

📅 November 15th 2022

Fed up with telephone tennis? Digital engagement tools in dermatology follow-up



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Digital Dermatology



It's not just the technology that's changing - our clients are too. Gen-Z and the Millennials have grown up with - even been born with - technology, and expect to use it. They have access to digital solutions in every aspect of their daily life, and see no reason for their pet's medical care to be any different. Added to that, "Digital Influencers" are increasingly vocal in the veterinary sphere, and are dramatically influencing the conversation.

And our staff are changing too! More and more of your colleagues are eager to engage digitally, looking to apply added value. They - and you! - can see digital solutions as an opportunity, not a threat.

Digital-native clients



Veterinary dermatologic cases are typically part of a long game, with very regular repeat visits or check ups. There are lots of ups and downs, and above all, client compliance is key to effective treatment. This makes these cases ideally suited to digital input - enabling follow-up, repeat check-ins, and client education. Given the complexity and ongoing nature of many of our derm cases, using digital techniques to gather histories and information can also be invaluable. But dermatology is also profoundly visual - and that's another area where the ubiquity of digital cameras can be leveraged to your advantage.

Marketing & Media

Social media is **great** for client education. The drip-feed of accurate and trustworthy information trickling across your clients' feeds is a very powerful tool for presenting information to suit a range of learning styles. It also allows proactive addressing of common misconceptions. However, you have to go where your clients are - and so you have to know who is using what platform. The days of using Facebook and reaching 90% of the online population are long gone.

However, do not underestimate more general online resources: there is a wealth of reliable information out there that you can tap into (eg the DOUXO S3 website!).

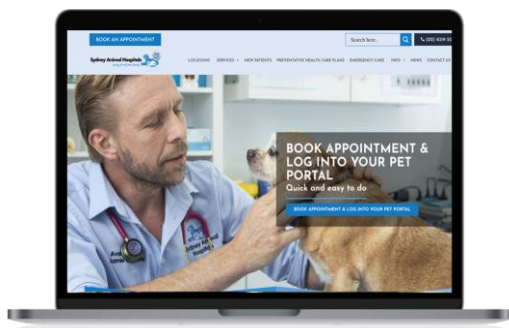


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Appointments & the T-word...



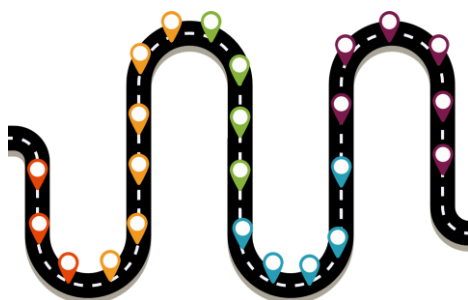
Telemedicine is a bit of a marmite topic at the moment - but post-Pandemic we have a much better idea what it is, and is not, useful for. However, the closely-related area of online appointment booking has almost no drawbacks, and frees up reception and support staff time when you need it most: as well as allowing your clients to book in for rechecks, follow-ups, or even initial appointments at a time to suit them, without your needing a receptionist “on call” for those people holding eccentric hours.

Messaging & Payments

Your clients want to be able to get in touch with you whenever they want, wherever they might be. And if they're phoning you all the time, it's unmanageable! But asynchronous messaging is remarkably effective at allowing people to get in touch when they need to, and then you can reply when you can. Use of widespread messaging networks such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are almost always preferred to dedicated apps.

When properly configured, you can also take payments - for services, or even deposits - and gain consent for procedures, all through the supercomputer almost all of your clients carry in their pockets. And then sync it to your PMS!

So, what next?



Digital is the new normal - embrace it!
However, it can be daunting. So...

- Build a trustworthy online presence to educate your clients
- Embrace digital assists to your consults and your follow-ups
- Use digital to turbo-boost compliance
- Focus on those services that will benefit your patients the most, and build on them.
- Find ways to be available to your clients (even when you're not!)
- Appoint a digital champion in your team