

## VETERINARY VOICE: Tips of the Trade

### How To Harness the Power of Social Media To Rapidly Grow Your Practice

Here are a few quick and simple ways to start using and leveraging social media to drive new clients/patients to your veterinary practice.

#### How Much Time Will Social Media Take Me?

**Embrace Social Media and quit paying for expensive third party advertising.** Make social media an integral part of your marketing strategy. Social media is not that time consuming. It literally takes just a few minutes a day to update your website, homepage or blog while empowering your practice to reap profitable benefits.

#### Where Do I Start?

**Start with Twitter and FaceBook.** It's as simple as going to their website: <http://twitter.com> or [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and filling some of your practice's basic practice information and creating an email address and password.

#### Friend or Follower?

**Search for Followers:** Its easy, just look on each social media site for friends and followers you already know. This simple task can be achieved by simply entering friend's names or interests in the search field and pressing enter. Try to select friends that already love you and your practice. It also helps to search for friends in your city for a faster following. Once you find your friends, invite them to be your Twitter and/or FaceBook followers. Most people will follow you once you invite them to be your friend. There is a simple way to find where friends are located on Twitter by accessing a website called Twellow.com <http://www.twellow.com>. This website is basically the "yellow pages" of Twitter. Additionally, look for friends that have a lower number of followers, because you and your practice will be more noticeable to them and their friends.

#### What Do I Say On My Social Media Sites?

**Educate & Engage Your "Friends and Followers".** Think of social media as one big party and everyone's invited! When you host a party you are there to be social and get to know your guests better. You are not at your party to sell yourself. However, when you are asked what you do for a living, your answer often results in an in depth discussion about a veterinary topic of interest to them. It's the same with FaceBook, Twitter, Linked In, You Tube, etc. It's your social media party and it allows you to engage your friends and followers in an interactive dialogue about your practice and its services. Consider posting on your social media sites what's going on in your practice, an interesting case, the importance of senior wellness and dentistry week and the neat things your patients and staff are doing. Be personal, but don't be too personal. Most importantly, don't just talk about your practice all the time. Search and include relevant veterinary news and interesting veterinary statistics as well. Pay close attention to the conversations being held on your site(s) and reply immediately at the consumer's level. Answer their questions, comment on their topics and just be real, because one day soon your practice and its social media site(s) may become the consumers go to places in veterinary medicine!

#### Questions? Hospital Administrator:

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Jan Woods' health care career has spanned over thirty years in both human and veterinary medicine. She was previously the Vice President of Operations and Development for Care Net Health Systems based in Nashville, TN and Communicare/NBC HealthCare, based in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Jan is currently the Hospital Administrator, and one of six co-owners of Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson. Jan is President of the Veterinary Specialty Practice Alliance, an organization that is comprised of veterinary specialty hospitals, nationwide. She is one of the cofounders and the current facilitator of The Southern Arizona Veterinary Managers Group and writes the monthly Southern Arizona Veterinary Managers Group Newsletter.