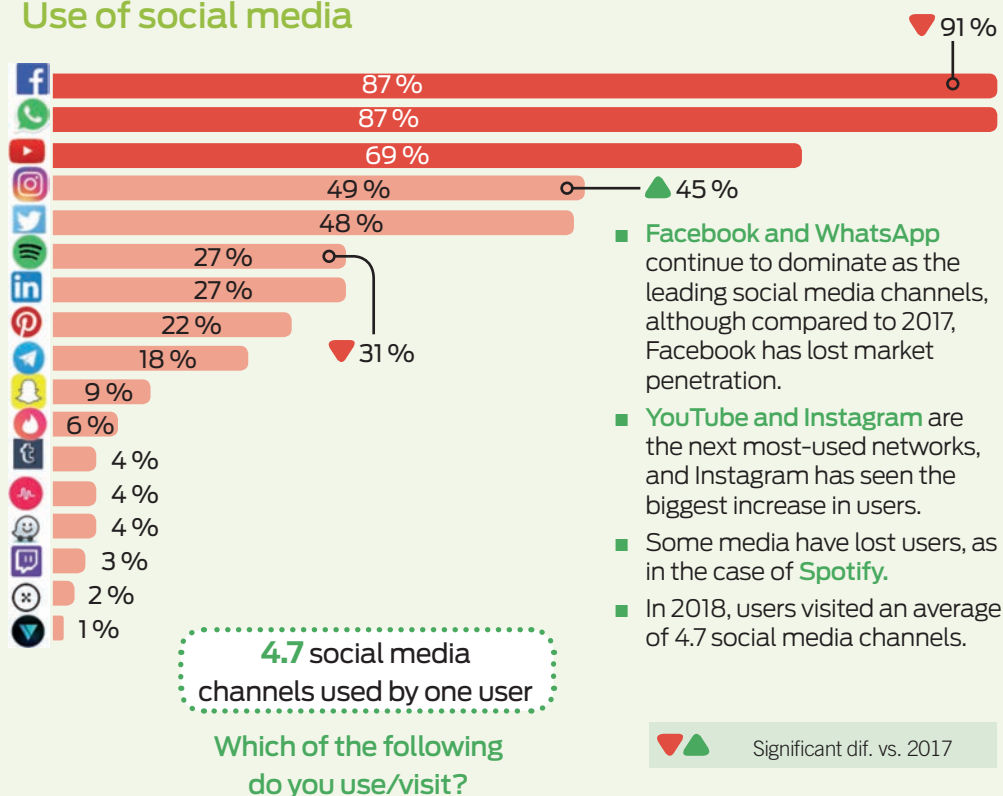
Before implementing any marketing actions, you need to create a strategy.

Social media strategy: the conversion funnel

To get the most out of SM, you must understand how they work. Before implementing any marketing actions, you need to create a strategy. Social media channels rarely act as a means of direct sales, they are more about creating user confidence, so they eventually request the services. A pet owner with a requirement (illness, emergency, information) goes straight to a search engine, for example Google Search, which is used by 95.05 % of browsers in Spain (StatCounter, June 2018).

DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE VETERINARY CLINIC

Use of social media



- Facebook and WhatsApp continue to dominate as the leading social media channels, although compared to 2017, Facebook has lost market penetration.
- YouTube and Instagram are the next most-used networks, and Instagram has seen the biggest increase in users.
- Some media have lost users, as in the case of Spotify.
- In 2018, users visited an average of 4.7 social media channels.

Annual study of social media 2018

Courtesy of



Figure 4. Of all social media users, around 90 % use Facebook and 50 % use Instagram.

Table 1.

Most distinctive features of the main social media	
Facebook	Very broad and varied user base (like the clients of a veterinary practice): different ages, locations, interests, and purchasing power.
Twitter	- Fewer users than Facebook and a predominantly young, urban public. - For sharing news or ideas.
Instagram	Constantly growing as a network, primarily based on photos and short videos, and generally younger user profiles.
Pinterest	Image-based SM channel with predominantly female users.
LinkedIn	- Mainly users with an academic degree and a certain amount of purchasing power. - Professional use.
YouTube	Video content, all ages, although mostly younger users.
WhatsApp	All ages, this channel is described in more detail in the section "Digital Tools".

MEDIA, STRATEGIES AND MARKETING PLANS

They do not search in a social network, although this may change in the future.

A veterinary practice will only appear in their SM timeline (or wall) if they are following that clinic or because one of their friends has shared or commented on a post. Given the average user spends around an hour a day on media such as Facebook, one advantage for businesses is that you can deliver information about your clinic on a daily basis (in the case of clients who follow social media), not just during the three or four annual appointments at the clinic. As we shall see in the section “Digital Tools” you can also guarantee posts or advertising messages appear thanks to adverts placed in pet owners’ social media applications.

Social marketing is oriented towards the target public on SM and it encourages them

to follow, for example, health advice (target), either directly or indirectly.

The process through which a pet owner discovers a specific veterinary clinic, learns more about it, takes an interest, and finally decides to use its services is called a conversion funnel (Figs. 3 and 4).

What can I achieve using social media?

When managed properly, SM allow companies to gather a group of loyal users around a brand who then draw their friends and other users to the product or service. This group corresponds to “the community” of followers.

The digital community will grow by a varying degree depending on how attractive it is. The person who posts new content expects a return for their social marketing actions, while

Conversion funnel

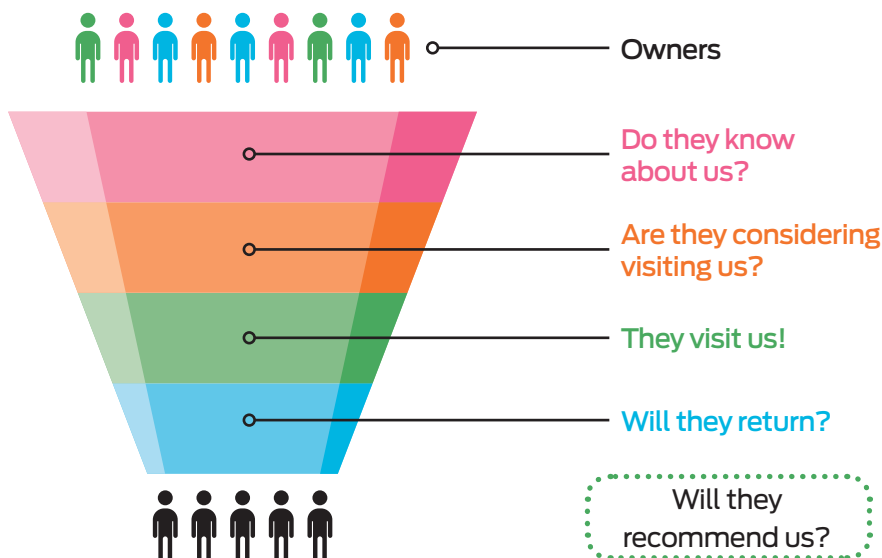


Figure 3. Conversion funnel.

DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE VETERINARY CLINIC



Figure 4. Social media allow you to present your clinic to pet owners, capture their interest, and entice them to use your services.

*The most direct means to continue generating confidence while the clients develops more interest in products and services is via:

- Redirecting traffic from Facebook to your blog or landing page.
- Acquisition of their email and then sending out personalised emails (see the section on email marketing in Chapter 17).
- Direct promotions from Facebook.
- Remarketing through Facebook advertisements.

the follower also wants to gain something from following them. Generally speaking, users will accept content that includes 20 % advertising (brand presence, direct promotions, campaign explanations, etc.), provided that the remaining 80 % is useful. Usefulness is understood as: receiving information and leading news articles about health and leisure for their pets, entertainment, and a little bit of fun.

Social media provides veterinarians with:

- Greater visibility in search engines
- A new customer service channel

- A source of information about their users
- An attractive platform with the opportunity to redirect traffic to their website or blog
- A new means of capturing data from potential clients
- A new means of creating client loyalty
- The opportunity to protect their online reputation

Posts and content strategy are dealt with in the next section about Facebook, and they are similar for other social media, although these will not be covered in such detail. •

The publishing strength of Grupo Asís

Editorial Servet, a division of Grupo Asís, has become one of the reference publishing companies in the veterinary sector worldwide. More than 15 years of experience in the publishing of contents about veterinary medicine guarantees the quality of its work. With a wide national and international distribution, the books in its catalogue are present in many different countries and have been translated into nine languages to date: English, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, Turkish, Japanese, Russian and Chinese.

Its identifying characteristic is a large multidisciplinary team formed by doctors and graduates in Veterinary Medicine and Fine Arts, and specialised designers with a great knowledge of the sector in which they work. Every book is subject to thorough technical and linguistic reviews and analyses, which allow the creation of works with a unique design and excellent contents.

Servet works with the most renowned national and international authors to include the topics most demanded by veterinary surgeons in its catalogue. In addition to its own works, Servet also prepares books for companies and the main multinational companies in the sector are among its clients.

Communication services

- ➡ Online visualisation of the sample chapter.
- ➡ Presentation brochure in PDF format, compatible with mobile devices.



Servet (División de Grupo Asís Biomedica S.L.)
Centro Empresarial El Trovador, planta 8, oficina I
Plaza Antonio Beltrán Martínez, 1 • 50002 Zaragoza (España)
Tel.: +34 976 461 480 • Fax: +34 976 423 000 • www.grupoasis.com