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Do Special Promotions Get Tails Wagging?

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Question:

How effective are special promotions in attracting new clients?

Answer:

Special promotions – events, targeted programs, service packages – can be effective tools for reaching out to new clients and strengthening relationships with existing ones. At the same time, promotions are no substitute for a positive client experience. Effective promotions should have clear goals (see your marketing or business plan!), deliver value, follow a plan and provide measurable results.

Goals

Building awareness and getting new business are too general. Price reductions position you as the low cost provider. A promotion should be based on specific goals and strategies identified in your marketing or business plan. For example, based on what you know about clients and marketplace trends, are you targeting:

New clients through an entry point like spay and neuter?

Singles (high spenders on pet care)?

Existing clients for dental services?

A greater share of the reptile market?

Senior citizens (growing market)?

Value

One of our clients sponsored a National Pet Dental Health Month photo contest that educated clients, positioned the practice as experts, offered dental service packages and rewarded the winners. Effective promotions provide value that goes beyond veterinary (or other) services. Consider the intellectual, emotional and social benefits that you can deliver based on the needs of your target audience.

Execution

Even the best ideas often fail in the execution stage. Develop a detailed promotion plan that addresses timing, potential conflicts with other events, key tasks and completion dates. Consider how to leverage the promotion by identifying opportunities for:

Publicity in the local media

Tie ins with national and local events

Collaborations with other businesses or organizations

Promoting your website

Measurement

Was the promotion successful? Go back to goals. Identify early how you will track your response.