

Top Tips For Tougher Times

Marketing Your Veterinary Practice Online

2009



Special Industry Report:

Prepared for Veterinarians and Animal Hospital Practices



Animal  Hospitals
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Online is no longer a trend: it's how pet owners want to find you...

"73% of consumers say they use Search Engines to find a local product or service."

Rather than letting their fingers wander through printed yellow page directories, it's the mouse now doing the heavy lifting, as consumers today prefer online search to find local vet practices...

- **Google, Yahoo, MSN and other engines are now the primary resource** consumers use to find local businesses. Printed Yellow Pages usage continues to decline.¹
- **73% of consumers** say they use Search Engines to find a local product or service.²
- **Local searches grew 58% in 2008**³ (Local search is defined as a search for a neighborhood business, versus searching for a national product, brand, or company.)
- **Printed yellow pages ad revenue is projected to drop by 39%** within the next four years, according to at least one industry analyst.⁴

That's good news for your practice - and your budget - during tougher economic times:

Pet owners that find you online are more motivated and qualified, ready to book an appointment immediately if they like what they see. Compared to traditional mailers or print ads that "push" your message to people who may not have a need for your service now, wasting time and money.

Online advertising also costs less than traditional print advertising on average, with faster, more accurate measurability and real-time feedback.

How do consumers find local veterinarians online?

Keywords	Approx Avg Search Volume
Keywords related to term(s) entered	
vet	1,830,000
veterinarians	673,000
animal hospitals	450,000
vets	450,000
vet clinic	135,000
pet vet	60,500
vet hospital	60,500
emergency vet	49,500
veterinarians in	49,500
vet clinics	22,200

Source: Google est. monthly search volume, March 2009

These are the keywords millions of people enter into Google each month to find nearby veterinarians and hospitals – including pet owners in your neighborhood.

1. TMP Directional Marketing second annual Local Search Usage Study (2008)

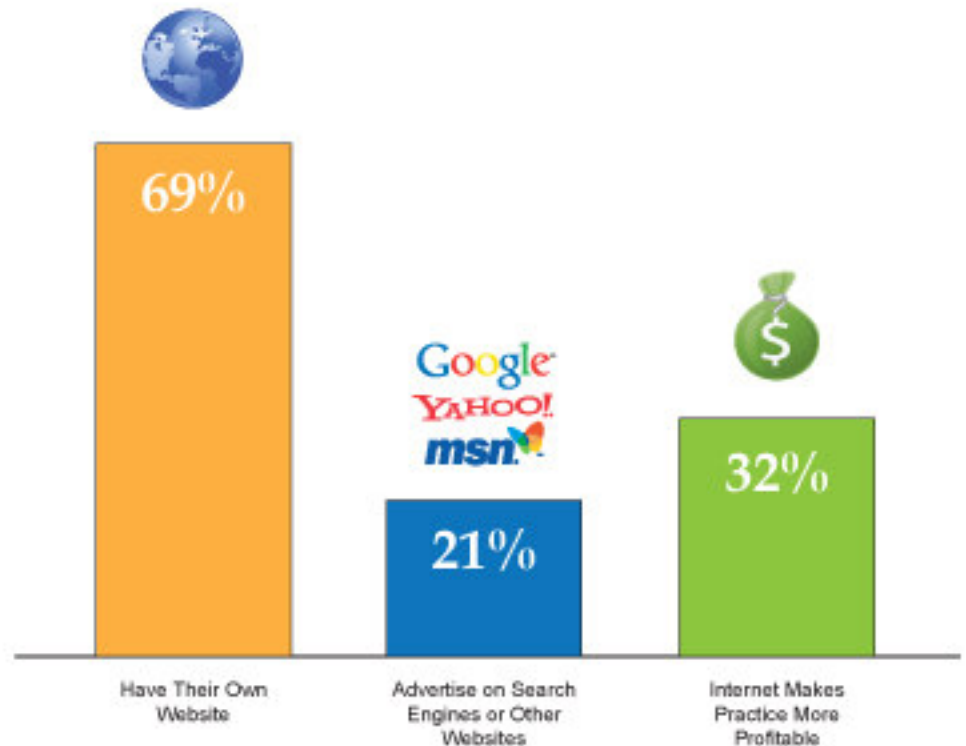
2. Nielsen Market Research, November 2008

3. Larry Small, Local Search Means Business: March 16th, 2009 SearchEngineLand.com

4. Wall Street Journal Blog Yellow Pages Face Extinction, November 17th, 2008

How many veterinarians are actually marketing online now?

- 69% of those polled in a recent survey have their own website
- 21% advertise on search engines or other websites
- 32% strongly agree that "the Internet makes my practice more profitable"⁵



There's still a sizable window of opportunity for veterinarians to enjoy revenue growth from online advertising.

Unlike other industries well-established online, many of your smaller-to-medium size competitors still rely on printed directories or have websites with low visibility. This leaves market share open for those who take the right steps now. Late adapters who wait will find it very difficult to build any visibility, once competitors already dominate their local market.

So how can you get your practice at the top of Google, Yahoo or MSN search results?

The following page shows three popular ways practitioners are increasing online presence and attracting new patients...

3 popular ways Veterinarians market their practices online...

including the advantages and disadvantages of each platform:

“68% of users click a result from the first page the engine displays.

92% click within first 3 pages”

1. Practice Website:

There are two steps to marketing via your website. Most practices do the first but neglect the second, which leads to sites that lack visibility and visitors. Both steps are critical to success.

- **Physically building and writing the website itself.** This includes content “optimized” with the right search phrases and words people actually use when going online to find a local vet.
- **Marketing your site.** The only way your site is likely to be seen is to appear on the first through third pages of engines like Google, Yahoo, and MSN... 68% of users click a result from the first page the engine displays; 92% click within the first three.⁶ SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and/or PPC (pay-per-click) strategies help you earn these higher rankings via the right key phrase usage embedded in your site codes and content; regular site updates; content-rich articles and blogs; links to respected sites and paid ads to generate traffic.

PROS	CONS
100% control over your practice image and brand	Requires a lot of technical know-how to set up optimized site and market it properly
Markets your practice and your services to online visitors 24/7	Very time-consuming: requires constant work/effort to ensure you remain visible
	Often expensive: SEO can take up to 6 months to see tangible revenue; PPC is faster, but can be costly

2. Paid Listing in General Local Directory like Yellow Pages Online:

These directories serve the same purpose as the traditional printed directories, just online. They list a wide variety of products and services, all generated by a consumer's specific keyword search. Their teams perform critical SEO and PPC work to ensure a good engine ranking.

PROS	CONS
Good ranking on average: directory will position fairly high in engine searches	Not as focused: Vet care is one of many different categories featured, just like traditional yellow pages
Simple and straightforward: just buy the contract listing and you're done	Can be more expensive than other online advertising, as it's usually combined with print directory fees
No time, technical or online marketing skills needed	All your competitors are shown too: very easy to be overlooked
	You have very little control: people can post negative reviews of you to the site, seen by others

3. Paid Listing in specialized "find a veterinarian" online directory:

These are specialized directory sites geared towards helping pet owners find local veterinarians or hospitals. Their teams do the critical SEO and PPC work to ensure high search engine rankings.

PROS	CONS
Positions you in a highly relevant online space: 100% veterinarian-focused	Most directories show all your competitors too- you'll share valuable leads with other practices
Strong SEO Ranking in engines for top veterinarian search keywords people use	Some charge per click or per response vs 1 flat rate: you may pay more than you need per patient
Simple and straightforward: just buy the listing and you're done	
No time, technical or online marketing skills needed	

How do I know it works?

Know exactly what you're measuring...

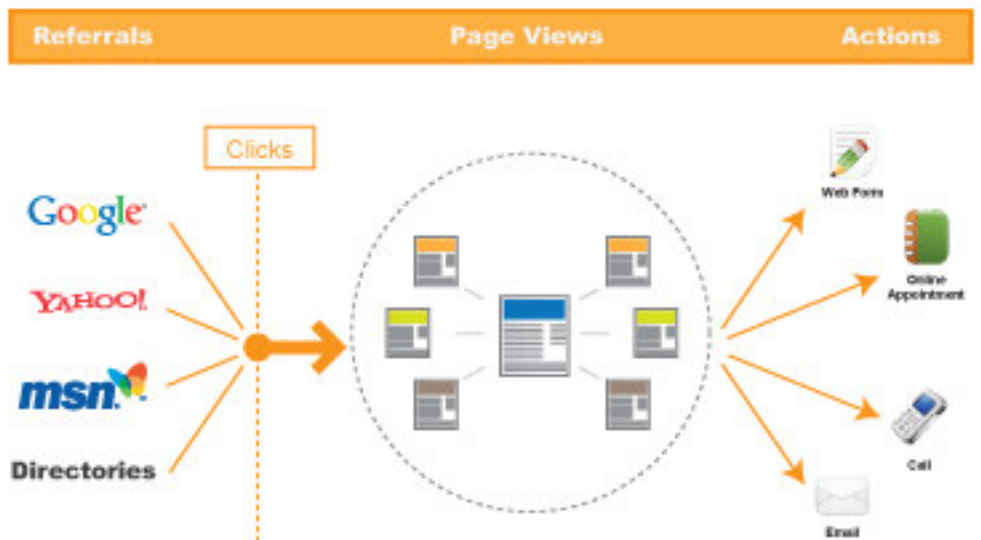
"the best metrics equate to tangible revenue..."

*-more calls
-more appointments
-more new patients"*

At its best, online advertising assures you instant feedback and measurability: you know which ad efforts are working because you can track every new patient appointment back to its original source. But you must know what metrics to look at....

Online advertising metrics to measure include:

- **Referrals:** Where your website visitors come from: (search engines, directory, etc.)
- **Clicks:** How many click-throughs the referring web sites send you
- **Views:** How many times your ad or page was seen
- **Leads:** How many inquiries you receive via the web form
- **Calls:** How many calls you receive from specific channel
- **Appointments:** How many booked appointments your practice receives



Ask these questions to choose the right online vendor or directory:

Visibility: How does their directory or website rank in search engines?

Pet owners won't venture beyond the first few pages of engine results to find you. So make sure you have a presence within the first three pages; preferably page one - whether it's your own site or an online directory listing that is housing your website.

- **Considering an online directory listing?** Enter a few popular search words for veterinarians in your browser to see where their site appears. (See 1st page of this report for examples of common terms most pet owners enter in finding a local vet).
- **Marketing with your own website?** Hire a proven SEM (search engine management) professional or commit the time, energy and know-how to do it yourself. Otherwise, your site will be invisible online - prospects won't see you.

Accountability: What metrics can they track for you?

Pet owners who find you online have different needs and ways of reaching you. One person may be new to the neighborhood and scoping out nearby vets, but won't book their appointment until weeks later via email. Another just adopted a new pet and is on the phone with your office seconds after finding you to schedule their first check-up.

Whether they email, call your office, or click to your site, your vendor has to be able to track all activity back to your online advertising. It's the only way to know what works.

Look beyond "hits", "clicks" "traffic". Too often, the jargon used by the online advertising industry confuses practitioners. When vendors talk about volume of "hits" or "clicks" to your profile or site, this is a way of measuring your online visibility. But the best metrics are still the ones that equate to tangible revenue for your practice...more phone calls, more appointments, more new patients!

Customers have changed the way they search for local businesses:

At Veterinarians.com, we make sure they find you....

[Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

[Veterinarians.com](#) - Online directory of animal doctors for ...

Online directory of animal doctors for emergency services, vaccinations and surgeries for your dogs, cats, birds, horses and other exotic pets.
www.veterinarians.com/ - 22k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[AnimalHospitals.com](#) - Online directory of animal hospitals for ...

Online directory of animal hospitals for emergency services, vaccinations and surgeries for your dogs, cats, birds, horses and other exotic pets.
www.animalhospitals.com/ - 22k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)



The search for a new vet begins with a mouse for many pet owners, but if they don't find you on that first or second page, chances are you'll never be seen.

Veterinarians.com assures you that coveted spot at a fraction of the cost and time it would take to achieve this on your own— and without any specialized online expertise or effort on your part.

Veterinarians.com is the only online platform that assures the best of all online worlds:

Exclusivity: Every time a resident in your zip codes searches our directory site, your practice is the only one they see. That equals more leads with a lower ad cost per patient than on any other online search site.

Maximum visibility: Veterinarians.com & AnimalHospitals.com are premium Internet domain names for Veterinarians and Animal Hospitals: you enjoy top online visibility. All for less than you're probably paying now for a printed directory that's generating questionable results at best.

Full measurability: One mouseclick shows you exactly how many new business appointments came from your profile: that's accountability you won't find with printed directories, ads or even your own website in most cases.

All the control of a private website: Your professionally-developed, detail-rich profile looks just like a "mini-website" with services, hours, staff, photos, contact info and so much more. No negative reviews, nothing posted without your consent. You control and approve all content.

Spend less – and drive MORE new business to your practice
with your Veterinarians.com and AnimalHospitals.com profile:

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