EMAIL MARKETING FOR
PET AND VETERINARIAN
FOREWORD

“I gave my beauty and my youth to men. I am going to give my wisdom and experience to animals.” – Brigitte Bardot

Household and agricultural animals have a profound impact on society. Domestic animals provide companionship and security to millions of people around the world, and much of our food supply depends on livestock. The industry providing for the feeding, veterinary care and overall wellness of these valuable and cherished animals is widespread and extensive but each pet and veterinarian business unit within this sector is facing increasing competition at a time when the global economy demands greater efficiencies than ever to maintain profitability.

The rapid adoption of innovative and revolutionary mobile Web enabled devices like smartphones, tablets and netbooks has created a new lifestyle where users can be universally connected twenty-four hours a day, triggering a new and exciting era in online promotional communications and email marketing. The ruling is in: meeting the consumer online is the most efficient means of meeting and expanding your customer base.

This guide is intended to provide information to pet/veterinarian business owners and managers about the latest developments in the industry’s email marketing campaign opportunities and discuss how they may become more competitive and profitable by appealing to the new generation of clientele. Look to the future, when every pet and veterinarian business takes advantage of the indisputable power and reach of state of the art email marketing!

– Curt Keller, CEO, Benchmark Email

INTRODUCTION

The information in this guide, Pet & Veterinarian: The Proper Care & Feeding of Your Business through Email Marketing was
assembled to develop an overview on the current condition of email marketing campaigns as implemented by pet and veterinarian business owners and managers, and to help those business owners and managers hone their organization’s online marketing campaigns. The statistics put forth in this guide are intended to assist individual pet and veterinarian businesses magnify their online marketing and promotional efforts with the following techniques:

1. Gaining an overview on how to design and manage an email and social media campaign set up to draw in new customers while maintaining the loyalty of existing clients

2. Breaking down the legal laws and ethics encountered during email marketing activities

3. Identifying critical determinant facts and figures so that an overview may be gained as to the bottom line results of the approaches implemented by other pet and veterinarian business owners and managers around the country

4. Implementing email marketing campaigns tailored for your pet and veterinarian business to gain market share and overcome your competition

Recently published statistical studies were used as the basis for this guide. The owners and managers of pet and veterinarian businesses across North America were surveyed about their business units for this paper’s samplings; statistical content was obtained from all levels of the pet and veterinarian industry and can be reviewed in the Pet and Veterinarian Email Marketing Survey section.

The principal intention of this report is to raise questions pet and veterinarian business owners and managers must ask themselves to gain an understanding about the current state of their own email campaigns.

BACKGROUND

The pet and veterinarian sector is extremely competitive,
with types of stores ranging from the “ma and pa” pet shops to anchor superstores with thousands of square feet in prime retail or mall space. Along with retailers, the industry also includes pet and veterinarian suppliers, warehousers, wholesalers, jobbers, specialty retailers like organic purveyors and pharmaceutical and veterinary equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

The ranges of businesses that make up the pet and veterinarian sector equalize utilization statistics gathered to determine the sector’s results from email and social media marketing. Because the sector spans from small local retail locations and individual practitioner veterinary clinics to national chain stores operated by multinational corporations, the median configuration of email marketing usage is difficult to determined, and thus averaged representatively. Smaller range pet and veterinarian businesses are less likely to utilize email marketing, while other sections of the industry - like national chain stores - tend to use online forms of promotion to a greater degree.

PET & VETERINARIAN BUSINESS EMAIL MARKETING STATISTICS

This manual is informed by a variety of recently published surveys and research studies from leading industry sources. Pet and veterinarian business owners and managers across the United States and Canada were surveyed to obtain data contained within the manual.

Pet & Veterinarian Businesses that Engage in Email Marketing

Forty-four percent of pet and veterinarian businesses report
current engagement in email marketing campaigns, while 35 percent state intentions to launch email marketing campaigns in the future. Twenty-one percent report no intention to engage in future email marketing campaigns. Because the median profiles of the smaller pet and veterinarian business owners and managers indicate more traditional advertising spends, they maybe not be currently aware of the advantages available to them through email marketing. Larger pet and veterinarian retailers, providers and distributors are more likely to utilize email marketing, seeing it as fundamental to their corporate promotional activities.

**Pet & Veterinarian Business Sending Frequency**

Forty percent of pet and veterinarian businesses send emails on a more than monthly basis, while 53 percent send missives monthly. Five percent report communicating with customers online every two months; one percent send emails quarterly; and another one percent sends seasonal or annual communications.

**Pet & Veterinarian Business Content Type**

The content type utilized by pet and veterinarian businesses tends to skew towards a mix of informational and sales content, which accounts for 51 percent of all material from the industry; 34 percent of all content sent is informational only; 15 percent contains sales information exclusively.

**How Pet & Veterinarian Businesses Obtain Email Subscribers**

Subscriber sources for pet and veterinarian businesses tend to be primarily made up of current customers, totaling 54 percent of subscribers. Ten percent result from promotions; 29 percent are Web derived; two percent are purchased and supplied leads; and five percent are garnered through public promotional events.
Typical Pet & Veterinarian Business Email Subscriber List Size

List size for pet and veterinarian businesses skews low: 51 percent of all businesses report less than 500 email addresses on their lists. Thirty percent stated 500 to 1,000, while three percent claimed between 1,000 and 3,000; two percent report between 3,000 and 5,000 subscribers on their email list. Fourteen percent state they have more than 5,000 email subscribers.

Pet & Veterinarian Business List Segments

Segmentation rates in this industry are above average. Fifty-nine percent of business owners and managers state they participated in no list segmentation, while the remaining owners and managers actively segment their subscriber lists.

Email Open Rates for Pet & Veterinarian Business Campaigns

The overall email open rates for the pet and veterinarian industry are elevated. Though 50 percent of business owners and managers did not report their open rates, 17 percent claim a high open rate of between 25 and 40 percent, and 9 percent claim a more than 40 percent open rate. Thirteen percent show a rate between 15 and 25 percent; 11 percent report less than 15 percent of their emails are being opened.

Versus Industry Open Rates

The pet and veterinarian business open rate average of 33.5 percent exceeds overall averages for industry open rates by more than a third.
Pet & Veterinarian Business Subscriber Click-Through Rates

Seventy-three percent of subscribers to pet and veterinarian email marketing campaigns act on the marketer’s call to action. Three percent of business owners and managers claim an excellent click-through rate of more than 15 percent; eight percent state their rate between 10 and 15 percent; 10 percent report between 5 and 10 percent; and six percent show rates of less than five percent.

Versus Industry Click-Through Rates

Overall average industry click-through rates are 4.3 percent for all industries: by comparison, the rate for pet and veterinarian businesses is almost double that median at 7.8 percent.

PET & VETERINARIAN INDUSTRY DISCUSSION

To create a list of all the different types of pet and veterinarian businesses would be next to impossible because of the exceedingly wide range of retail outlets and veterinary ventures in the industry. Veterinarians may specialize in small household animals in urban centers while their more rural peers may only deal with large farm animals; different approaches are necessary to successfully reach these different audiences.

In the case of veterinary clinics located on the outskirts of cities that encompass both suburban and rural territory, email marketing segmentation must be geographically accurate and able to provide specific email content relative to the customer’s location. The suburban dweller most likely has small household animals, while the rural dweller has large farm animals; sending a marketing message to one that is better suited for the other will confuse and alienate sections of your email newsletter subscription list. This is also true for retail outlets: a pet and veterinarian retail business located in a major
Boston mall will offer different merchandise than one located on the side of a highway between Fort Collins, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming. Different stores are going to have a client demographic profile – mostly likely, these two stores do not share a single SKU!

Every customer base contains subgroups of characteristics that determine the types of products they will buy and the most effective incentives to obtain their loyalty and repeat business. The average income in the Frackville, Pennsylvania zip code 17932 is $2,750; yet in Pittsburgh’s zip code 15272 the average income zooms to $229,686. The Pennsylvania pet and veterinarian retailer will find that an online promotional strategy emphasizing economy supplies, bulk pet food purchasing, generic off-brand products and deep discounts will be successful in the former location but may fall flat in the latter.

Tuning the content of your email newsletter campaign to reflect the specifics of your retail location and particular customer profiles is critical to achieving success in any email marketing program. Achieve this refinement by implementing subscriber segmentation efforts; by sectioning your list according to demographic, geographic and behavior based characteristics, you will be able to compile particular content that addresses the preferences and requirements of your customer base.

Once you have identified segments, proceed to determining and implementing incentives for your call to action. The invitation to private events, prize draws, membership in a VIP club that presents specific discounts, unique pet accessories, complimentary visits, sneak peeks at new products or access to other particular facilities or events can be applied as powerful incentives for motivating your email newsletter subscriber.

So how can businesses collect new email addresses? Some of the methods and locations where pet and veterinarian businesses have been successful in gathering new addresses include:

- At agricultural fairs
- At community events
- At dog and cat shows
• At dog parks and beaches
• At parades, farmer’s markets and flea markets
• At sports events
• At the customer service desk through a business card drop
• At veterinary trade shows and expos
• By sponsoring little league and other local teams
• By training staff to ask for the email address in person and on the phone
• From collaborative local businesses in the field of pet as well as animal supply and health
• Via a guestbook
• Via a website signup page

Every email address collected by your pet and veterinarian business must be accompanied by explicit permission from the customer to be placed on your email marketing subscription list. Additional entries will provide you with opportunities to further segment your list and drive sales in your pet and veterinarian business. Whether you are operating a veterinary clinic offering services to small or large animals or running a pet retail operation of any size and location, taking the time to craft a captivating email marketing campaign is your best promotional investment.

PET & VETERINARIAN BUSINESS EMAIL MARKETING GOALS

Your email marketing newsletter campaign should be customized to appeal to every type of pet and veterinarian client, from casual customers who may only be peripherally aware of your operations to dedicated pet owners, breeders and farmers who use your services on a regular basis. By providing precise information to each customer category, you help ensure they will turn to your location first.
Short Term Goals

The short-term goals of an email marketing campaign designed by professionals to meet the requirements of your pet and veterinarian business can produce the following results:

- Competitive advantage over other local pet and veterinarian businesses
- Customer participation in additional sales, events and special occurrences
- Extend online presence and authority
- Find new customers
- Location loyalty
- Location recognition
- Same quarter sales
- Word of mouth

Long Term Goals

Over the long term, pet and veterinarian businesses can expect a fully featured professional email marketing campaign to produce:

- Expansion of customer base
- Facility loyalty
- Gaining local and regional competitive advantage
- Higher traffic for a broader range of products and services
- Increased cooperation from suppliers & related businesses
- Online authority translating to sector market leadership
- Year on year sales

As an experienced pet or veterinarian business owner or manager, you know your overall services may not be obvious to all prospects in your area. They may know your location by viewing your signage, but they may not be aware that you offer the precise types of products and services their pets and family require. They may not know that your clinic offers house calls with extended consultation or has packages for canine RV, DHLPP and Lyme, or feline RV, FIV, FVRCCP and FELV vaccines. If you have a pet retail outlet, your customers may not be aware that - in one handy location - they can have their pets groomed,
Implementation

Email marketing for pet and veterinarian businesses differs radically from placing a listing in the Yellow Pages or running an ad in local newspapers, radio or television. The regulatory requirements for email marketing are far more restrictive and federal law is extremely specific on the procedures all pet or veterinarian business owners and managers must follow.

Compliance

United States federal law dictates that customer data cannot be entered into your subscription email list unless specific permission was obtained from the client. Violation of this legislation is considered a serious crime and carries heavy fines and potential prison sentences.

CAN-SPAM Violations Have Severe Consequences

In the United States of America, the legislation that has jurisdiction over all forms of email marketing is called CAN-SPAM. CAN-SPAM describes the standards of email marketing online activities. The legislation explicitly states that any subscriber should be able to immediately opt out of your list at their very first request. Violations of the CAN-SPAM Act can lead to severe fines and even incarceration.

Unsubscription Facilitation

Your pet or veterinarian business must make it easy for your subscriber to request removal from your systems through a link contained in all of your outgoing email missives. Failure to swiftly and irrevocably honor any type of unsubscription request is a severe violation of federal law and may trigger
extreme legal sanctions against your pet or veterinarian business.

Bouncing Email Control

When your pet or veterinarian business sends out any type of email - whether it is a personal message, a business reply or an email marketing newsletter - one of three results will occur. If the send turns out to be successful (as most emails are), then it will then be delivered with no negative follow-up report. If the send is delayed due to a problem with your customer’s email account or an Internet network issue, then it is called a soft bounce. If email sends cannot be executed due to the address being blocked or unavailable, then it is known as a hard bounce.

When you receive a soft bounce report back from the Web’s Mailer Daemon service, it is advisable to contact the customer through other forms of communication and inform them of the delivery issue. If you receive a hard bounce notice, then you must immediately strike that email address from your subscription list, as resending to a hard bounce email address is a primary identifying characteristic of professional spammers.

Privacy Policy

It is important to have a privacy policy specifically written to suit the precise activities of your company’s online engagements. Copying and pasting from a competitor’s website to your own leaves your business open to legal challenges, which can be expensive to fight in court. Your privacy policy should be written by your pet and veterinarian business lawyer to ensure that it thoroughly covers the entire course of the way your company conducts its online business.

List Segmentation

Email segmentation is by far the best method for focusing your online communications strategy based on the demographic and behavior characteristics of your subscribers. Through
the application of segmentation techniques, you can develop email marketing content that precisely fits the characteristics of your subscriber base and offer the types of discounts, events, products, services, feed, medication, equipment and accessories each group is most likely to be interested in.

**Ongoing Content Testing**

The A/B split is one of the most important tests available to business owners and managers: it allows you to determine how your subscribers respond to varying a number of elements within an email. By changing just a single parameter, such as the preheader or the **subject line** of your emails, and then carefully reviewing the resultant open and click-through rates, you will be able to make a clear determination about customers’ reactions. Analyzing this data will allow you to continue to test and keep refining your email content to make it as powerful and alluring as possible.

**Solicit Your Customer’s Personal Data**

Many customers are recalcitrant to contribute personal data, but online **email surveys** have been repeatedly proven as a highly successful way for pet and veterinarian businesses to obtain this information, as are signup sheets near your main or checkout counter. Pet and veterinary business owners and managers report that incentives work wonders in maximizing the percentage of customers who participate in this critical form of polling.

**Scrutinizing Your Customer’s Behavior Patterns**

The best way to determine the success of your email marketing campaign is through an analysis of the open and click-through rate metrics. Some clients of your business who may be habitual customers who never open your emails; these customers are best deleted from your list. Other subscribers may open and read your emails but perennially fail to respond to the call to action and click-through to your landing pages;
these individuals should not be eliminated from the list because they are actually reading through your email newsletters and may respond in other manners than a click-through, like by showing up for one of your pet events without registering online as your call to action requested. They may also call in for more information or to book their pets for a visit to your location. The most responsive group contains customers who both read and click through to your website pages; these subscribers are the most valuable from an email marketing standpoint.

Best Email Practice

Adopting best email practices for pet and veterinarian businesses will ensure your email marketing newsletter campaign is fine tuned for best returns. Preheaders and subject lines should be meticulously composed, and the various browser and mobile display pixel resolution restrictions should be managed across the board by your email template. Providing multiple landing pages featuring targeted content specific to the segmented outgoing emails will help generate the wide range of data necessary to perform your A/B split tests.

BENCHMARK AS YOUR PET & VETERINARIAN BUSINESS’ EMAIL MARKETING PARTNER

Quickly & Thoroughly Renew Your Email Campaign Strategy

Your pet or veterinarian business will see immediate benefits from your collaboration with the renowned industry professionals at Benchmark Email. Benchmark Email is
widely lauded as one of the top tier email marketing service providers in the United States, and relied upon by over 73,000 satisfied customers. Based on their rock solid foundation in many years of expertise service meeting the requirements of pet and veterinarian businesses all over the country and around the world, Benchmark Email is offering a Pet and Veterinarian Email Marketing Solution that will integrate every element possible to ensure your overall email and social media marketing efforts are achieved.

Return On Investment (ROI) is a key criterion for any business expenditure, and Benchmark Email’s powerful Do It Yourself Web-based solution for pet and veterinarian businesses incorporates a straightforward online interface with the most technologically advanced email marketing and social media promotions available. Engaging your clientele through Benchmark Email’s modern and up to the minute DIY solution allows you to determine what the real bottom line value of email marketing contributes to the success and progress of your business.

Choose to Have Benchmark Email’s Renowned Marketing Pros Do It for You

The experienced pet or veterinarian manager or owner knows when to subcontract tasks to professional, knowledgeable and trusted staff; you might prefer to adopt an autopilot approach to your email promotional campaigns by this critical job to the online marketing professionals at Benchmark Email. Your pet and veterinarian business will witness the beneficial and profitable results by participating in the We Do It for You Full Service Email Marketing offer, where the experts at Benchmark Email carry out all of the functions of your own personal in-house email marketing and communications staff. All you need to do is send in your email newsletter subscription list, along with a definition of the primary campaign elements you wish to emphasize, and the experienced Benchmark Email pros will launch your campaign swiftly and precisely.

The email and social media marketing masters at Benchmark Email will place into action the most highly proven procedures
available to meet and even exceed all of your campaign goals. They will design custom tailored templates containing relevant and striking graphics able to be accurately displayed on every type of PC or mobile monitor - right down to the tiniest smartphone viewscreen. You will find Benchmark Email’s **Real Time Email Reports** extremely easy to understand and a comprehensive way to gain a wide perspective on all the relevant campaign performance metrics. The analysis of these reports allows you to make precise determinations about exactly how your campaign is progressing at any time and your professional online email concierges at Benchmark Email will make sure your pet and veterinarian business is prominently visible on the most popular social networks by publishing on your Facebook Fan Page and even posting your current newsletter links on your own Twitter page.

**INDUSTRY STANDARD FEATURES**

Whether you opt for Benchmark Email’s Do It Yourself or the We Do It for You service, your pet and veterinarian business can derive great benefits from these technologically advanced features:

*Advanced Message Scheduling* – Benchmark Email allows the functionality to schedule your emails for delivery at any time, on any date you prefer. By utilizing highly sophisticated auto-responding functions, Benchmark Email can enable your pet and veterinarian business to set up countdown timers to coincide with any particular occurrences you wish, including the renewal date, an anniversary date or your subscriber’s birthday.

*Comprehensive Video Integration* – Benchmark Email’s state of the art capabilities include a video email process that allows the inclusion into your email template of any video productions you prefer while minimizing file sizes.

*Contact List Management* – Benchmark Email’s **permission based list management** capabilities can segment, rationalize
and streamline your subscription lists to allow you to precisely target your customer categories based on a significant variety of factors including geographic, behavior and demographic information.

*Delivery Assurance* – Benchmark Email is proud of its history of collaboration with the major worldwide ISPs, and it is these strong relationships that can be considered greatly responsible for the elevated delivery rate that is achieved on a continual basis. Benchmark Email’s remarkable delivery assurances are based on a policy of adhering to the best practices as well as the application of effective anti-spam features to ensure that your pet and veterinarian business will benefit from an impeccable email reputation.

*Full Tracking Reports Incorporating Visual Graphs* – Benchmark Email’s extensive email tracking reports offer an easily understandable, totally graphic view of all your email marketing campaign’s figures. Each section of the report is explained in clear language without resorting to convoluted technical jargon.

*High Volume Plans* – Should your pet and veterinarian business’ subscription list exceed 100,000 individual email addresses, Benchmark Email can utilize a series of advanced technologies that will facilitate your large scale sends.

*Polls & Surveys* – Obtaining key data on your pet and veterinarian business customers is a prime requirement to improve your segmentation processes. Benchmark Email can implement effective polling and surveying methodologies designed to obtain some of the most extensive data sets available and increase your bottom line results.

*Social Media Tools* – Benchmark Email can post your messages to the most popular social networking sites and gain the highest number of “Shares” and “Likes,” engaging your social networking clients in the form of specific bilateral conversations they prefer.

*Templates* – The highly experienced content, graphics and programming professionals at Benchmark Email have
engineered hundreds of precisely targeted, attractive templates to best portray your pet and veterinarian business' email marketing image. The designers at Benchmark Email can even create a custom tailored template for your exclusive use.

Find Out How Your Pet & Veterinarian Business Can Profit from Benchmark Email’s Services

Benchmark Email’s Do It Yourself package of services allows you to select the types of services you want to integrate into your email marketing on an item by item basis, while the We Do It for You package encompasses every aspect of a state of the art online promotional program entirely conceived, engineered and managed by Benchmark Email’s professional marketing specialists. Regardless of which email service package you determine is the best fit for your pet or veterinarian business, you will see unequivocally lucrative bottom line results that simply cannot be achieved through investments in older traditional media advertising.

Benchmark Email’s service packages allow your pet or veterinarian business to take advantage of the most advanced technological implementations in the email service provider industry. Your pet or livestock owning customers will respond strongly to these powerful marketing approaches, and the result will be seen in your bottom line!

ABOUT BENCHMARK EMAIL

Take powerful features by the dozen, sophisticated list management, hundreds of email templates, ultra-precise reports and dazzling email and video email. Now, package all that together for an extremely affordable price. Sound appealing? That’s us.
There’s a reason – or 100 – that more than 73,000 users trust us with their email marketing campaigns. With a second-tonone feature set, headache-free tools that make every campaign a snap and extremely reasonable price plans, we’re the email marketing service for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

At Benchmark, we’re more than email marketing experts, we’re innovators. Our main aim is to perfect our email marketing service, but we also follow social networking, search engine optimization (SEO) and Web 2.0 just so our 100% Web-based software is completely compatible with the ever-changing Internet world.

No other service gives you this robust, standard range of features ... for FREE! With our Free List Plan 2,000 you can have up to 2,000 contacts and send up to 14,000 emails per month. Start today at www.benchmarkemail.com/register.

CONTACT US

We welcome your feedback and would love to talk with you about your email marketing needs. Please contact us at the addresses below.

Website: http://www.benchmarkemail.com/
Call: 800.430.4095 (USA) or 562.252.3789 (INT)
Email: sales@benchmarkemail.com