

Ouch! Sticker Shock!

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Choosing a marketing provider

Recently, I was at a convention speaking about internet marketing. At least 15 percent of the attendees after the first CE class came up to speak to me about a contract they had just signed on the exhibit floor. They all had the same story: “I signed this contract because I freaked out about the cost of marketing, and this company seemed to do it for less. Now I am not so sure.”

The uncertainty came into play because the only variable people were comparing was the price of the service. What was unknown at the signing was if the service was the same between companies, and the expected outcome. Once the attendees learned more about how marketing worked, they became educated consumers and started to realize that just doing price comparison is not enough. In fact, they wanted to reconsider the contracts they just signed and educate themselves further before deciding on a marketing provider. All of a sudden, price became a secondary consideration to other factors.

When people do not know the value of a service, they tend to go to something they can understand—like price. Perhaps this behavior has been witnessed in your

own veterinary hospital. People get sticker shock when presented with the bill. Why? Because there is no context to understand why a blood panel is X dollars, or a radiograph is Y dollars. All the pet owner sees is “expensive bill!” and “how do I pay for this?”

The same can be said for marketing. Many veterinary practices do not understand marketing and how it can drive tails through the door. There is no context to put the price or understanding on the value of marketing. When there is little to no other information to go upon, the automatic reaction is to jump to a variable which is understandable—in this case, price.

Remember the saying, “You get what you pay for?” When receiving quotes for marketing services, some companies tend to be higher and others tend to be lower—there is a reason for it. In the veterinary vertical, there tend to be two groups of marketing agencies. The higher-priced marketing agencies lean towards being more customized and focused on the individual hospital’s messaging. The lower-priced group tends to do more duplication of services, meaning multiple hospitals receive the same service, just with names changed.

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For example, the higher-priced marketing agencies typically have a website completed in two to three months (depending on the work needed). The design will be owned by the hospital, as well as the content. The lower-priced group will state they can churn out a website in as little as four hours. How? The design and content is already completed, and just a few little adjustments are made. The marketing agency in this case, more often than not, owns the website design and content (as a reminder, Google has a rule called "Panda" that means no duplicate content on a site is permitted).

One session attendee who was starting to understand that maybe she should focus on other factors than cost said, "Kelly, if a company can drive tails through my door and make me money, then I am not going to worry about the few hundred dollars in difference a month between the higher-priced agency versus a lower one. Especially if I know the higher-priced agency is doing my marketing correctly and per Google rules."

Isn't that what it boils down to in the end? Can the marketing increase my bottom line? *Instead of focusing on the upfront and monthly costs as the primary decision point on which marketing company to use, maybe instead focus on the results.*

Attendees in the session started to chime in about results from their marketing efforts. Here are some of their comments:

1. Facebook and Google Ads really work—to the point they need to be shut off because of the amount of tails being driven through the door. The ads need to be customized to the business and follow the rules laid down by Google and Facebook.
2. Hospitals with the most successes had to be found in all the right places where people are looking. Working with an agency who knows these places and how to place them where they will be seen is key.

3. People had to trust their agency and know that the marketing company has their best interest in mind.

It is a mental switch from focusing on price to looking at results. When interviewing marketing agencies, ask them for examples of results, samples of the reporting they use to show successes, and references to call. If at any time you are feeling pressured to make a purchase in a short period of time, consider that a warning flag. Move onwards to another marketing agency.

At Beyond Indigo, we are happy to discuss how we drive tails through the door. Often, our clients are having us switch the focus of our ads/marketing because we have sent too many pets to their new ER service, or booked out their dental appointments. Call us today to become empowered about your marketing and to learn that what you pay for at Beyond Indigo, you really do get. Call Melissa Neff at 877.244.9322, ext. 100, or email her at Melissa@BeyondIndigo.com.

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