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José Antonio Soares, André Luiz Baptista Galvão, Lucas Vinicius Shigaki de Matos, Julia Cestari Pierucci, Katia Denise Saraiva Bresciani, Nadia Kassouf Pizzinatto,

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# Marketing strategies in small animal clinical practice

Marketing  
strategies

José Antonio Soares

*Faculdades Integradas de Itapetininga, Itapetininga, Brazil*

André Luiz Baptista Galvão, Lucas Vinicius Shigaki de Matos, and

Julia Cestari Pierucci

*Faculty of Agrarian and Veterinary Sciences, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Jaboticabal, Brazil*

Katia Denise Saraiva Bresciani

*Department of Support, Production and Health, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Araçatuba, Brazil, and*

Nadia Kassouf Pizzinatto

*Universidade Metodista de Piracicaba, Piracicaba, Brazil*

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Marketing strategies can be used to leverage business in the service sector, specifically in veterinary medicine; among other benefits, it can make a difference in satisfaction and consequent customer loyalty. Marketing should be used with ethics and professionalism due to one administration area that contributes to effective management in the continuous pursuit of quality in the provision of services and demonstrate that veterinary clinics have much to gain if managed with support of marketing strategies. This paper aims to analyze the applicability of marketing strategies in the management of small animal clinics, such as guidelines to the entrepreneurs of this services sector.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Marketing literature is plentiful in proposing alternative strategies, whether focused on the achievement and loyalty of customers, whether to raise the competitiveness of an organization or simply to its survival in the market. In this study, some marketing strategies were selected, on secondary data research, in theoretical framework, to investigate their application in the practice of veterinary medicine. This study emphasizes promotional strategy toward communication with the market and construction of organizational image, using public relations as marketing strategy.

**Findings** – The use of marketing strategies is recommended in the management of small animal clinical practice, especially with respect to the high customer satisfaction by streamlining the procedures and optimizing veterinary services provision.

**Originality/value** – This study is different because it proposes an integrated system of management techniques in veterinary organizations, which will lead to better efficiency of attendance, adding value to the service provided and generating greater profitability for the organization, which positively reflects on the economic point of view and for the image of the company and its professionals, providing a better quality of life for both clients and their pets.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurship, Marketing in veterinary medicine, Pet market, Veterinary clinic, Veterinary market

**Paper type** Literature review



## 1. Introduction

It is clear that the main mission of a veterinary medicine project is focused on animal health and welfare, so they are the ones that receive the services and products (baths and food, for

example). Therefore, they can be considered consumers of the clinic, although they have no power to choose a clinic. It is the owners who have the power of decision and really elect the medicinal veterinary clinic, and they are considered the customers of the organization. That is why, from the enterprise aspect, the company needs to be profitable, to survive and grow, so new services can be offered to add value, satisfying both consumers and customers. Gordon and Apud Pizzinatto (1998/2005) classify customers into categories, the “Prospects”, people identified within the general population and whose profile matches the target audience of the organization but who are not yet buyers of their services, and the “Defenders”, who are very committed and loyal to the organization and spontaneously diffuse the brand. It is the marketing manager’s role to adopt marketing strategies so the target segment passes from one category to another.

According to the Brazilian Association of Pets Products Industry (Abinpet), the national market of pets in 2012 handled R\$14.2bn, corresponding to 0.32 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). While there was an increase of 16.4 per cent in the national pet market, when compared to 2011, in the same period, the country’s economy advanced only 0.9 per cent. Brazil is the second largest market in the world in this field, preceded only by the USA. Thus, it is considered very attractive, despite being extremely competitive (Sebrae, 2013).

Given this highly competitive scenario, being just a competent veterinarian professional is not enough; it is necessary to manage the veterinary medicine as an enterprise, housed in a marketing system in which disputes space with other veterinarians, with differentiated consumer expectations to be attended to.

In this sense, the knowledge and the correct application of the concepts and strategies of marketing are currently key prerequisites for the success of an enterprise in veterinary medicine. A competent professional does not violate the ethics of Veterinary Medicine by using marketing to serve the needs of their patients (Pereira, 2010a, 2012c).

This article is a result of an exploratory study accomplished by literature research, gathering and confronting two areas of expertise: marketing, with regard to management strategies, and veterinary small animal practice. As a result of conceptual analysis, it reaches the analysis of the applicability of some marketing strategies in veterinary small animal practice attempting to improve the management of the enterprises.

In Item 2, we present the theoretical support of marketing strategies focused upon by this work: promotional strategies, point of sale strategies, personal sales strategies, expanded service strategies, public relations as a marketing strategy, customer loyalty strategies and internal marketing as a marketing strategy. In Item 3, a direct confrontation between the theoretical and veterinary small animal clinical practice is carried out, per type of investigation strategy, as a contribution to managers of this healthcare services sector.

## 2. Main marketing strategies

The marketing literature is plentiful in proposing alternative strategies, whether focused on the achievement of customers and their loyalty, whether to raise the competitiveness of an organization or merely to its survival in the market. In this study, some marketing strategies were selected, on secondary data research and in theoretical framework, to investigate their application in veterinary medicine practice.

Marketing management strategies are important for enterprises of the veterinary segment. Among them, those related to the so-called transactional marketing, based on transactions and supported by the marketing mix – price, product, distribution (point of sale) and promotion – allow us to highlight goods and services supplies in the establishment and thus promote sale (McCarthy, 1996). Regarding veterinary medicine, the product, tangible, is being replaced by its equivalent such as intangible good, which is the service

offered by the professional. The point of sale element, in the words of Hoffman *et al.* (2010), plays a “strategic role as a physical evidence” of the enterprise, and requires attention to items such as the following:

- environmental conditions (lighting, air quality, noise, music);
- space/function (layout, equipment, furniture, accessories); and
- signals, symbols and objects that direct the flow of the service process or customize the facilities.

The element promotion ranges from the sales promotion to advertisement and includes every activity designed to rapidly increase the sales.

This study emphasizes promotional strategy toward communication with the market and the construction of organizational image, using public relations as marketing strategy.

One of the main goals of relationship marketing strategies, which is the latest center of attention in this field, is to build long-term relationships with customers by identifying and meeting the expectations of the client that “has conditions to specify the desirable characteristics of a product or service and that knows how to work with the information and develop comparisons with other competitors”, explains Pizzinatto *et al.* (2005). For this purpose, loyalty strategies can be adapted, grounded in extended product, which is adding to the standard offer services that hold value to the customer. Dias (2003) explains that it is a concept that “indicates a tangible product and the services added to it, such as technical assistance and training”. Service sector involves adding an extra service to professional service as a strategy to differentiate it from that provided by the competition. Therefore, in this paper, Section 3 will be identified as a strategy for amplified service. Similarly, public relations strategies can be adopted, which contributes to customer loyalty by focusing on credibility, ethics and social responsibility and in short is summarized as “the organization’s image as a whole” (Pitombo and Pizzinatto, 2005). Public relations correspond to the strategy held by Hoffman *et al.* (2010), which is to “build a solid organizational image”. The foundation of all strategies to retain customers, warn Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), “relies on customer satisfaction”; according to them, the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty ranges from a state of “affection”, where satisfaction levels are high and so is fidelity, undergoes a state of “indifference”, placed at intermediate levels of satisfaction, and finally can reach state of “desertion”, with low levels of satisfaction, predisposing to switching of the service-provider. Hence, it is important to invest in customer satisfaction.

It is important to ensure a good experience between customer, clinic, attendants and the responsible professional. The good experiences depend, to a great extent, on good service; thus, the importance of the internal marketing strategies, guided by the qualification, motivation and commitment of employees, as justified by Gavião *et al.* (2005). In fact, endomarketing is used as a motivation system for attendants and associates of a veterinary clinic, therefore, within the so-called marketing mix, as already mentioned, being part of a personal selling element strategy. Thus, strategic marketing constitutes a system of interacting activities intended to plan, set sale cost, propagate and distribute services that can recognize and meet the requirements, needs and wants of these clients and patients (Pereira, 2012c).

### 3. Marketing strategies in small animal clinical practice

Next is the analysis of implementation of some marketing strategies into small animal clinical practice.

### 3.1 Promotional strategies in veterinary medicine marketing

The practice of veterinary medicine consists of preventing and treating animal diseases, among other duties. Already in a marketing vision, this practice consists of providing solutions to pets' problems. Animal health and welfare will always be the aim of marketing approaches, which involves ensuring that dog owner realizes what is being done, and the communication between the veterinarian and client is of great importance so that the client values the provided service (Pereira, 2012c).

To discuss effective promotional strategies, we need to identify, among the reasons, what brings new customers to a veterinary clinic. Those that stand out include the following:

- purchase of the first pet;
- the provision of differentiated and specialized services in different areas of veterinary medicine;
- owners unhappy with the service provided in another establishment;
- ease of establishment location and access; and
- recommendations from friends and colleagues. Considering this last reason, which attracts new possible customers to veterinary clinics, Felsted and Brakke (2013) remind that potential customers study and inform themselves about the company with friends, colleagues, veterinary clinics websites, check online comments and social networks pages and, in these cases, the "word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising works very well.

When searching for a veterinary service, the customer looks for quality, safety and appropriate accessibility to their pets' needs, and when a clinic or a veterinary hospital is chosen, it is because they believe that they will obtain the expected service. Thus, the veterinarian has to exceed those expectations and offer a better service than the one estimated, differentiating themselves from other competitors and interacting with their customers (Pereira, 2009a, 2010a). Delighting the customer can lead to loyalty.

Many owners hold an intense emotional involvement with their dogs. These customers should be heard and treated with patience and comprehension by all staff in the veterinary clinic, in a standardized, caring and respectful way (Pereira, 2009a, 2010a, 2012b; Gioso *et al.*, 2011).

Professionals who listen to their clients will have a great opportunity to differentiate from the competition; thus, it is recommended that their company is filled with the "customer's voice" (Whiteley, 1992). Felsted and Brakke (2013) explain that through these relationship practices, bonds between the professional and customers can be established and these can be likely to return and be committed with the recommendations. The authors also recommend that veterinary professionals utilize available resources such as internet and/or social networks as a means to attract customers, by creating a website, a blog or social network page of their establishment, with the clinic label, adding photos of the physical space and team, thus helping in publicizing their service. Initially, the professional could disclose the website to their assiduous and loyal clients, requesting authorization to release pictures of their pets and stories, where customers could leave comments and statements about them. Through social networking, it would be possible to publicize services, orientate customers and make them aware about pet nutrition and obesity or even about the importance of different diets applied in different pathologies. It is interesting to offer customers or visitors a link with information about pets' needs and preventive care.

The website can provide an online pharmacy, with information on drugs, such as human drugs which are toxic to dogs and especially cats, or even disseminate veterinary

pharmaceutical products available at the own establishment. Another smart option is making available educational videos on various topics such as animal welfare or the importance of dental hygiene (Materni and Tumblin, 2013). By creating this webpage, partnerships can be established with companies of the pharmaceutical industry, such as laboratories, pharmacies and veterinary products stores, for seeking sponsorship and real disclosure of their brands and products, leading to decreased investment in this kind of promotion and enhanced dissemination of the company as well as strengthening networking contact, which increases customers' trust in the company.

Another way to differentiate establishments is by demonstrating involvement with social support actions to the public. Veterinary hospitals in the USA are prepared in gathering supplies for local charities, encouraging their clients in donating and providing services discount to customers who make donations (Tudor, 2013).

What matters is not the quantity but the quality of communication (Pereira, 2010b). It is essential to use appropriate marketing techniques to make customers realize the quality of service through education and information about the important role of the veterinarian in their pets' life (Soares *et al.*, 2013a).

### *3.2 Point-of-sale strategies in veterinary medicine marketing*

The front desk should offer proper accommodation, facilities and safe environment to owners and patients, as well as water, tea, coffee, candy, cookies and a presentable toilet so that both owners and patients feel comfortable. It is necessary to provide disposable containers for water and/or food supply for the patient, in case it needs. During harsh sun or rains, making a sunshade or umbrella available to the customers might be interesting, and in these situations a team member can be on standby to help customers when leaving and entering the establishment (Stewart, 2008; Barforoush, 2012).

It is recommended that the appointment is booked in a clever way and, whenever possible, patients of the same species should be scheduled together, to avoid conflicts, say, between dogs and cats. Cats which do not share their home with dogs can be anxious and stressed when taken to the veterinary clinic and therefore should be placed in a separate and private environment, preferably in its carrying case, and must remain in an isolated room. Independent of the employee at the reception, guests must be greeted warmly and so must be the patients (Stewart, 2008).

Estimates indicate that gaining a new customer can cost five times more than keeping the current (Las Casas, 2008). So small practices make difference and should not be neglected, such as hygiene of the establishment, ease of approach, opening hours, time of appointment and approaching both customer and patient by their names. Important details include full explanation of procedures and the full details of the payment request, which shall be conducted with clarity and respect (Pereira, 2012b).

### *3.3 Personal sales strategies: attendance in veterinary medicine marketing*

Over the years, dog owners have become more demanding as they learn to spend money on what matters most. Thus, in clinical practice, those clients study and examine their chances of spending regarding diagnosis and treatment procedures, and question, argue and refuse services if the explanations are not convincing or if the client do not feel sufficiently secure with the veterinary doctor (Tracey, 2011). The customer must have an overview of the service to be provided and especially recognize the quality of this service.

The more education and respect the team of the veterinary clinic demonstrates to both owner and patient, the better is the clinic's reputation (Tracey, 2011). The way the customer is treated becomes a differentiator against the competition. It is worth mentioning the

satisfactorily attendance of the patients' needs and also the customer can be psychologically upset, so a gesture, a well-placed word can make a difference.

It is extremely important that the veterinarian performs a careful clinical examination and discusses with the owner the real situation regarding the patients. During this dialogue, the veterinarian must demonstrate safety and explain with clearness and honesty the risks involved with the disease in question, options for diagnosis and treatment procedures, accurately, giving priority to less aggressive interventions and offering the owner free will to decide which conduits shall be taken. The pet owners, at this moment, reaffirm their confidence in the professional regarding the investment of their time and money (Tracey, 2011).

By the end of the additional requested tests, the veterinarian must reveal the test results to the owner as well as monitor the progress of the therapy elected to the patient, by scheduling returns and making contact by email and/or telephone (Tracey, 2011).

Throughout the attendance, the owners must be aware of what their pet is feeling. This will help them to decide what should be done immediately, is a priority and might be expected, so the owners can establish how and how much they can and should invest (Becker, 2013).

#### *3.4 Expanded service strategies in veterinary medicine marketing*

Specialized veterinary clinics make much difference. Thus, a clinic can, for instance, have a specific ambulatory for immunization and one for ectoparasites control (where the product is sold and administered), an operating room, an intensive care unit (ICU), a clinical laboratory, hospitalization room and even an office with electrocardiogram (Pereira, 2011). Thus, it is not necessary to have a large structure to succeed in the market; all that is needed is organization, service excellence and dedication to have the customers' recognition (Lobato, 2010).

Medical specialties and programs were created to meet the needs of each client and patient in particular. The following are two examples of programs that can make difference in the "pet world" competitive market.

The first one is the pediatric program. Customers should be guided at the puppy's first visit, with the establishment of an infectious and parasitic prophylactic schedule and elucidation of the importance of a balanced nutrition for its growth and development. Also, if the customer joins the program, he/she will begin a relationship that will last for years if well managed, leading to loyalty between owner and veterinarian (Pereira, 2005).

The second program is the geriatrics. When the dog reaches the age of seven years, it starts to become an old animal, requiring special care to stay healthy and have its life expectation expanded. The vet then conducts a survey of the registered animals that are over seven years old and contacts the owners to explain about senility, demonstrating concern about the patient's health. From this alert, the owners realize that their pets are getting older, which is crucial for their adhesion to the program. The higher the patient's survival rate and better quality of life, the longer it will be assisted by the clinic and its owner will be a satisfied customer. In today's competitive market, differentiated programs contribute greatly to customer loyalty and business growth (Pereira, 2012a).

Geriatrics, dentistry, nutrition counseling and caring for clients are the most timely customer activation campaigns; however, there are many other services and medical specialties. As no one fully knows everything, the recommendation is to forge partnerships with other colleagues, outsource the various medical specialties, keeping your customers happy and present in your clinic or hospital. An annual calendar of marketing can be made, with differentiated offerings regarding the month of geriatrics (Pereira, 2007).

Nowadays, some services are popular among pet owners and can improve and increase the business profitability, as suggested by the Sebrae (Brazilian Service to Support Micro and Small Enterprises):

- *Happy Day*: the owners leave their dogs for a whole day so it can play with other dogs. The dog enjoys ten hours of fun (from 8 to 18 h).
- *Dog day care or gym*: daycare carries out animal activities to improve dog's behavior, or cause them to spend energy, ensuring the balance of the animal and reducing problems such as hyperactivity, aggression and anxiety. The daycare center operates from Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and offers three daily meals, collective games, walking, relaxation, dry bath and good manners lessons, involving basic training.
- *Therapeutic treatment*: in the form of dog massages, helping column treatment, muscles strengthen, balance of immune system and promoting tranquility. Various massage techniques can be utilized such as "shiatsu", "yoga" and even lymphatic drainage. Half an hour massage costs around R\$45.00. The most important is that the cost of this service may be zero if the entrepreneur establish partnerships or use the own veterinarian office space for this activity.
- *Home care*: services such as bathing and grooming can be done in the client's domicile and accessories, toys and treats can be brought for selling.
- *Modern health treatments*: veterinary medicine is becoming increasingly closer to human medicine, having a variety of equipment, drugs and modern treatments for the pet's health care. Among the equipment, there is one that maps the animal's blood circulation and another that evaluates spinal injuries and is capable to detect brain tumors.

### 3.5 Public relations and marketing strategy in veterinary medicine

One way to achieve organizational results is when public interests and organizations are brought together, establishing a strong relationship between marketing and public relations (Pitombo and Pizzinato, 2005).

Public relations are based on the principle that the more you know, the more you create a favorable image for an organization. This justifies the investment of veterinary clinics in building a socially responsible image, supporting social initiatives such as promoting dog walks through the city and collecting, as a registration fee, food for people in need. It could be denominated as "take a walk with your pet".

In veterinary medicine, it seems that the care of dogs from shelters or animal protection associations might be a strategy that can be adopted to heighten awareness of the local community about a certain clinic and its social responsibility, which can attract customers (Wasche, 2008).

Therefore, honesty and clearness is essential from the beginning, in the form of an open and frank dialogue, with full explanation of service conditions, discounts and payment procedures (Biele, 2012).

### 3.6 Marketing strategies of customers loyalty in veterinary medicine

For greater satisfaction of the dog owner, all receptionist, nurses and veterinarians must work on the same page (so that they are always accessible to the client, answering their questions and phone calls). The customer should be treated with education, compassion, good humor and patience. Stewart (2008) recommends that the team must demonstrate



attention and concern with the pet and with their stories and listen to the owner's needs and concerns. The author also suggests that in difficult situations of customer satisfaction, the professionals must ask themselves the following questions:

- Why is the customer unhappy?
- What should I do to help the customer feel happy in the situation?
- Is this something we could have done for the customer? Why or why not?
- If not, how could have we communicated better or helped the customer find what he/she needed elsewhere?

The author also warned that if customers are leaving a particular clinic, the professional needs to know why. In this case, a letter can be sent to the customer asking the reason for disconnecting or even provide a special offer on services offered in your establishment, to try to bring the client back.

According to [Karsaklian \(2000\)](#), the motivation is the "start" of an act of purchase, and will lead to a need, which arises a desire, which, in turn, brings up the preferences for certain specific ways that meet the initial motivation, and these preferences are directly related to self-concept, that is, the clients tend to choose a product or service that matches the concept they have or would like to have of themselves. However, the author advises that in the opposite direction to the motivation come the brakes, which is the risk awareness explicitly related to the product or service. So it is not advisable to offer anything to the customer other than offering most attention to the patient and show the customer the benefits that a product or a service will bring to the pet as that's the moment of truth. [Pereira \(2010a, 2012c\)](#) contends that the aim is, invariably, customer loyalty; therefore, it is important to earn their trust by providing them good experiences and especially strengthening the clinic's commitment to the pet.

### *3.7 The internal marketing as marketing strategy in veterinary clinical medicine*

Internal marketing is directed to the employees considered internal customers, seeking their commitment to the goal of building long-term relationships with external clients as well as with other employees. [Zeithaml et al. \(2014\)](#), highlight the essential role of employees in providing services, emphasizing that they "are both the service and the organization to the customer's eyes, are also the brand and are marketers" of the organization. [Gummesson \(2010\)](#), determines that there are links between all functions and an employee should be seen as a supplier of something to his colleague, of who is a partner. In his words, in the traditional marketing services, the functional relationships are indispensable. The practice of internal marketing requires research on task flow and the person responsible for each step to identify the cross-functionality of the work in the company. It also requires the organizational climate survey to identify the degree of employee satisfaction with their activities and commitment with clients' satisfaction.

Actions focused on internal staff (employees) reflect externally on companies. If used in an integrated and complementary way, reveal excellence in providing services and care for their patients and customers ([Soares and Pizzinato, 2004](#)).

The development of people in organizations is a broader concern than imagined because it includes, besides training, other tools such as coaching, social responsibility activities, career management, trainee programs, job rotation, performance management and feedback ([Vilas Boas and Andrade, 2009](#)).

The team should be organized, the duties well distributed, each in charge of certain and specific task. This reduces stress and allows the attendance of other customers with

efficiency. All team members are important and should feel valued and appreciated (Barforoush, 2012).

The pursuit of customer loyalty must be a constant task of an entire team, with supporting tools to help the achievement, in practice, of the desired efficiency. Only providing the expected service is not enough; you must enchant the clients, and to do so various stimuli may be offered, from occasional promotions to a personalized service, where customers and consumers interact and feel happier and satisfied (Soares *et al.*, 2013b).

### 3.8 A new dimension for veterinary medicine as a marketing strategy

Some successful techniques in other sectors can and should be used in veterinary medicine to improve the organization's image, brand and quality in services. Next, we present some of these techniques, which, when implemented in an integrated way, add value to the service and to the way employees and customers recognize this service. It is worth noting that these techniques shall be implemented in an integrated and simultaneous way as they should be present during the entire process (Figure 1).

**3.8.1 Rapport.** If veterinarian professionals wish to differentiate their business and/or service in such a competitive market, it is also necessary to differentiate the way of meeting the customer and dealing with the situation. It is important, as the first contact to acknowledge the issues in the customer's life story, that is, tries to understand the context in which the problem is installed. The idea is that professionals in this area are trained to apply, for example, the rapport technique, which basically consists of a greater interaction between professional and client, and includes the physical posture, facial expression, structured listening and appropriate language. The attention must be totally focused on the customer, and in a second moment, on the pet. These professionals specializing in human psychology and animal behavior would complement the services provided.

**3.8.2 Follow-up technique.** As the aim is customer loyalty, it is essential that companies in this field establish a follow-up technique, and the ones that have already implemented follow-up refine customer follow-up since the first contact through anamnesis, until the resolution of the problem. It is necessary that the staff is well trained to perform a good service, from the moment that the customers look for a company to solve their and their pets' problem, going through the veterinary professional, which performs a detailed anamnesis focused the costumer and their animal, continuously monitoring, even after the problem resolution.



**Figure 1.**  
Integrated techniques  
applied to  
organizational  
management

*3.8.3 Feedback.* Staff should be prepared to look for answers and knowledge regarding the attendance, recovery and treatment results, so that such information return to the company, are discussed and analyzed to improve the service provided. At this stage, it is essential to listen to the customers and employees, giving the appropriate attention and consideration to the raised issues. The feedback should be encouraged through information, telephone calls, emails, physical presence in the company and, if applicable, professional visits to the client's home.

*3.8.4 Implementation of housekeeping.* In addition to this dimension, we can use the housekeeping technique, which should be applied in the environment where people live and work, focusing on the transformation of people by using an educational constructivist methodology and establishing consensually standards. This technique aims to inform, educate and assist in the environmental monitoring of the organizations and the place where the pet lives. Some of the objectives of housekeeping are operational (the first three) and others are behavioral (the last two).

*3.8.4.1 Operational.* The first stage is called separating (SEIRI), which is to separate the necessary items from the unnecessary, that is, identifying what, how many, where and how to store them. To identify, it is necessary to check everything that rapidly multiplies, generating loss of space and affecting the daily functions at the place, causing disorder, attachment, insecurity and laziness. Regarding veterinary medical clinical practice, the professional must pay attention so he/she does not accumulate unnecessary objects and utensils, and has all the equipment needed for good care near him/her. As to the environment where the animal lives, the orientation is that the only objects kept are the ones necessary for feeding, resting, leisure and wellness.

The second step is called order (SEITON) "a place for everything and everything in its place", consists of quickly finding what you need, organizing them in the following order: immediate use (at the time), frequent use (once per day/week), sporadic use (once a month) and eventual use (once a year).

The third stage is characterized by cleanness (SEISO) consists of cleaning; insuring the cleanness of equipment and the environment, removing dirt, dust, among others. Thus, the work ambience must be kept clean as well as the environment where the animal lives. This contributes to the quality of life and health of people and their pets likewise for all employees that work at the small animal clinic.

*3.8.4.2 Behavioral actions.* The first action involves standardizing (SEIKETSU), that is maintaining a good working environment in the daily routine and establishing procedures and protocols. Some recommendations may be offered to the customer regarding animal care, within a responsible ownership program, such as feeding schedule, bathing, hygiene, stool collection, environmental cleaning and hygiene, walking time, medication schedules and the development of a prophylactic calendar, aimed at disease control, including vaccination program and pet deworming.

The last step, discipline (SHITSUKE), refers to good habits, keeping the place clean and tidy, in compliance with the procedures of order, cleanness and hygiene and team spirit. All parts involved in the process must be committed and aware of the importance of these procedures, both in the veterinary clinic and at the pet's residence.

#### **4. Final considerations**

The use of marketing strategies is recommended in the management of small animal clinical practice, especially regarding the high customer satisfaction by streamlining the procedures and optimizing veterinary services provision.

Clearly, in addition to the highlights in this work, there are many other marketing strategies that can contribute to the success of the veterinary management services, which may also be the subject of studies. (Adams *et al.*, 2007; Lane and Bogue, 2010; Colette and Lorna Treanor, 2012; Burge, 2016).

We cannot bypass, for example, that one of the characteristics of the services is the inseparability, relatively, according to Hoffman *et al.* (2010), to “interconnections between the service provider, the client that receives the service and other customers who share the experience of the service”. The service provider, that is, the veterinarian, must be physically present to provide the service and ends up being “particularly judged based on the use of language, clothes, personal hygiene and interpersonal communication skills”.

Therefore, negative evaluations of points such as these can invalidate high power of customer acquisition and customer loyalty strategies, hence the need to keep investigating veterinary medicine characteristics as a field of services sector and other marketing strategies most suitable for your management as enterprise.

This article also represents a contribution to extend the reflection on the inclusion of components such as marketing, management and entrepreneurship in the curricular programs of universities, resulting in veterinary professionals who are aware of their skills and competences, especially when referred to their ability to communicate with their employees and customers.

## 5. Conclusion

This study is different because it presents as a proposal an integrated system of management techniques in veterinary organizations, which will lead to better efficiency of attendance, adding value to the service provided and generating greater profitability for the organization. This positively reflects on the economic point of view and for the image of the company and its professionals, providing a better quality of life for both the client and their pet.

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### Corresponding author

Katia Denise Saraiva Bresciani can be contacted at: [bresciani@fmva.unesp.br](mailto:bresciani@fmva.unesp.br)

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