

Can We Talk About Results?

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Have you noticed that the conversations around marketing in the veterinary space all center on costs? Shouldn't there be discussions around results as well? Many veterinarians and their teams look at marketing like a massive, expensive, gaping hole. The hole seems to have no end, nobody knows what to view to see if the marketing is working, and it just seems flat out scary. When there is a lack of information, people in the U.S. tend to fill it with negative, not positive ideas. And, since there is little dialog about results with marketing, we assume that marketing doesn't work and costs a fortune.

Marketing works—it brings tails through the door

Let's balance out the perception of marketing and turn the discussion to results as well as costs. What results can a marketing company can give you for the dollars they spend?

At issue is veterinarians often have a lack of knowledge on what to ask in order to be educated consumers. So, what tends to be discussed is cost because it is a known factor. Let's change the conversation to results first and costs

second. If a company cannot produce results, there is little point in discussing costs.

Here are some questions that can be asked:

Measurement. First off, when I ask people if they receive a report for the services they have purchased, most of the time the answer is "no" or "rarely." Does it seem inconceivable to treat an animal without some type of diagnostics? Reports and measurements for marketing are the same as diagnostics for animal health—necessary and needed—in order to give direction to achieve the desired results. Without numbers, trends and indicators, a marketing program is running blind. To find out if measurement is even being used by a marketing agency, try these inquiries:

- What type of reporting is offered for the services I am purchasing? Does a team member go over these reports with me? If so, how often?
- What is the education/training/experience of the person who will be working on my account? Do they have certifications from Google and Facebook showing they

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understand the story behind the numbers?

- How often is my specialist reviewing the metrics of each of my marketing services? Based on that information, are course corrections being made on an ongoing basis throughout the month?
- What are the metrics being measured and how are mine doing compared to the average benchmark? For example, a typical click-through rate (CTR) for Google AdWords is 1 percent. If a practice is receiving a 5-percent CTR that is a good indicator that tails are being sent the hospital's way to be treated.

The second aspect to measurement is actually carving out the time to review and discuss the measurements. Once a marketing firm has been selected, make sure that the owner of the practice, as well as the key marketing contact within the hospital, meets with the agency.

A few veterinarians I have asked, "Do you receive reports?" have answered "Yes," and then sheepishly said, "but I don't read them!" How does one know if marketing is being managed in a way that brings tails through the door if one doesn't engage with the process?

Examples of Results. Have you ever asked for recommendations from vendors when you want to purchase services in others aspects of your life? The same goes for marketing—examples of results that have been given to other clients are legit. However, expand it past the illustrations of placement in search results, which is the common result given. Instead, ask if tails were walking through the door. A few examples one might hear are:

- The advertising program conducted via Google and Facebook Ads was so successful that the ads had to be pulled because the results filled the appointment book, flooded the ER, booked out the dog boarding center, etc. Ask for names of practices where the work was successful and see if they would give a recommendation if it is not already in writing.
- Pet owners are increasingly aware of the name of our practice since a Brand Awareness Campaign was created.

Do you want to see the actual ads and marketing creative done for other practices? Ask! A marketing agency should have a "look book" or examples of work (websites, ad campaigns, Facebook work, etc.) that the agency has done.

Metrics, measurement and examples of results are just the beginning of turning the conversation to what marketing is really about—tails through the door. Marketing's job is to increase the bottom line for a business. Understanding the specific goals for each marketing campaign is key. Following the numbers and watching from the business end to see if extra tails are wagging in the waiting room are essential.

At Beyond Indigo, we bring results through the door. We are happy to give examples of work that we have done for other hospitals. We focus on results first and discuss costs second. We have been on the cutting edge of digital marketing for the last 20 years. We deeply know how Google works, how to manage reviews, and how to build websites. Call Melissa Neff at 877.244.9322, ext. 100, or email her at Melissa@BeyondIndigo.com to have us assist you!

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Kelly Baltzell, M.A. is President and CEO of the Beyond Indigo family of companies which she founded in 1997. Beyond Indigo is a full-service marketing company focusing on Search Engine Optimization, is a Google Adwords Partner, Social Media Marketing, Online Reviews and websites. She has been a monthly columnist for MWI Animal Health since 2011. She has also presented and been published in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK.

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