

VET CANDY

Special Edition 2024

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HOW TO WORK WITH FRIENDS

NAVIGATING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE

BIZZY TIPS:

HOW TO TURN AROUND A BAD MOMENT (OR DAY!) AT WORK

SECRETS TO HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIPS WITH PET OWNERS

SAY WHAT?!?

5 STATEMENTS THAT TRIGGER CLIENTS AND WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

BETTER TOGETHER

WITH DR. JEN REMNES & DR. JESS TRICE



DO YOU KNOW BIZZY?

+ much more

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Welcome to the world of
VET CANDY

Dr. Jill Lopez



Real-life BFFs Dr. Jessica Trice and Dr. Jen Remnes are unstoppable forces of nature who discovered they are better together. As co-founders of Vetique, an upscale veterinary clinic in Chicago, they mix business and friendship, pet health and human luxury, hard work and fun ... making them the perfect pair to rock the cover of our Better Together issue.

These two visionaries understand that healthy teams make for happier workplaces—something they aim for every day at Vetique. In fact, according to a recent study, around 75% of employees rate teamwork and collaboration as being very important, while 86% blame lack of collaboration as the top reason for workplace failures.¹ Like Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess, veterinary practice and team well-being are better together.

As you noticed on the cover, Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess are joined on the cover by Bizzy! Just who is this friendly feline? Glad you asked.

Bizzy is the feline influencer and clinic cat helping CareCredit support and empower veterinary teams—because she was inspired by what she saw them living through. Since 2020, the delivery of veterinary care has changed forever, shifting from “inside” to “curbside” to “now what?” New workflows, staff shortages, constant turnover and pent-up demand for vet care have led to a nonstop state of busy. Teams are fatigued. Clients are sometimes impatient. Relationships can be fractured. In other words, the last three years in veterinary practice have been a blur of adaptation to never-ending change.

Bizzy admires how veterinary teams have stuck by patients and co-workers, and she wants to help make their days more paw-sitive, productive ... and even peaceful. In big ways and small.

So Bizzy started offering tips and stress busters, and talking about the CareCredit credit card's friendly financing solutions that are purr-fect for today's busy practices—and the pet parents who are seeking care like never before. Brought to you by CareCredit, the sponsor of this special issue of Vet Candy, Bizzy is your guide throughout the following pages, pointing out ways to ease mental flow, cash flow and work flow.

I'm sure you'll agree that Bizzy and veterinary teams are Better Together!

So enjoy this behind-the-scenes look at Vetique in Chicago (you'll definitely see why we awarded them with the Vet Candy Design & Innovation Award—see inside for the details) and be inspired by Bizzy's solutions for achieving greater team, clinic and personal success!

As always, I would love to thank our amazing team of writers for their help putting this issue together and we thank you for reading!

Reference:

¹ 35+ Compelling Workplace Collaboration Statistics [2023]: The Importance Of Teamwork. Zippia.com. February 16, 2023. www.zippia.com/advice/workplace-collaboration-statistics

The budget-friendly solution for
veterinary care *is friendlier than ever.*



What could be friendlier than giving your clients a contactless, all-in-one digital way to learn about financing, see if they prequalify (no impact to their credit score), apply and pay. All on their own. That's how simple payment can be when you accept the CareCredit credit card.

It's easy to get started. Just call 844-812-8111 to apply to enroll with CareCredit and mention VCAND0124VA.

 **CareCredit**
a Synchrony solution

Learn more at carecredit.com/mycustomlink.



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BETTER TOGETHER

Drs. Jessica Trice & Jennifer Remnes (plus Bizzy the clinic cat!)

These dynamic docs are all about pampering clients, healing patients and conquering cost conversations.

We've all seen the dog that plants all four paws in the doorway of the clinic, terrified to cross the threshold—sometimes we're holding the leash; sometimes we're coaxing from inside. Dr. Jessica Trice and Dr. Jennifer Remnes have seen it too. And they hate it.

As a result, these two veterinarians came together to design a veterinary clinic that would eliminate as much anxiety from pets' experiences as possible. And they didn't stop there. They're just as committed to making veterinary visits relaxing and even exciting for their clients. In November 2022, the two opened a new-concept boutique veterinary practice called Vetique in downtown Chicago.

Vetique's goal? To make everyone who steps in the door feel like a VIP—very important person and very important pet! Dr. Jess and Dr. Jen took time to think through all the details that would turn something clients and pets have to do into something they can look forward to. That means calm-inducing, stress-reducing amenities like scent diffusers for people and pheromone diffusers for pets, heated hand towels infused with lavender, and even a complimentary in-clinic bar so guests can kick back and relax with a glass of wine while their furry friends receive care. (And let's be honest, just like Dr. Jess and Dr. Jen, errands and wine go better together.)

"When people walk in, they're like, 'This is a vet clinic?' It feels more like a spa," Dr. Jess explained. "I think that's why pets don't put the brakes on. They're like, 'Oh, what's this? Are we not ... Where are we at?'"

How it all started

Both doctors have years of experience working in other veterinary clinics. In addition to many hours logged in exam rooms with patients and clients, they both gained leadership experience by serving as medical directors for two different corporate hospitals. When they met each other in a mentoring relationship, the two realized they worked better together and became BFFs in the process. They concluded they could achieve anything they put their minds to—and that's when they decided to co-found Vetique.

The idea for adding spa vibes to the clinic emerged from their shared passion that client and patient stress could be addressed differently in the industry—and pet owners enjoying a glass of wine in the waiting area could go a long way.

"You've seen those nail salons or beauty bars where it's 'polish and pour'? Well, we had the thought that, why can't we do that in our industry?" Dr. Jen said. "Why can't we make it a more relaxing, stress-free and fun environment?"



Putting the paw in spaw

Along with pampering pets, Vetique extends its spaw-like experience to humans as well by providing products and services owners can indulge in. Currently on offer is a skincare kit for clients to pamper themselves with when they take their pet in for a visit, because all pet owners deserve to look and feel better.

Vetique has also partnered with a local medical spa, Opulence Chicago, to offer minimally invasive services, such as BOTOX® injections and dermal fillers on designated spa days. Imagine clients receiving aesthetic services while their pet is getting wellness care—this takes luxury to a whole new level!

“We’re trying to make clients feel like they’re getting a first-class experience,” said Dr. Jen.

“Emergency care is expensive, so that of course causes sticker shock,” Dr. Jess said. “I talked to the client about CareCredit, and he applied for it and was approved, so he was able to take the kitten to the ER. And now she’s doing well! That was an amazing night.”

Besides proving that an incredible veterinary team and a financing solution like CareCredit work better together, stories like this also help boost the Vetique team’s mental well-being. Unfortunately, even in non-crisis situations, lack of finances is often the reason a patient doesn’t receive the care it needs. Being able to shift the focus of a conversation from supportive care to a treatment plan that helps the pet get better keeps clients and team members positive. And financing options help give team members the confidence they need in conversations about cost.

Who says the vet clinic has to be stressful?

Vetique aims to take as much worry out of veterinary visits as possible—including cost anxiety. A veterinary bill of less than \$250 is enough to trigger stress about how to pay in many clients,¹ as Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess have witnessed many times. They decided to combat the fear associated with veterinary care payments by accepting the CareCredit health and pet care credit card at their practice. They realized that although their practice was already pretty great, offering an easy financing solution could make it even better. In fact, they link to CareCredit directly from their main website navigation menu. When clients are presented with treatment plans ... they look to us for help,” Dr. Jess said. “CareCredit is definitely a way to bridge that gap in order to provide the services we want to patients.”

This payment option can even make the difference between a patient receiving lifesaving care and a devastating outcome. For example, Dr. Jess recently had a client come in with an 8-week-old kitten that was near death. The team was able to stabilize the tiny patient by providing CPR and oxygen, but the kitten needed to be transferred to an emergency hospital.

¹Pet - Lifetime of Care Study, August 2021, petlifetimeofcare.com.

A happy team means happy clients

After witnessing firsthand the burnout and rise in mental health issues in the veterinary profession, Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess resolved to protect their team members' peace of mind when they were designing the Vetique experience. They wanted to make sure their practice would provide not just a safe environment for the team to do its work but also an exciting place to work every day.

"It's not just about our clients and pets, but it's also about changing the way our staff is treated," Dr. Jess said.

"And in turn, that affects our patient care," Dr. Jen added.

While it goes without saying that Vetique team members can't unwind with a glass of wine during work, the doctors help protect their staff from burnout by controlling patient volume. Their years in practice taught them that having an overwhelming number of patients to manage contributes significantly to stress in a clinic. And they firmly assert that while numbers matter, they aren't *all* that matter.

Both doctors believe that the quality of their team's work is just as important as the quantity of clients the clinic has. Controlling patient volume at Vetique also allows them to spend more time one-on-one with patients and develop a trusting relationship with their owners. Their hour-long appointments allow for thorough client communication and education and help everyone get on the same page when it comes to the health of the pet.

"We're exceeding our financial goals and we're able to do that with hour-long appointments," Dr. Jen said. "We're able to provide optimal care. We're offering gold standard treatment plans. That's how we get to our numbers."

So ... what's next?

Although they're still in the early stages of this new venture, Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess have big plans for Vetique. Their eventual goal is to franchise the business and open more locations in Chicago, then hopefully expand Vetique into other major U.S. cities.

"It started small-scale, but we definitely plan to incorporate down the road and make it bigger and better," Dr. Jen said.

For Vetique, the sky is the limit, especially with Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess running the show. Their practice is proof enough that some things just work better together: a glass of wine and vet visits, best friends and business or veterinary care and CareCredit.

¹Synchrony Lifetime of Care Study, Pet, August 2021, www.petlifetimeofcare.com.

Want more DR. JEN AND DR. JESS?

Check them out on their new show, Real Talk on Vet Candy. Who was their first special guest? Bizzy! She spills the tea on how to deal with awkward cost conversations with your client.

Bizzy is the passionate and curious clinic cat who's helping CareCredit inspire, support and empower busy vet teams! She's got nine lives to make it happen!



Speaking of Better Together...

Bizzy's Better Together List

Dr. Jen and Dr. Jess have figured out that pet care and people pampering go great together. And these aren't the only things that are better together at Vetique—or your practice either. Check out Bizzy's favorite pairings that make veterinary visits a breeze for pet parents and veterinary teams alike. (Who's Bizzy? See page 2 to find out.)

Veterinary care & prepared clients

A payment solution like the CareCredit health and pet care credit card can help pet owners be ready to pay for lifelong veterinary care. When clients don't have to be scaredy-cats about costs, patients get the care they need.

Busy days & contactless payment

Your CareCredit custom link and QR code give clients an easy way to pay so your team's busy day can flow without a hitch.

Pet insurance & flexible financing

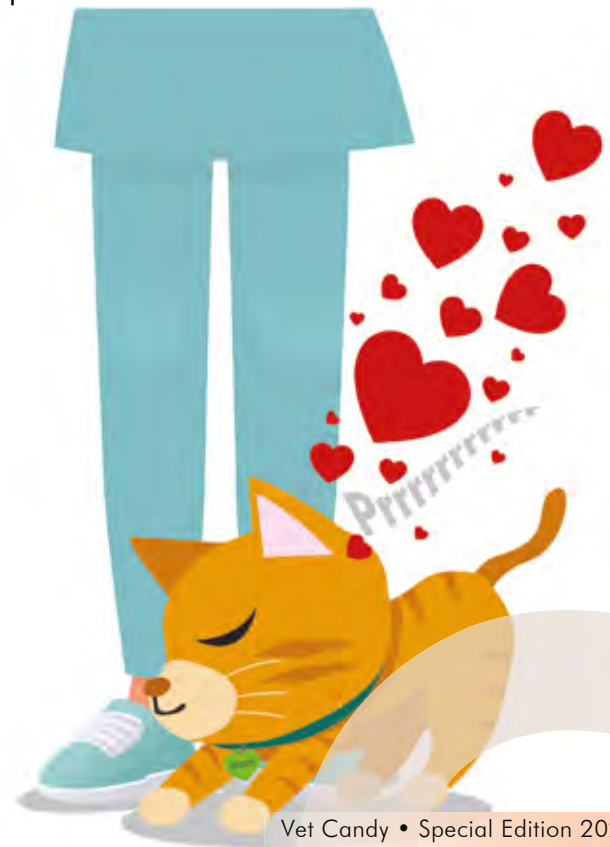
CareCredit and Pets Best (both Synchrony solutions) work together to help clients stay financially prepared for all vet visits.

Clients & clear communication

Transparency in cost conversations keeps clients in the know and makes sure all parties are on the same page.

Veterinary teams & self-care

Bizzy's not *kitten* around when she says she wants veterinary professionals to be happy and healthy. Team members deserve to have fun and enjoy work—even on the craziest days. After all, a positive team means better care for pets!



4 ways to help clients be financially prepared from the start

Out-of-pocket veterinary costs can be overwhelming to clients. Empower pet owners to plan ahead for these expenses so they can provide their pets with quality care for life.

When a prospective pet owner sets eyes on their future fur baby, they're not likely to be thinking about how much money they'll spend on that companion over the next 15 years or so. If costs do enter their mind, they're liable to vastly underestimate them.

That's according to the Synchrony Lifetime of Care Study,¹ which reports that pet owners can spend more than \$55,000 on a dog and \$45,000 on a cat over the course of the pet's life. This and other insights from the study can help you prepare clients for the cost of care. Let's take a look at how.

1 Prepare new pet owners for costs they may not anticipate.

The Lifetime of Care Study asked pet owners if they thought they were financially prepared for pet ownership at the beginning—and if, after a few years, the reality matched their expectation. Nearly half of dog owners (45%) and over a third of cat owners (38%) believed they were financially ready for pet expenses—but were not.

What does this mean for you? When a client comes in with a new puppy or kitten, help them prepare for a lifetime of quality pet care by discussing with them what those potential costs may be throughout their pet's life (see the chart at right).

Initial pet care costs, including spay/neuter



Costs in average year*



Lifetime cost of care (15 years)**



*Does not include health insurance, wellness plans, spaying/neutering, technology purchases or initial costs. Low end of range does not include other non-basic expenses.

**Includes initial costs, spaying/neutering, technology costs, and end-of-life expense (high). Low end of range does not include health insurance, wellness plans, or other non-basic expenses. Amounts have been rounded.



2 Recognize that an invoice of just \$250 or less may cause anxiety.

The study also asked pet owners about their level of stress related to unexpected pet care expenses, along with the amount of the veterinary bill that caused that anxiety about how they will pay. One in four respondents said they were stressed out by a bill of \$250 or less,¹ which many veterinarians may find surprising.

Regardless of the price point, present a treatment plan with options for care along with associated costs. Whatever you do, make sure they're not hearing the total for the first time at the checkout desk—even if it's just \$100 or so.

3 Be upfront and open about the financial options you provide to help manage cost.

The best time to talk about financial preparedness is before a pet owner is in crisis. Things like pet insurance and flexible financing for pet health expenses can provide peace of mind and help pet owners budget for care. In fact, 53% of pet owners said they would use a credit card dedicated to pet care, even though the vast majority—86%—did not have a health-related credit card.¹

4 Offer financial choices to all clients.

Out-of-pocket costs totaling in the tens of thousands. Worry over a \$250 invoice. Openness to financial tools. All of these set the stage for you to present your clients

with budget-friendly solutions to pay for veterinary care throughout their pet's life.

The CareCredit credit card offers a simple way for your clients to pay for everything from annual exams to diagnostics, dental care to parasite control, special diets to emergency care—and the list goes on.*** They can use it again and again with no need to reapply.

Pets Best Pet Health Insurance, another Synchrony solution, is a top-rated insurance brand that allows your clients to choose the level of coverage that best fits their life and budget. The claims process is simple and straightforward, and veterinary advice is available 24/7 if your clients ever need some extra help.

With CareCredit and Pets Best, your clients can have peace of mind about managing pet care costs from day one—and every day after that. In fact, these tools may help them avoid financial stress. The result? Relaxed clients, healthy patients, and a veterinary team that feels great about the care they provide.

It's easy to get started. Just call 844-812-8111 and mention code VCAND0124VA or go to carecredit.com/vetenroll.

Already enrolled? Visit carecredit.com/mycustomlink to download your practice's custom link experience.

Visit www.petsbest.com/vets to discover how Pets Best Pet Health Insurance benefits your clients. Check out petlifetimeofcare.com for more on the Synchrony Lifetime of Care Study.



¹ Pet - Lifetime of Care Study, August 2021, petlifetimeofcare.com.

***Subject to credit approval. See carecredit.com for details.

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A photograph of a male veterinarian with glasses and a beard, wearing a blue scrubs, talking to a woman with long dark hair in a pink sweater. They are in a bright, modern veterinary clinic. A golden retriever is sitting on a table in the foreground, looking towards the camera. The background shows a clean, professional environment with a clock on the wall and some plants.

SECRETS TO HEALTHIER FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS with pet owners

The love your clients feel for their pets runs deep, but their anxiety can skyrocket when it comes to paying for care. Understanding these stress points and addressing them up front not only builds trust—it helps your patients get the care they need.

While your relationship with clients is built primarily on the human-animal bond and a shared love for their furry family members, money is a key element of that relationship as well. Without income, you can't provide the care that keeps pets healthy. But too often, cost is a source of friction between pet owners and veterinary teams. Clients get stressed when they encounter an expense they're not prepared for, and that can stress you and your coworkers.

The good news is you can take action to make things better. When you help pet owners anticipate and prepare for pet care costs, you strengthen your relationship with them and build trust. Synchrony's Pet Lifetime of Care Study¹ has revealed clients' financial stress points and how lifelong pet care costs add up. Armed with insights from the study, you and your team can address payment anxiety at its source and guide clients toward a healthy financial relationship with your practice. Here's how:

TALK OPENLY ABOUT MONEY

Just like preventive care helps your patients avoid potential health problems down the line, talking proactively about financial matters can help prevent future stressful moments for your clients. According to the Pet Lifetime of Care Study:¹

- Nearly half of pet owners underestimate their pets' lifetime cost of care.
- 45% of dog owners and 38% of cat owners thought they were financially ready for pet expenses—but were not.

It makes sense that lack of awareness would lead to cost-related stress when financial realities become clear. That's where you come in. If you broach the subject of cost first—dispelling any misperceptions and pointing directly at the elephant in the room (hint: it's money)—you can prevent surprises and help ease the client's mind.

Keep in mind, your clients may be worrying about expenses from the moment they set foot in your clinic—but are hesitant to bring it up. Relieve them of that burden by addressing cost directly and you'll smooth the financial conversation going forward.

BANISH THE BILLING BLUES

"I love sticker shock and tears at the front desk"—said no veterinary professional ever. Just as bad is the client who pays quietly, walks zombie-like out of the clinic, and then never returns. Unfortunately, both can happen. From the Pet Lifetime of Care Study,¹ we know that:

- 1 out of 3 pet owners will face a pet expense that causes financial worry.
- 1 out of 4 pet owners is stressed by an unexpected expense of \$250 or less.

Again, proactivity on your part can help prevent the pain for all concerned. The key is to not let the invoice total be a surprise when clients check out. This means weaving cost into the conversation when you present your medical recommendations, so clients know exactly where they stand financially in each scenario.

But be aware: While some clients will let you know an expense is beyond their reach, giving you an opportunity to present less expensive alternatives or payment options, others won't be so transparent. (After all, some individuals respond to stress not with "fight or flight" but "freeze," which means they shut down and stop communicating.) So don't assume lack of objection means a client is on board.

Your best bet is to talk through care options along with budget-friendly ways to pay. Knowing about a financing solution such as the CareCredit health and pet care credit card, which enables clients to spread out the cost of care over time, can help them say yes to your full treatment plan—without the angst.

BUILD A LIFELONG CONNECTION

As your clients become more comfortable with cost conversations at each visit, their trust in you is strengthened and they become empowered to make the best decisions for their pets. Together you build on this foundation to create a *lifetime* of care that helps keep each pet in tiptop shape.

And this strong foundation is vital, since the cost of excellent care that lasts throughout a pet's life definitely adds up. According to the Pet Lifetime of Care Study:¹

- The lifetime cost of care for dogs ranges from \$19,893 to \$55,132*
- One year's worth of healthcare costs for dogs: \$534 to \$1,285**
- The lifetime cost of care for cats ranges from \$15,055 to \$45,790*
- One year's worth of healthcare costs for cats: \$374 to \$965**

While most pet owners are truly dedicated to their pets' health and well-being and want to share life with them for as long as possible, these totals can be eye-opening. Fortunately these costs don't hit all at once. When you have open and honest conversations about cost at the first appointment and each visit after, clients find they can walk the lifetime care path with confidence. Think of it as providing financial care for clients.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE LOVE

Easing the financial stress associated with the cost of pet care helps shift the focus of veterinary visits to the most important thing: the love between pet and human. After all, the Pet Lifetime of Care Study reveals that:

- 7 out of 10 pet owners see their pet as a member of the family.¹

As a steward of this special relationship, you become a trusted partner who wants the best for your clients and their pets—whether that's providing treatment options, offering payment solutions, or simply lending a listening ear. Once clients discover they don't have to stress out over unexpected costs, they realize they're equipped to decide their best care option at each step of the journey.

For more insights from the Pet Lifetime of Care Study, visit petlifetimeofcare.com.

¹Pet - Lifetime of Care Study, August 2021, petlifetimeofcare.com.

*Includes initial costs, spaying/neutering, technology costs, and end-of-life expense (high). Low end of range does not include health insurance, wellness plans, or other non-basic expenses. Amounts have been rounded.

**Does not include health insurance, wellness plans, spaying/neutering, technology purchases or initial costs. Low end of range does not include other non-basic expenses.



Bizzy's got your back in cost conversations

Bizzy is all about easy cost convos! This feline influencer and vet team champion has seen for herself how cost stress can affect everyone. (Check out page 2 to find out more about Bizzy.) To help put some chill into the financial relationship, Bizzy has these tips:

1. Make your custom QR code “speak” for you!

Clients want to know that you understand their financial concerns, and introducing them to financing options early on is a great way to address potential worries up front. With a custom link that lets them learn about CareCredit, they'll “hear” how you help make care accessible—without you saying a word!

2. Proactive communication eases conversation.

When pet parents are financially prepared for a *lifetime of care*, everyone can be less stressed about cost! Share about financing options in multiple ways to help them be ready: Text or email your custom link while clients wait, add it to appointment reminders and your website, and place Bizzy QR stickers around the practice.

3. Work on words that work!

Learning to speak “pet owner” helps clients understand how wellness care keeps their pets in tiptop shape. Get more fluent by visiting avma.org/languageofcare.

“
Clients want
to know that you
understand their
financial concerns
”

UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF PET OWNERSHIP

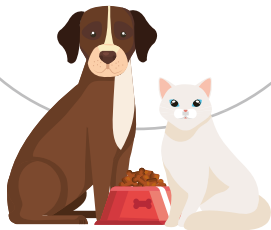


According to the Synchrony Lifetime of Care Study, seven out of ten pet parents consider their pets as members of the family, yet nearly half underestimated the lifetime cost of care.

KEY FINDINGS ALSO INCLUDE:

7 out of 10

pet owners see a pet as a family member or child



45%

of dog owners and

38%

of cat owners originally thought they were ready for pet expenses, but were not



The 15-year cost of a Lifetime of Care for pets

CAT

\$15k
TO
\$45k*

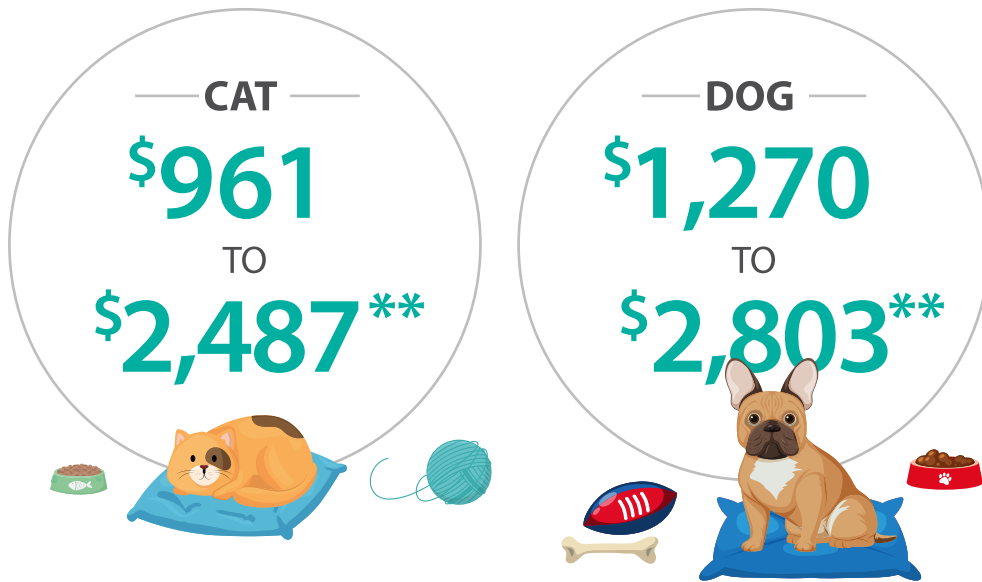


DOG

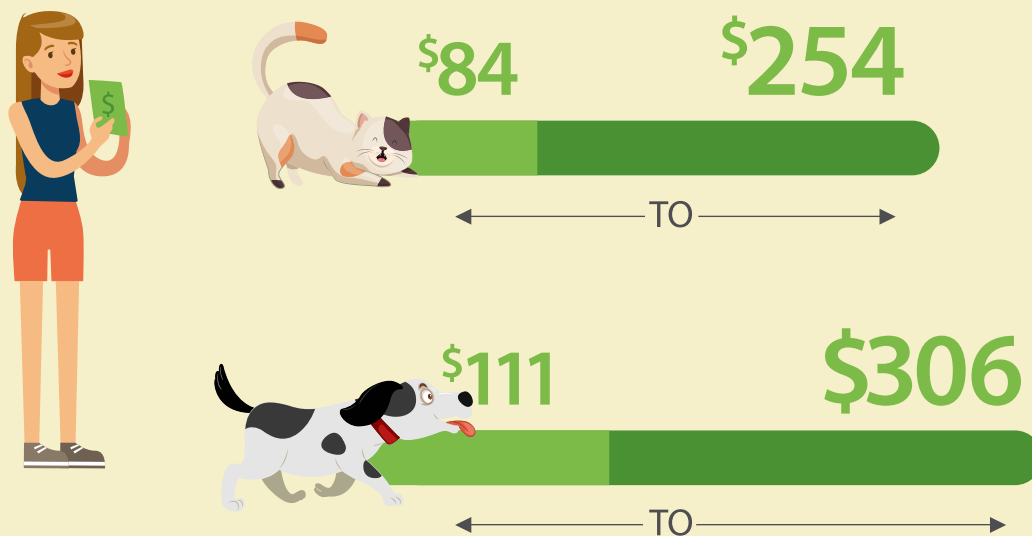
\$19.8k
TO
\$55k*

*Includes initial costs, spaying/neutering, technology costs, and end-of-life expense (high). Low end of range does not include health insurance, wellness plans, or other non-basic expenses. Amounts have been rounded.

One-year cost of pet ownership



Average monthly cost of pet ownership



PetLifetimeofCare.com

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**Does not include health insurance, wellness plans, spaying/neutering, technology purchases or initial costs. Low end of range does not include other non-basic expenses.

Learning how to speak “pet owner” enhances the value of regular care

According to a language-focused research study spearheaded by the AVMA, what you say to your clients—right down to specific words and phrases—matters. A lot.

A nationwide study, *Language That Works: Changing the Way We Talk About Veterinary Care*, shows that a fundamental shift in the way veterinary teams communicate can significantly influence pet owner perceptions about the value and importance of regular veterinary care. Study results are now available in a new ebook, the first in an AVMA library of Language of Veterinary Care resources, made possible in part by educational funding from CareCredit and Pets Best Pet Health Insurance.

What pet owners want to hear

The study revealed pet owners may say they rely on veterinary medicine to keep up with their pet’s care, but they also admit they don’t always bring their pets in for regular checkups.

When asked what they value from their veterinarian, three main things topped the list:

- Expertise
- A strong relationship
- Personalized recommendations

Of anything a veterinarian could offer, personalized recommendations stood out as the most valuable to pet owners. This quality differentiates vets from sources that provide generic support. Pet owners also say that when their veterinarian first takes the time to get to know them and their pet, it makes recommendations seem more personal and credible.

Which word works best?

41% of pet owners chose “checkups” as the best way to talk about wellness visits.¹

41% Checkups
31% Wellness visits
24% Visits
4% Appointments

Start with language that’s reassuring

Pet owners know that preventive care is good for their pets’ long-term health but they don’t want to be told it’s their responsibility. (This kind of talk just makes them feel criticized.) **They prefer to focus on the relationship they have with their pets.** A good place to start is to simply tell them that regular checkups are a great way for you to learn more about them and their pet. Routine exams can also help identify (even avoid) problems early. And, according to the study, this is the time to assure your clients they can always turn to you and your team for recommendations tailored to their pet.

Talk about the elephant in the room

What’s the first thing pet owners associate with veterinary care? The answer is “money.” The research revealed pet owners typically don’t budget for



veterinary care and may not be aware of payment options. They also appreciate it when their veterinarian shows empathy about the cost of care and provides options to help them pay. It makes them feel like the vet is on their side.

Mention solutions that can help

If clients have concerns about cost, one way to respond is to tell them you have options to help make payment easier for the care you're recommending.

One leading option is the CareCredit credit card, a flexible financing solution that's accepted at more than 25,000 veterinary locations. With CareCredit, clients have a way to fit pet care into their budget and pay over time.*

CareCredit can also be used with Pets Best Pet Health Insurance to help clients be financially prepared for the care you recommend at every stage of a pet's life.

Most valuable thing a vet offers?

More than half of respondents said "personalized recommendations."¹

53% Recommendations

33% Advice

13% Guidance

13% Answers

7% Insight

It's easy to get started. Just call 844-812-8111 and mention code VCAND0124VA.

Already enrolled? For more information about the Language of Care, visit avma.org/languageofcare.

For more details about CareCredit or Pets Best, visit carecredit.com/vetinsights.



¹Language That Works: Changing The Way We Talk About Veterinary Care, AVMA. Made possible in part by educational funding from partners CareCredit & Pets Best. *Subject to credit approval. See carecredit.com for details.

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SAY WHAT?!

5 STATEMENTS THAT TRIGGER CLIENTS

—and what to say instead

Findings from the AVMA Language of Veterinary Care study can lead to happier, more effective conversations with clients—especially when it comes to discussions about costs.

Whether you think of yourself as a world-class client communicator or someone who speaks “dog” better than “human,” chances are you’ve had at least a few tricky discussions in the exam room or at the front desk with a pet owner who’s unhappy with your estimated cost of care. Navigating conversations about cost can be especially challenging—after all, it’s one of the primary reasons pet owners avoid seeking veterinary care.¹

It turns out that some of the things doctors and team members say to try to show the value of their services can do more harm than good. The AVMA Language of Veterinary Care study uncovered the language that works best when encouraging pet owners to prioritize regular veterinary visits. The results might surprise you.¹

Take a look at these five statements that often cause clients to feel defensive or frustrated. Have you used any of them? If so, it’s time to consider a more effective approach.

TRIGGERING STATEMENT: *Veterinary care is a responsibility that comes along with being a pet owner.*

What clients think: *That tone is kind of judgmental. I feel like I’m being scolded.*

Statements like this can make a pet owner feel judged, and no one likes to feel like they’re being reprimanded. Participants in the Language of Veterinary Care study responded much more warmly to a relational approach. Veterinarians who emphasize getting to know their clients and patients by way of regular visits are more likely to make a positive connection.

What to say instead: *Regular checkups let us build a strong relationship with you and your pet.*



TRIGGERING STATEMENT: *When it comes to protecting your pet's health, no one is more committed or better-equipped than a veterinarian.*

What clients think: *My trainer, dog walker, groomer and doggie daycare manager are a big part of my pet's life. It takes a village!*

The idea that veterinary professionals are the only ones qualified to help pets can be a turnoff to clients. They value the input they receive elsewhere, as well as their relationships with other pet care professionals, even if you might question the advice they're getting.

To set your expertise apart, focus on your experience rather than your training and education—that's what pet owners find truly special. They especially seem to appreciate hearing about your experience with different species and conditions.

What to say instead: *I see hundreds of animals of all shapes, sizes and breeds. I'm able to make recommendations based on my experience.*

TRIGGERING STATEMENT: *If we can't meet your budget, we're always willing to refer you to a lower-cost clinic.*

What clients think: *You think I'm not good enough for your practice. You're judging me.*

The suggestion of a referral for more affordable care makes many clients feel inferior—like they're not classy enough for your clinic because they don't have enough money. They chose you for a reason, and even if they can't accept your complete recommendation, they don't want to go anywhere else.

A clear finding from the Language of Veterinary Care study was that pet owners don't realize they can discuss financial concerns with their veterinary team. Not surprisingly, if they don't know they can, they won't! Make the first move and invite your clients to ask questions about cost.

They also tend not to know that veterinary care (or how they pay for it) can be personalized according to what they can afford. So let clients know there are options when it comes to affordability of care—the word options was found to resonate strongly.

What to say instead: *We're committed to finding a solution that works for you. We offer flexible treatment and financing options to fit your budget.*

TRIGGERING STATEMENT: *Wellness visits for your pet are like scheduled immunizations for your baby.*

What clients think: *I love my pet, but a baby and a pet are not the same thing.*

Though many pet owners love their pets like family, they push back on direct parallels that suggest pets need the exact same care as a human being. It's definitely good to acknowledge the special place a pet holds in the family—just don't take the comparison too far.

What does click with clients is a reminder that pets can't speak for themselves or ask for help, which means pet owners must be their advocates.

What to say instead: *Pets can't communicate about how they feel, and they tend to hide illness, so it's important to check their health regularly.*

TRIGGERING STATEMENT: *Skipping visits to the vet can leave your pet vulnerable; we need to catch problems before they become deadly.*

What clients think: *You're just trying to scare me into spending more money.*

Participants in the Language of Veterinary Care study had a negative reaction to words like *vulnerable* and *deadly*, believing worst-case-scenario language was a thinly veiled hard sell designed to get them to spend more. They responded much more favorably to a personal approach that emphasized the positive impact of preventive care on their pet's long-term health.

They also appreciated hearing examples of avoidable conditions like rabies and heartworms, as well as potential underlying issues like kidney disease and arthritis, saying these specifics made the communication feel more personal and relatable.

What to say instead: *Pets need checkups to get vaccines and prevent illness, and they give you a chance to ask questions about your pet's health.*

TRIGGERING TRUST

At its most fundamental level, effective communication is about *relationships* rather than *value*. And the best relationships are highly personal. Help your clients recognize you're learning more about them and their pet with every visit so you can provide personalized recommendations—and you'll work with them to get their pet the care it needs. Try out a few of these communication shifts during your next appointment. You might find yourself speaking “human” better than ever!



Reference

¹Language That Works: Changing The Way We Talk About Veterinary Care, AVMA. Made possible in part by educational funding from partners CareCredit & Pets Best.

Learn more about the Language of Care study at avma.org/languageofcare.



Purrs and chirps: More client communication tidbits from Bizzy

With the CareCredit financing experience, your practice team can communicate that they provide friendly financing options.

Clients will “hear” that your practice cares about making care accessible—without saying a word.

Here are the pet-owner-pleasing statements from the AVMA Language of Veterinary Care Study that Bizzy loves the most—and has heard in action! (see page 4 for the lowdown on Bizzy, the feline influencer who supports veterinary teams). Take them for a spin today!

Flexible: “There may be more than one treatment, medication or procedure that can provide a good result for your pet.”

Helpful: “Our veterinary practice can help you with financing options and other financial tools to afford veterinary care.”

Empathetic: “Veterinary care is expensive, and it’s often a reason even the most loving of pet owners have to make difficult decisions around what they can and can’t afford.”

Personal: “We can provide you with personalized recommendations for anything related to your pet’s care—from vaccines and medications to nutrition and behavior.”

Nonjudgmental: “No matter when your last visit was, your veterinarian can help you catch up on your pet’s healthcare needs.”

Not yet enrolled? Call 844-812-8111 or visit carecredit.com/vetenroll.



Learning to speak “pet owner”

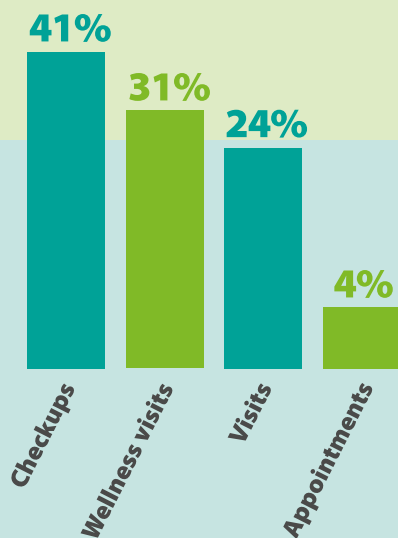
A new AVMA nationwide study, *Language That Works: Changing the Way We Talk About Veterinary Care*,

reveals the words veterinary teams should (and shouldn't) use when talking with pet owners. Changing how you talk to clients can help them better understand the value of preventive care and lead to healthier pets.



Let's talk about checkups

The term “checkups” resonates most with pet owners. In the study,¹ 41% of owners chose “checkups” as the best way to talk about wellness visits.

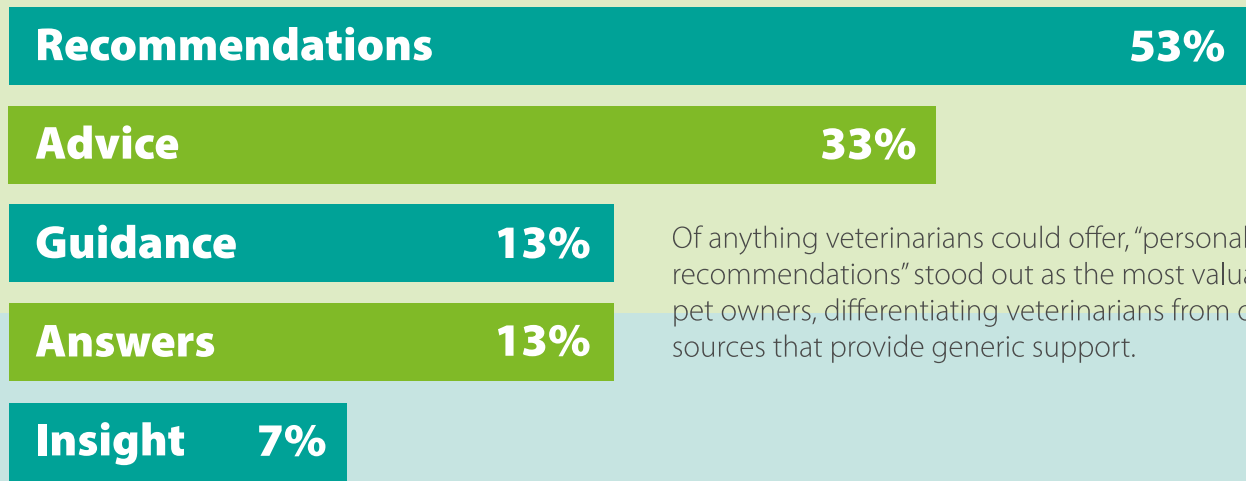


Building client relationships

Pet owners want a strong relationship with their veterinarian. To clients, the word “relationship” signals the vet is trustworthy, will make their pet feel comfortable, and goes out of the way to provide personalized service.



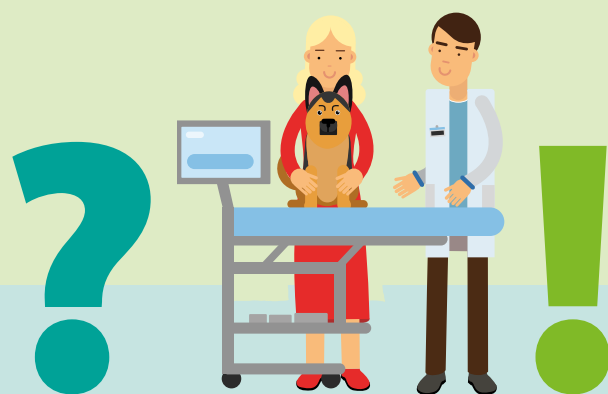
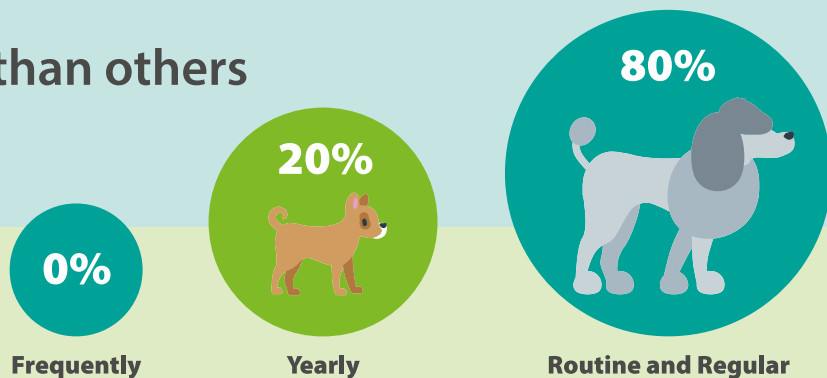
What do pet owners want to hear?



Of anything veterinarians could offer, “personalized recommendations” stood out as the most valuable to pet owners, differentiating veterinarians from other sources that provide generic support.

Some words work better than others

How do you discuss the need for frequent checkups? Most owners (80%) chose the words “routine” and “regular” as the best way to promote consistent preventive care without being overbearing.



What more did they say?

Find the answers in a new ebook, the first in an AVMA library of Language of Veterinary Care resources, made possible in part by educational funding from CareCredit and Pets Best Pet Health Insurance. Visit avma.org/languageofcare.

Get started with CareCredit and talk to your clients about a budget-friendly solution. It's easy to apply to enroll. Just call us at **844-812-8111**.

For more information about CareCredit and Pets Best, visit carecredit.com/vetinsights.



¹ Language That Works: Changing The Way We Talk About Veterinary Care, AVMA. Made possible in part by educational funding from partners CareCredit & Pets Best.

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BIZZY TIPS: HOW TO TURN AROUND a bad moment (or day!) at work



Check out these bite-size treats that help you practice moments of self-care and compassion—and even fun—during your busy days at work.

From her catbird seat in a busy veterinary clinic, Bizzy—the feline influencer and clinic cat helping CareCredit support and empower veterinary teams—has seen the bad moments and sometimes bad days with clients. She’s witnessed team members’ stress and felt their fatigue. And she wants to help them turn things around!

So she put together this collection of Bizzy Tips. Each one is designed to offer you a brain break in the midst of a demanding day in the veterinary clinic, whether it’s a moment of zen or a belly laugh you need most.

Pick one tip or several, follow the prompts, and see if you don’t feel better afterward. And don’t miss the Bizzy Bonuses—these financial solutions are *purr*-fect for your busy team. (So, just who is Bizzy exactly? See Page 2 to find out.)

Listen to your favorite music



Music can literally change your state of mind by increasing alpha waves in the brain.¹ If you feel like you're on the last of your nine lives, fire up your favorite playlist. Listen in private or play over the break room speakers to share your sanity moment with others.

Bizzy Bonus: With your clients spending up to \$55K over the course of their pet's life,² budget-friendly financing options will be music to their ears.

Watch funny cat videos



You know you've let out a few side-splitting howls while watching feline goofiness online. In fact, cat videos can boost productivity. So the next time you have five minutes between tasks, head to your favorite online animal antics destination and take an efficiency break.

Cuddle a patient or clinic cat



Even on the craziest days, a major upside is that you're surrounded by animals. So take advantage! Soft fur, a warm belly, kind eyes, an affectionate nuzzle ... there's no limit to how these can help your sense of well-being.

Bizzy Bonus: Bonding with a patient can mean a more personalized connection with its owner—something clients are looking for.³

Savor a cup of coffee or tea



Whether your choice is Italian roast, oolong or organic chamomile, prepare a warm brew to sip in a quiet corner. (Bizzy's request—a touch of cream, please!) A few serene moments may be just what you need to push "reset" on a chaotic day.

Do 10 jumping jacks



Bust out this calisthenics move to raise your heart rate, discharge some stress, and feel more light on your feet. Even better, get a few folks to join in! You'll be surprised how hard it is not to laugh, which will instantly make you all feel better.



Eat the frog



Mark Twain once said, "If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first." Translation? Tackle the ugliest task on your to-do list, and your day will instantly improve.

(No frogs were harmed in the making of this Bizzy Tip.)

Do these 3 YOGA MOVES

Channel your feline flexibility as you hold these stretches, breathing in ... then out. Feel your muscles relax.

- Chair twist
- Standing side bend
- Standing forward fold

Practice box breathing

Ever watch a sleeping cat and felt envious of those deep, slow breaths? You may not have time for a catnap, but you can still achieve a state of calm with this technique.

- Breathe in for four counts.
- Exhale for four counts.
- Hold for four counts.
- Repeat four times.

Bizzy Bonus: If a client stresses over an invoice, which can happen with a bill of even \$100,² practice this move. You'll clear your own mind so you can help your client with financing options.

Tell (or request) a joke

Doesn't matter if it's corny—in fact, dad jokes are having a moment! Chances are one joke will lead to another, and soon enough the silliness will chase away the busy-day blues.

Q: Why don't cats play poker?
A: Too many cheetahs.



Do something nice for someone else

Kindness, according to the experts at Mayo Clinic, has been shown to increase self-esteem, empathy and compassion, as well as boost mood. It can also lower blood pressure and cortisol, which directly influences stress levels.⁴ Not only will your act of clinic kindness improve your day (and someone else's)—it just may help you live longer!

Bizzy Bonus: You may not think about having “the money talk” as an act of kindness, but clients want to

have this conversation. They'd rather discuss the cost of care up front with you than be surprised at the end of the visit.³

Take a lap around the building

When you're feeling the pressure, take a quick walk outside. The quick burst of physical activity discharges stress hormones, and seeing a peek of nature—sky, sun, grass, dog-pee-resistant shrubbery—can help you regain a sense of perspective.

Eat a healthy meal



The right nutrients in the right portions are not just good for your body; they can feed your spirit too. It's easy to head for the drive-through on a busy day, but pausing to figure out a healthy lunch can set the stage for a great afternoon. If it's not possible during the workday, try for an extra-nutritious evening meal.



Call a friend or loved one

Sometimes just hearing the voice (or bark) of someone who loves us is all it takes to reverse a downward emotional spiral. Plus, talking about our problems gets them out in the open, where they seem less foreboding and more manageable.

Eat some chocolate



There's a reason we crave sweets when we're stressed—sugar boosts feel-good chemicals in the brain. Bonus: chocolate boasts additional mood-elevating properties that can soothe a rattled nervous system. So go ahead and treat your mind to a tasty bite.

Bizzy hopes these tips give you and your team the boost they need to not only navigate your hectic life in veterinary practice but also put a positive spin on cost conversations. After all, there is no one more awesome than a veterinary professional, and you deserve to have your days be as fun-filled and relaxing as they can possibly be.

Go to bizzy.carecreditvirtual.com to download Bizzy's Turn It Around Cards. Not enrolled?

Get started at carecredit.com/vetenroll.

References

¹A. De la Torre-Luque, C. Díaz-Piedra, G. Buela-Casal, "Effects of Preferred Relaxing Music After Acute Stress Exposure: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Psychology of Music* 45, no. 6 (2017): 1-19.

²Pet - Lifetime of Care Study, August 2021, www.petlifetimeofcare.com.

³Language That Works: Changing The Way We Talk About Veterinary Care, AVMA. Made possible in part by educational funding from partners CareCredit & Pets Best.

⁴Steve Siegle, "The Art of Kindness," Mayo Clinic Health System, May 29, 2020, www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-art-of-kindness.

Read through uplifting notes from clients

Open that drawer full of thank-you notes or stop by the bulletin board of gratitude. Then take a few minutes to read through these reminders that what you do makes a difference to pets and the people who love them.

Bizzy Bonus: Clients appreciate being prepared for care. With 45% of dog owners and 38% of cat owners admitting they weren't ready for pet expenses (even though they thought they were),² a little preparation can go a long way! Share the benefits of pet insurance and financing options before there's a crisis, so clients are ready for a *lifetime of care*.

Journal



Whether you use a fountain pen on parchment, scribble in a steno pad, or click away on your laptop, journaling is a great way to impose order on internal chaos. Write out your problem, examine why it bothers you, and list steps you could take to resolve it. Even five minutes of word therapy will provide a refresh and reset.

VET CANDY @NGRATULATES
WINNER OF OUR

2023 DESIGN & INNOVATION AWARD

Vetique

by Melinda Dawn



Taking our beloved pets to the veterinary clinic can be quite stressful – and not just for them but for us too. Fortunately for the pets of Chicago, Vetique has solved some of this stress for us.

Just like how we can visit our local beauty salon for pampering and relaxation, a trip to the veterinary clinic can feel like that too! And not just for us, but our pets can be pampered and spoiled too!

Vetique is a veterinary clinic in Chicago with a design like no other. From chandeliers in the hallways to a fully stocked bar. Vetique knows what their customers want and they designed their clinic around that.

Yes, they provide full veterinary services, but with a twist—a pampered experience for both pet and pet parent!

GOLDEN ACCENTS

Gold sparkle epoxy—Vetique floors are a constant reminder to never let anyone dull your sparkle! ;)

How Is Vetique Different?

Dr. Remnes and Dr. Trice aim to shake up the veterinary care industry. Instead of a stressful experience, they want their clients to have a chic and luxurious one. Pet parents should be able to sit back and relax with a complimentary glass of wine while their pet is being cared for. The surroundings have lovingly been designed so you feel more like you're at a fancy restaurant or spa rather than a medical setting.

Vetique's wine bar and sustainable, clean-crafted selection of wines from Scout & Cellar. Our favorite feature about the wines are our unique branded wine labels. We have the following selections available at our in-clinic bar: Pinot Meow, Caternet, Ruff Day Rose, Pawsecco, Sauvignon Bark.

Who Owns Vetique?

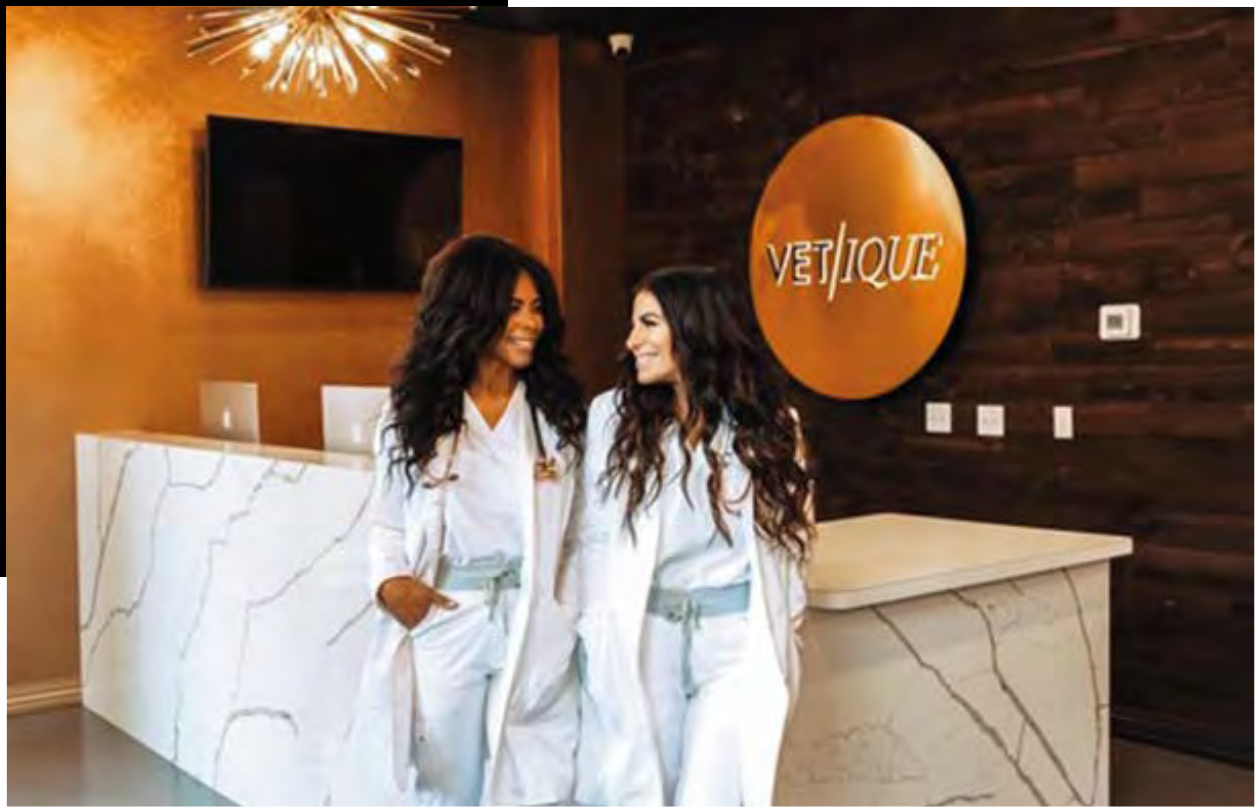
Vetique is fully female-owned by two best friends, Dr. Jennifer Remnes, and Dr. Jessica Trice. These two female bosses have the sweetest dispositions and have hired the best team for the clinic. Expect to be happily greeted by staff when you enter the beautifully designed clinic. By the time their clients leave, they feel like they have just made best friends with everyone.



SPA VIBES

Vetique has a Hotel Collection scent diffuser (the clinic smells just like the 1 Hotel in Miami Beach!). The diffuser emits crisp, woody notes in the sophisticated "My Way" scent.

It's infused with an exquisite combination of Tuscan leather, lush sandalwood and oud wood. The My Way reed diffuser adds a breath of luxury and opulence to the space!



Why Vetique is Being Honored for This Award

Vet Candy's Design and Innovation Award was created to celebrate veterinary professionals that disrupt the status quo and make change for the better. Vet Candy selected Vetique, because of not only its unique interior that you'd never guess was for veterinary services, but also because of the care they provide to pet and pet parents. Before the clinic opened, great care was spent with the architects in designing the perfect space, including a front reception area with wine bar, washrooms, and examination and surgical rooms that look more like a posh salon.

PERSONAL TOUCHES

Each exam room is dedicated to pets that inspired the vision for Vetique. These portraits were created by Perkie Prints, a small female-founded business!

Whether you decide to relax with a glass of wine, or simply sit on the comfortable couch and view the intricate details of the walls and interior design, you'll agree that this is the most beautiful and caring veterinary clinic on the planet that has combined innovation with reliable veterinary care.

Want to see more? Take a tour of Vetique on myvetcandy.com!



OUR FIVE FAVORITE FEATURES OF VETIQUE

by Dr. Jill Lopez

Gold sparkle epoxy - the floors are a constant reminder to never let anyone dull your sparkle!

1. Personal heart pet portraits + named exam rooms - each exam room is dedicated to pets that inspired their vision for Vetique. These portraits were created by Perkie Prints, a small female-founded business!

- * "Kolby & Shamrock" - Dr. Jen's childhood pets, this is our geriatric and comfort room, as well as integrative care
- * "Mariah Carey" - Dr. Jess's heart cat and our feline-friendly room
- * "Nutmeg" - Dr. Jen's heart dog
- * "Ophelia" - Dr. Jen's current rescue
- * "Giuseppe" - Dr. Jen's current rescue
- * "Georgina & Gelato" - Dr. Jess's current kitties

2. Vetique wine bar and sustainable, clean-crafted selection of wines from Scout & Cellar. Our favorite feature about the wines are their unique branded wine labels. They have the following selections available at their in-clinic bar: Pinot Meow, Caternet, Ruff Day Rose, Pawsecco, Sauvignon Bark.

3. Spa Vibes - Vetique has a Hotel Collection scent diffuser system so their clinic smells just like the 1 Hotel in Miami Beach. The diffuser emits crisp, woody notes in the sophisticated "My Way" scent. It's infused with an exquisite combination of Tuscan leather, lush sandalwood and oud wood. The My Way reed diffuser adds a breath of luxury and opulence to the space!

4. Speaking of great scents, they also offer each client a lavender scented heated neck warmer and a hot or cool essential oil infused refreshing towel upon entry!

5. Their Puparazzi Wall - Vetique has a feature wall located on the main floor for clients and patients to take fun pictures. This design features branded Vetique icons. The mural was hand created by a friend, artist, and fellow healthcare worker, Jackie Camarado, of the Riot Healers, another female founded biz!



WINNER OF OUR
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VETIQUE

How to Work With Friends

Navigating Personal Relationships in the Workplace



by Shauna Simmons

Whether you are meeting new people on the job, or starting a new work adventure with an old pal, it's okay to work with your friends. In fact, maintaining friendships at work can be very rewarding to an individual's quality of life. With proper communication and boundaries, working with your friends can contribute to a healthy work-life balance.

Communication is Non-negotiable

It's important to have healthy communication in any work environment, but it's especially important among work friends. This is because how you treat co-workers isn't the same way you would treat your friends, and so when you have work friends, it's important to communicate boundaries. This may mean conversations about what you are comfortable bringing to the workplace, and what topics you would rather not have brought up at the office.

It also means understanding that people may have different personas at work. People tend to develop work identities over time. So healthy communication might involve expressing those different identities openly at the appropriate times. For example, some people may seem more detached at work simply because it helps them maintain professionalism. They might be cordial with friends at work, but be more limited in personal conversation.

Balance is Key

Ultimately, balance is the most important aspect of having work friends. With an open mind, you will be able to navigate work friendships over time and decide what you are most comfortable with. Balance also means remembering that your friends are outside of work too. Be sure to spend quality time together to help maintain a work-life balance. It's easy to get sucked into the responsibilities of the job and forget that you know each other in your personal lives too. This especially goes for those who tend to set more strict boundaries with friends at work.

It's also important to note that not all work friendships are the same. As you learn to build healthy boundaries, you can tailor those boundaries to the people you are comfortable with. This just means you might share more free time and conversation with different people inside and outside of work. Working with friends means lots of communication and boundary-setting, but it can be a very rewarding experience to have friends at work.



Secrets to making your customers happy

by Shauna Simmons

The experience a business provides its customers is reflected in its reputation. Failing to show respect and cater to your customer's needs could harm a veterinary clinic's reputation and success. This could potentially lead to a loss of service over time. With healthy communication and good service, you can expect just the opposite. That's why it is so important to maintain a practice that values the customer's comfort and well-being.

Be Cordial and Personable

Never underestimate the power of eye contact during communication. When it's time to explain something, do so in a way your customers can understand as people who are not veterinary professionals. Simply taking a moment to translate any difficult terminology, process, or procedure beforehand can be very meaningful to your customers. They tend to notice more welcoming behavior like this, and that helps create a healthy reputation for your practice. This encourages new business and promotes a healthy atmosphere for customers and veterinary workers alike.

Happy Customers Means a Healthy Business

Everyone dreams of job security and a healthy work environment. Taking the time to provide quality veterinary care to clients reinforces the business as a whole. This means a steady flow of new and returning clients looking for veterinary services. When a business is booming employees can relax and focus on sustaining rather than building. It's much easier to maintain a flow than it is to work through building new client relationships. Quality customer care is a great way to reinforce consistent job productivity and security.

A good customer experience has a positive impact on business and reputation. A business that takes the time to provide quality customer experiences is sure to see a positive impact over time.

VETS! Tired of the
same old **CE?**



*vet
candy*

**Stream anytime,
anywhere**



Five fun things to do with your BFF

There are always new options for ways to spend time with your BFF. On the off chance that you've run empty with ideas, here are a few things that are especially fun to do with your BFF.

1. Travel Together

Planning and going on a trip with your BFF can be one of the best experiences. You can go on a road trip together, fly overseas, or plan a backpacking trip to your favorite destination. Try new food together, go sightseeing together, and share the same fulfilling travel experiences.

2. Learn A New Skill Together

Whether you want to learn a new language or craft, pick something together and join a class for that thing. The memories you create together will be unforgettable.

3. Host a Dinner Party

You and your BFF can host a dinner party together for a small group of friends. You can come up with a funny theme together, and plan out what food will be served. If you want to be extra creative, you can do something like murder-mystery night. You can host a dinner where you and your friends try to solve a mystery puzzle.

4. Read a Book Together

You can get creative with this option if you want to. You can choose a novel, comic book, cooking book, poetry book, or any other topic you prefer. Read the book together and discuss what you take away from each chapter. Once you complete one, move on to find another!

5. Play a Game or Do a Puzzle Together

Playing games and putting together puzzles are great ways to pass time. With technology today you have so many different options to choose from. If you own a gaming system, you can choose a two-player game to play with your BFF. You can find a board game you both enjoy or hunt for a puzzle with an image you want to construct together. These are great ways to continue building your BFF bond and share a laugh or two along the way.

Spending time with your BFF is always a great way to relieve some stress and relax. Whether you need a change of scenery or just a spark of joy in your life, you and your BFF will never run out of things to do together.

Are you losing *your best clients?*

By Dr. Jill Lopez



Ask any customer why they left their old clinic for a new one, and you'll often hear a story that boils down to customer service issues. While it's possible their veterinarian retired, or they were referred to you for specialist care, the odds are better that the customer felt service was too poor at their old office.

The good news is, you can improve your customer retention rate and attract new customers by providing incredible customer service. Happy customers are loyal customers, and are often the quickest to spread your name through word of mouth as well. A happy customer advocating for your clinic is worth more than any advertising campaign you could possibly put together.

Create a customer experience plan

What do you want your customer to see and experience when they come into your clinic? You want them to get checked in quickly, to feel comfortable in the waiting room, to be brought to a room quickly, and to get premium health care for their pet.

You might change the reception area so that more shy or boisterous dogs can have a location to get away from the rest of the waiting area, or provide a small cell phone charging station in case people need to call home and don't have enough battery.

Thinking about your customer every step of the way can help pave the way for a better experience for them.

Improve connections

Visiting the veterinarian's office is often an emotional time for clients. They may have to make tough financial choices, say good-bye to an old friend, or deal with their beloved pet's medical emergency. How you handle both these tough times, and more joyous occasions, such as a new puppy exam, can make a big difference in how they perceive your medical office.

Showing sympathy to people who have lost a beloved pet, or having financing options available to help with vet fees, can make a big difference in how people perceive your clinic.

Not all clients will be kind to you, especially when they're already struggling with difficult emotional circumstances. Putting yourself in their shoes and finding ways to make their lives easier can really make a difference in how they see you.

Pay attention to customer feedback

When customers leave feedback, it should be taken seriously. Most customers expect to receive some sort of reply, and to get one within a week. What can elevate your feedback response from good to amazing however, is to be able to give a reply immediately.

Try offering a real time chat window where customers can leave their compliment or complaint, and respond to it as soon as it arrives. This is extremely responsive, and will definitely leave an impression.

Your customers are the life blood of your veterinary office. Without families and their pets, your office will quickly have to close its doors. Keeping them happy and coming back for more great service is an essential part of business, and one all clinics should take seriously.

Five ways to improve your customer's experiences

When veterinary professionals can connect with customers' emotions, the payoff can be huge. In fact, a recent Harvard Business Review article showed that emotionally connected customers are more than twice as valuable as highly satisfied customers.

The customer experience is the most effective way to create an emotional connection. Check out these five ways that you can connect with your customer.



1. Make your client's life easier with self-service. Your customers should be able to easily make appointments or check in online, order refill medication, and get quick answers to common questions.

2. Say no to phone trees and start answering your phone! The fact is that businesses that have their phones answered by a live person outperform businesses that use an auto-attendant. Not only that, 72% of callers who reach an automated answer will hang up without leaving a message. (Source: Consumer Reports)

3. Offer texting as an option for your customer. In fact, texting has now become the the primary way Americans under 50 years of age communicate.

4. Hire and retain excellent staff members. Interpersonal skills, including the ability to connect with your customers and make customers feel special are invaluable employee traits.

5. Don't forget the little things. Does your clinic smell and look clean? Does your staff look professional? Is your team smiling and happy? Is your staff listening and focusing on your customers? Do your customers feel appreciated and welcomed? These simple things are very important to your customers. Make sure their experience is personal and friendly, every time.

Looking for a new BFF?

Here's how to find them!

by Shauna Simmons



Everybody has people in their lives that they love and appreciate, from family to friends, to everyone in between. People you can spend quality free time with and enjoy life how you prefer. Every so often we come across a special caliber of friendship that we can't help but feel all our guards fall away like a river down a waterfall. These are the relationships where laughter inevitably leads to more laughter, and friendship over time becomes a self-proclaimed sisterhood. So whether you are feeling lonely, or just looking for a quality friendship in your life, where do you find a BFF?

Tell a Friend

People tend to gravitate towards relationships with others that complement them. This means having similar personality traits, enjoying similar hobbies, sharing similar tastes in music, and even sharing similar romantic preferences. So if you are on the lookout for new quality relationships, let some of your current family and friends know. I know we have all heard of blind dating, so think of it like that. Let the people who know a bit about you introduce you to other people they know who you might get along with. You never know, you might just meet your next BFF.

Be Intentional

The upside to deciding you want a new BFF is that you can be intentional with who you welcome into your life. While I think we can all appreciate how organic relationships can come out of nowhere, intentional relationships can be just as meaningful, if not more. Friendships are the people we choose to have as a part of our daily life. It's not the same as your parents or another family member that you share blood with. So it would make sense that the best BFF relationships come from intentional choices to care about and cater to another person.

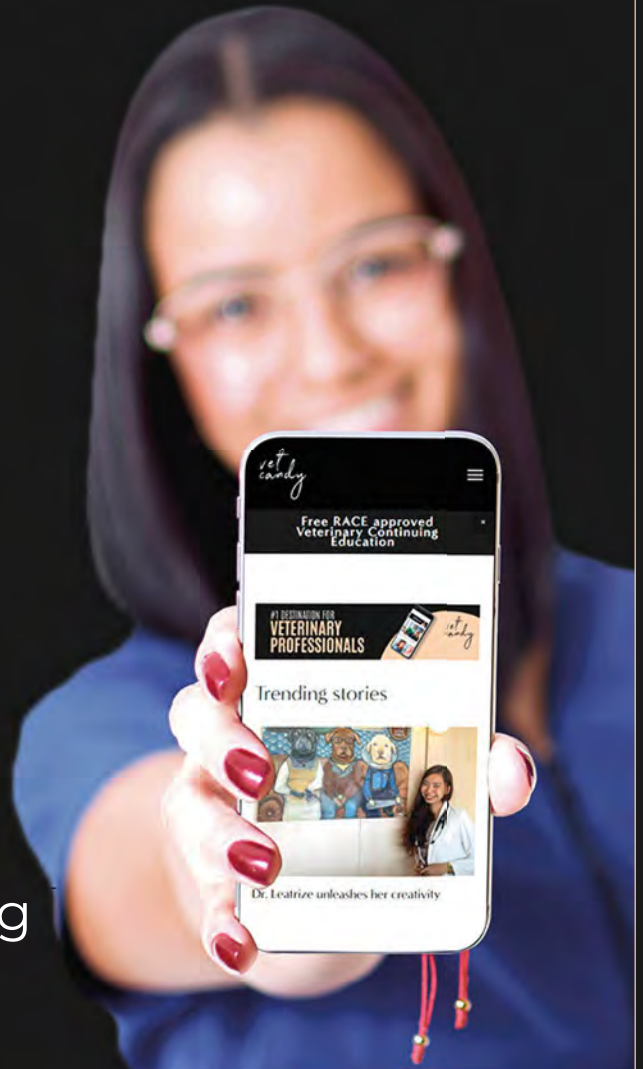
Put Yourself Out There

The best way to meet a new BFF is through the joy of something you love. So while your friends and family can help, sometimes it's best to just get yourself out of your comfort zone. Take up a new hobby, or indulge in a current one, in a way that forces you to connect with new people. There are many ways to make friends and potentially meet your next BFF, but staying within your comfort zone is the last on the list.



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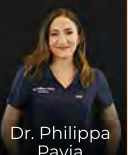
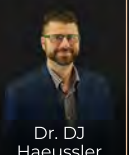

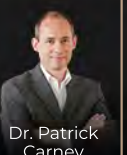
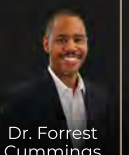
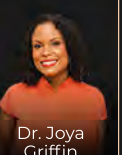
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Available exclusively on myvetcandy.com

Vet Candy Launches Exclusive New Membership Platform for Veterinary *Professionals*

All-in-one platform helps veterinarians invest in themselves as part of the \$130 billion U.S. pet industry

A good veterinarian never stops learning. From expanding their knowledge base of diseases, drugs, case studies, tools, and more, there is no end to the need for quality continuing education. But, let's face it – veterinary teams don't have a lot of free time. Currently, 66% of American households own a pet, with an estimated 23 million new pets since the pandemic. At the same time, the veterinary industry is experiencing an unprecedented shortage of vets, leaving thousands of practices with less free time than ever before. Multiple studies report that veterinarians are experiencing burnout at alarming rates.

Despite the shortage, veterinarians generated 30% of the record-setting \$136.8 billion spent on pets in 2022. It's clear that now is the time to invest in enhancing this industry.

That is why Vet Candy is thrilled to officially announce its new membership platform. Vet Candy membership offers all-in-one access to everything the modern veterinarian wants and needs. This includes exclusive RACE-approved continuing education, a members-only newsletter, a whole year of Vet Candy Magazine, podcasts, tons of just-for-you vet med info, case studies, a visual library of diseases, plus specialist and expert moderated forums. Video continuing education programs are shot in studio in 4K, so with a few clicks, members have access to "Netflix® style" content curated by the leading veterinary experts on the planet.

"Vet Candy is where education meets imagination. On this exclusive platform, vet teams can glean meaningful skills through guidance from outstanding instructors while also remaining engaged among a community of their peers,"

says Dr. Courtney Campbell, Executive Creative Director for Vet Candy, board certified veterinary surgeon, and journalist. "Vet Candy offers high quality and engaging content that you can't find anywhere else, including CE videos, clinical case reviews, podcasts, and well-being enrichment. Teams can stay informed with the latest clinical update, pique their intrigue with a veterinary mystery podcast, or gain critical skills with premium CE videos across a wide variety of disciplines," adds Dr. Campbell, a prior recipient of the Global Pet Expo Award for "Excellence in Journalism and Outstanding Contributions to the Pet Industry."

"Busy vet teams need premium CE at their fingertips. We have found that people focus on high quality and creative content way more than webinars and powerpoints. Vet teams deserve to finally enjoy CE," says Dr. Jill López, veterinarian and CEO of Vet Candy.

On top of that, Vet Candy hopes to address the lack of mentorship in the industry for new veterinarians. "It's no secret that new vet grads lack clinical confidence. Vet schools just weren't able to train new vets as effectively during the pandemic," says Shannon Gregoire, DVM, a recent graduate and veterinarian. In fact, according to the 2022 AVMA Senior Survey, the opportunity for mentorship was the number one reason graduates chose one job over another.

To address the need for quality mentorship in the industry, Vet Candy has partnered with a leading specialty telemedicine platform, Vet On Call Network (VOCN). Lopez says that "VOCN is capturing the U.S. specialty consult market right now with its commitment to quality and Slack-style telemedicine platform." López adds that "Members who post on the forum will be just a click away from having their question answered by a veterinary specialist." Vet Candy's forums will allow members to post questions and answers in reddit-style forums.

"This is an incredible opportunity for VOCN and Vet Candy to help offer mentorship to those vets that need it most," says Dr. Richard Joseph, CEO of VOCN and board-certified veterinary neurologist. "At the same time, this partnership fits perfectly within VOCN's mission to elevate the standard of care across the industry and create a virtual hospital extension at every one of our client's hospitals or clinics." Joseph adds that for complex cases that need an expert's guidance, vets can elevate their inquiry to VOCN's platform for a premium specialty consult. Additionally, Dr. Joseph expressed his appreciation for Vet Candy's outstanding work in producing high quality continuing education and promoting diverse perspectives, which he believes are crucial for the veterinary profession. "Vet Candy creates educational content like no other, they truly make learning fun," says Joseph, "we are looking forward to helping veterinary professionals build their clinical confidence with Vet Candy's exciting new platform."

Continuing education is booming. In fact, according to the U.S. Continuing Education Market - Industry Outlook & Forecast 2023-2028, it's expected to reach a whopping \$93.25 billion by 2028. Together with their partners, Vet Candy is investing in the future of veterinarians everywhere.

Learn more about Vet Candy's all-in-one source of exclusive CE by signing up at myvetcandy.com.



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