

Understanding branding as a companion veterinary practice owner

About The Author

4–5 minutes

Consider these possible places to begin building a brand:

- **Superlatives:** Are you the first, only, or one of very few practices with key services, certifications or practitioners with additional credentials?
- **Pace:** Do you strive for a cozy, laid-back client experience or do you attract clients seeking a fast-paced, high-tech collaboration?
- **Target:** Does your ideal client match certain demographic characteristics — such as Millennials with young families, childless Gen Xers, or retired Baby Boomers? Or do you only treat certain common or exotic species?
- **Hook:** Is there something so uniquely you that no one else can copy? Consider the [musical veterinarian](#) who scored a TV show.

Karen Bolten, DVM, practiced large animal medicine for 10 years before pursuing an MBA and launching [The Business Vet](#). She says branding takes control of the narrative, sets the tone, and connects practices to potential clients. “The thing about branding is that a lot of that relationship is actually built before they even walk in the door,” says Bolton. “Tons of those people learn to trust you before they even meet you,” she says.

What companion veterinary branding is not

“A brand is not a logo, name, or tagline,” says Brogdon. “It is what you stand for and what someone can expect when doing business with you. In short, it's your why and how.”

Branding also isn't trying to be everything to everyone or trying to match competitors step for step. Based on location, facility size, and their mission and values, different practices serve different target markets. Bolten says, "That is another thing that I didn't understand until the very end of when I owned my clinic. I was trying to present myself to everyone as a proper vet for them. And that is a losing strategy."

Justin Phillips, founder of [Practice Made Purrfect](#), adds that "your building may be your most expensive asset ... but don't mistake that for being your brand. It's the care and compassion of the team inside it that influences the decision of whom an owner trusts to care for their furry fam."

Common mistakes

Cheyenne Flerx of [Snout School](#) calls branding a practice's personality. She says practices "share what services they offer and about their facilities and the tech they have. What they forget is that we are in the business of serving people and their pets. So, they forget to convey how they plan on serving pet owners and caring for their client's pets."

Flerx lists these common mistakes:

- Talking only about veterinary technology and not how it helps staff care for pets
- Expecting only the veterinary work clients can see to tell your story
- Thinking that educational content alone creates connections

"People are such visual creatures and crave to see how a service or product performs," Flerx explains. People want to know how you care for pets and do your important work. Otherwise, she says, it's a lost opportunity to connect with clients on a deeper level.

"All this is to say that how you demonstrate how your practice serves clients and provides care to your patients digitally is your practice's brand," Flerx adds.

Branding takes commitment

Creating and establishing a known and effective brand takes time and consistency. It is not a quick fix, but take the time soon to evaluate and update your branding efforts to better implement a distinct companion veterinary practice message about who you are and why you do what you do — express your individuality that no one else can claim. Practices that know their uniqueness and identify, attract, and serve their best clients work within a happier, more sustainable culture.