

# *Guide to* **MARKETING**

Featuring **Dr. Jill Lopez**

*vet  
candy*





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# COMMON MARKETING TERMS:

## A/B TESTING

This is often done in email marketing campaigns when you send two versions of subject line, calls to actions, or copy to two separate groups of people. Reviewing the analytics can tell you which version was most engaging - which would be the one with the most clicks.

## Analytics

Analytics help you determine how effective your marketing is. It is a look at the results of your initiatives, including social media engagement, website visits, ad clicks, and bounce rates - the percentage of people who land on your website and then leave quickly.

## Call-to-Action (CTA)

This is what you want your customers to do, whether it is to call your clinic to schedule an appointment, sign up for your newsletter, or like your Facebook page. The goal of the CTA should be get you a new customer lead.



## Churn Rate

This is the measurement of how many customers you retain. To calculate this you take the number of customers you lost during a specific time frame and divide by the total number of customers you had at the very beginning of that time frame.

## Conversion Rate

The conversion rate for your website is the percentage of visitors who completed a desired action, such as calling your business or signing up for your newsletter.

## Keyword

Keywords are the topics that webpages get indexed for in search engines. It is important to pick the right keywords, you want to pick one that has a good search volume but it also aligns with your target audience.

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The practice of enhancing where a webpage appears in search results by using title tags, site structure and design, keywords, and links.

## Clickthrough Rate (CTR)

The CTR for your website is the total number of clicks that your ad, website, or newsletter receives divided by the number of views.

## Engagement Rate

This term describes the amount of interaction -- Likes, shares, comments that social media post receives. High engagement means that your messages are resonating with your fans and followers. To calculate, divide the number of views by the total number of likes, shares, and comments.

## Mobile Optimization

Mobile optimization means designing and formatting your website so that it's easy to read and navigate from a mobile device.

## Pay-per-Click (PPC)

The amount of money spent to get your ad clicked once.





# WHY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS YOUR BEST MARKETING TOOL - Dr. Jill Lopez

Excellent pet care needs to be the foundation of every practice, but if it's the only focus, the clinic might not be as successful as it could be. Great health care for pets at the expense of customer service can result in high customer turnover or lackluster reviews. Here are a few reasons why customer experience really matters.

## Brings in revenue

People spend more money at places where they get good customer service compared to places they don't. This can mean a hefty chunk of cash—Harvard put a number on it and said customers spent as much as 140% more at businesses that serve them well.

At a veterinary clinic, your clients come in for shots and exams, but they may be reluctant to take advantage of extras if they don't like the service. A customer who enjoys coming in might add on a fluoride treatment to their dog's dental cleaning or pick up some cat food while they're getting an exam done. Better customer service can add up exponentially over time.

## Converts visitors to loyalty

When a new customer comes in, their first experience defines whether they will keep coming back or not. Impressive customer service makes an impact your customer will remember and rave about. On average, loyal customers are worth ten times their initial purchase.



Loyal customers also save you money. It costs a lot to advertise your clinic, draw in new visitors, and keep advertising to make up for attrition. Loyal customers provide a consistent income. According to recent surveys, customers don't see brand loyalty as important anymore, but cultivating it does pay off.

The internet makes it easy for customers to look up a new clinic when they no longer like the one they are at, so it has become easier than ever for them to be less loyal and more demanding. You can help keep them from leaving by giving them reasons to rave about your services.

## Improves word of mouth

When customers are happy, they often share their great experience with family and friends. When someone is unhappy with their vet's office and ready to move on, or they're simply looking for recommendations, they often turn to friends and family for recommendations.

Word of mouth is a valuable marketing tool because clients are less inclined to trust the advertisements they see in the mail or online. They look for authentic, personal, first-hand recommendations—the ones they get from their friends who visit you.

Altogether, customer experience can have a big impact on your bottom line. To keep doing what you love—taking care of your clients' beloved pets—you need to make sure you deliver spectacular customer service to human and pet alike. That way, everyone benefits.



# SECRETS TO ATTRACTING NEW CLIENTS - Dr. Jill Lopez

When you open a veterinary clinic, getting new clients to try out your business isn't always easy. You want to build up a reasonable number of loyal customers who will keep you busy so you can focus on providing great vet care and not on constantly attracting new people.

If you're new, small, or in a very competitive market, you may be wondering how you can get clients. You can't win people over with your spectacular customer service until they've come through the door. Here are a few tips on how you can encourage new customers to give you a chance.

## Start a veterinary blog

These days, a lot of interaction with clients happens online. Nearly everyone has a smart phone, and when they're looking for a new vet clinic, they tend to check out reviews and websites before visiting.

An active blog that you update regularly can give them something to see when they search for you, and sound advice on pet health care will help them look to you as an authority on the subject.

## Embrace social media

Social media is a great tool to help your clients feel connected to you and your clinic. Set up a Facebook page where customers can contact you or an Instagram account featuring snaps of favorite patients. Posting videos on YouTube or Tik Tok can also attract attention and create sharable links that will spread the word about your office.

Video sharing has become a favorite way for clients to learn about different brands. A recent Google study found that as many as 50% of smart phone users made purchasing decisions based on videos.





## Let customers see behind the scenes

When their dog or cat gets taken to the back for shots or other services, customers feel helpless or even suspicious of what is going on. Showing clients the faces and personalities of the team handling their pet both reassures them that the animal is being treated well, even when no one can see, and also helps them form a sense of connection with your staff.

It might not seem like much, but when a client knows that Tiny is being handled by someone who also owns a mastiff and appreciates their quirks, they'll be more likely to let the Neapolitan Mastiff Club know about their great experience.

## Give your customers a gift

Customers love swag, whether it's a leash with your clinic's name on it, a tennis ball, or a pen. Merchandise also has a side benefit—these gifts serve as advertising to familiarize other people with your clinic. Showing your current clients your appreciation will not only improve their loyalty, it will also give them a talking point when people ask them if they like their vet or not.

## Reach out to the Spanish-speaking community

According to the Pew Research Center, between 2010 and 2019, the Latino share of the total U.S. population increased from 16% to 18%. Latinos accounted for about half (52%) of all U.S. population growth over this period, and they are the country's second largest racial or ethnic group, behind white non-Hispanics. If you aren't making an effort to attract Spanish speaking pet owners to your clinic, you are definitely missing out on revenue.

If there is a substantial number of Spanish speakers in your community, hire bilingual staff. Nothing makes a client more comfortable than having someone explain complicated veterinary information in their own language. Likewise, create bilingual signage and pamphlets and display them in your office. Many animal health companies offer brochures in Spanish, so check with your sales rep and order some. Finally, make sure your clinic's online presence has both English and Spanish information. That means adding details to your Google Places page and making special posts in Spanish.

With so many clinics available for your client to choose from, setting yourself apart can be hard. These tips will help.





# FOUR EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER RETENTION

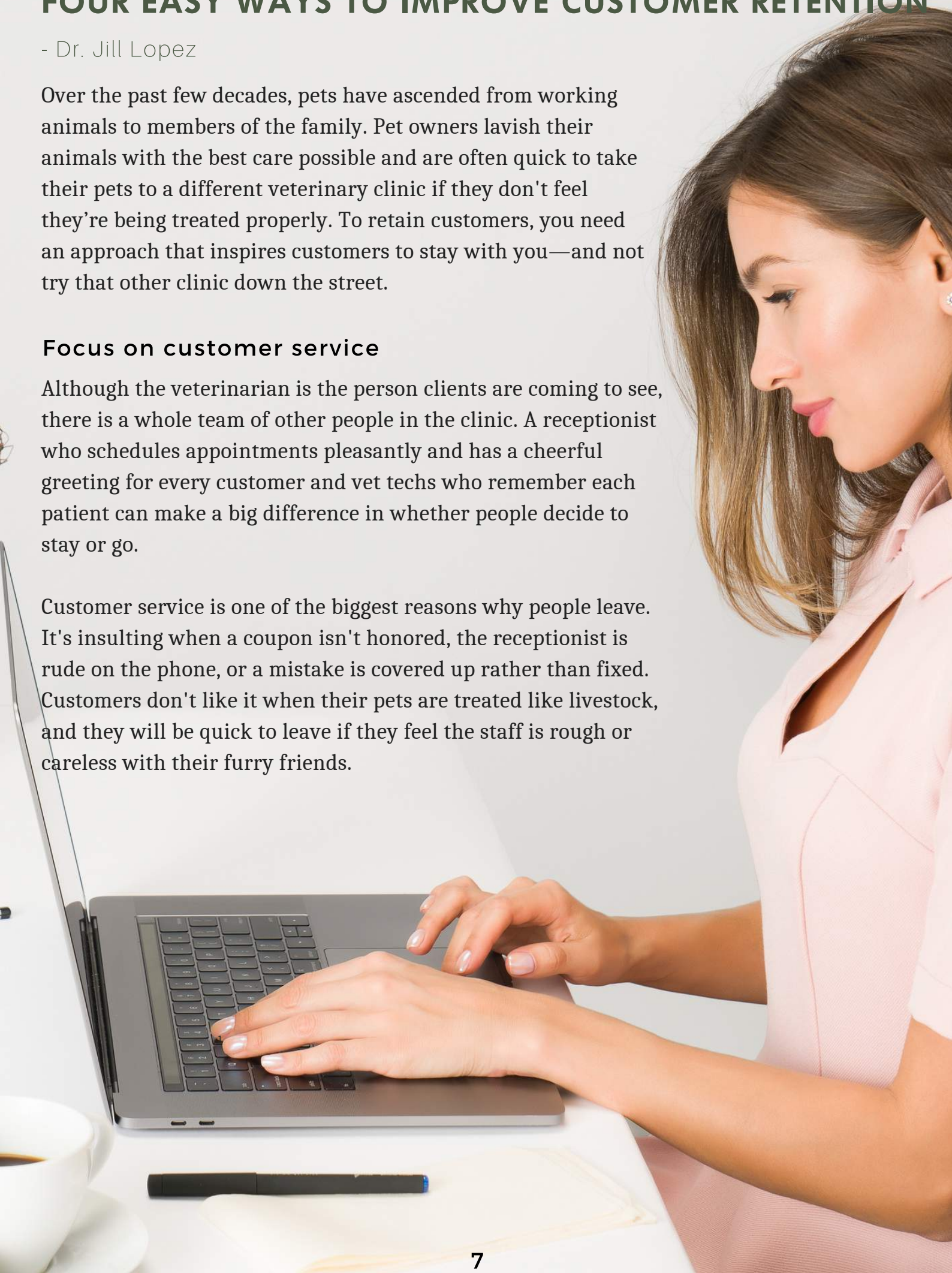
- Dr. Jill Lopez

Over the past few decades, pets have ascended from working animals to members of the family. Pet owners lavish their animals with the best care possible and are often quick to take their pets to a different veterinary clinic if they don't feel they're being treated properly. To retain customers, you need an approach that inspires customers to stay with you—and not try that other clinic down the street.

## Focus on customer service

Although the veterinarian is the person clients are coming to see, there is a whole team of other people in the clinic. A receptionist who schedules appointments pleasantly and has a cheerful greeting for every customer and vet techs who remember each patient can make a big difference in whether people decide to stay or go.

Customer service is one of the biggest reasons why people leave. It's insulting when a coupon isn't honored, the receptionist is rude on the phone, or a mistake is covered up rather than fixed. Customers don't like it when their pets are treated like livestock, and they will be quick to leave if they feel the staff is rough or careless with their furry friends.





## **Educate your clients**

Even great customer service isn't always enough to compete with other offices. Your clinic can distinguish itself by offering client education on your website or emailing a newsletter to pet parents each month.

By sharing knowledge about improved pet care, you can establish yourself as an information center that clients can rely on, as well keeping your business fresh in their minds. Reminding customers about the importance of routine health checks such as dental screenings and vaccinations benefits everyone concerned.

## **Offer additional products and services**

Convenience is another perk that customers respond well to. If they can also get their pet groomed at your office or pick up their dog or cat food, they are more likely to stay.

Investing in tools such as cold laser therapy and ozone therapy may set you apart from clinics that don't offer these. Look around for services that are absent in your area.





## Connect with clients on an emotional level

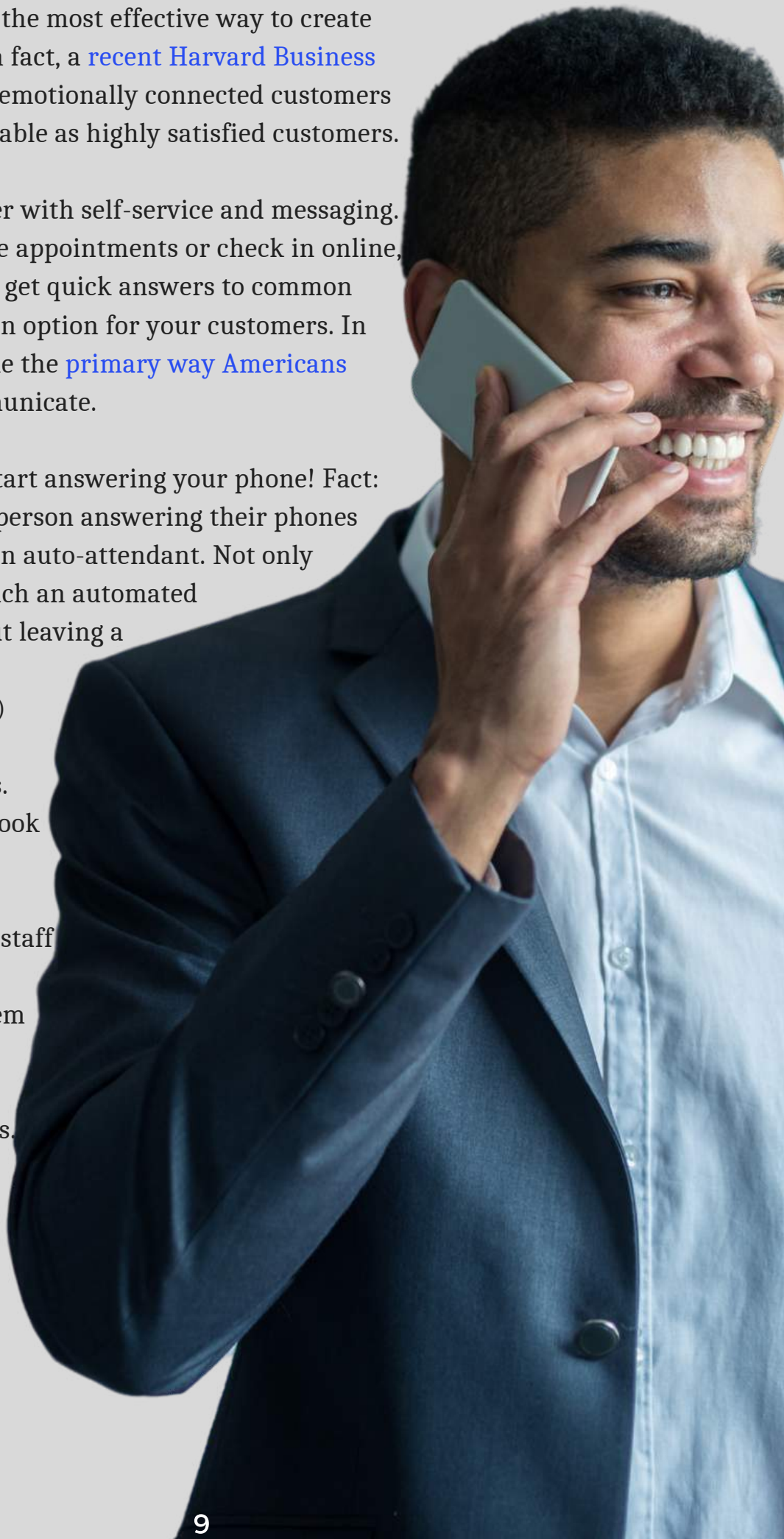
The customer experience is the most effective way to create an emotional connection. In fact, a [recent Harvard Business Review article](#) showed that emotionally connected customers are more than twice as valuable as highly satisfied customers.

Make your client's life easier with self-service and messaging. They should be able to make appointments or check in online, order refill medication, and get quick answers to common questions. Offer texting as an option for your customers. In fact, texting has now become the [primary way Americans](#) under 50 years of age communicate.

Say no to phone trees and start answering your phone! Fact: Businesses that have a live person answering their phones outperform those 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)

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 to and focusing on your customers, making them feel appreciated and welcomed? These simple things matter to your clients. Make sure their experience is personal and friendly, every time.





# HOW TO MAKE YOUR CUSTOMERS INTO YOUR BIGGEST FANS - Dr. Jill Lopez

As veterinary professionals, we went into this career because of our love of pets and desire to help them. You may think you've got great service under control, but with today's economy, you can never be complacent. Give clients a reason to keep coming back with these special details you can add to your service routine.

## **Provide a child space**

It's not just pets and their adult owners who come to appointments. Parents sometimes bring their children along, and keeping them entertained while waiting for an appointment can be a real strain. You can make the wait more pleasant by providing toys for kids to play with while they are waiting. A few toys are a small investment, but the relief it brings to the adults is enormous, and it may also help keep the kids out of mischief.





## **And treats for the adults too**

Most of your clients are busy people on the go. A coffee kiosk where they can get a little caffeine and maybe a cookie or two can make the wait more pleasant and also give them something to look forward to. When trying to squeeze in the dog's annual exam and shots after a busy day at work, your clients will appreciate chance to relax and enjoy a few treats.

## **Follow up with your clients**

A great way to let clients know you care is to touch base with them after you've treated their pet at your clinic. It gives them a chance to voice any questions or concerns and to let you know how the treatment seems to be working.

When an office gets busy, it's easy to assume that a client will simply call in if they have any questions. When you call back, it shows that you care, and it also helps you catch any early warning signs that a surgery or medicine isn't working as planned.



## Keep waiting room times down to a minimum

With emergencies, difficult patients, and other urgent matters, it can be difficult to keep the average day at the clinic on schedule. While wait times are to be expected, keeping someone who has taken the time to make an appointment waiting for more than 30 minutes past their appointment time is excessive.

You can keep an eye on wait times by recording when people come in, and if you see that someone has been waiting an excessive amount of time, ask the people working in the back to see if they can do anything to speed things up.

Taking care of clients, both the furry kind and the human ones, is important for the health of the business. Making a visit more enjoyable for your pet parents will pay off with greater customer loyalty.





# WHY YOU NEED TO GIVE YOUR CLIENTS INCREDIBLE SERVICE - 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 the clients were referred to you for specialist care, the odds are better that the customer service was lacking at their old office.

The good news is, you can improve your customer retention rate and attract new clients by providing fabulous customer service. Happy customers are loyal customers, and they are the quickest to spread your name through word of mouth. A happy customer advocating for your clinic is worth more than any advertising campaign.





## 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 an exam room quickly, and to get premium health care for their pet.

You might change the reception area so that shy or boisterous dogs can have a location away from the rest of the waiting area. Providing a small cell phone charging station is a thoughtful gesture.

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 joyful occasions such as a new puppy exam can affect how they perceive your practice. Showing sympathy to people who have lost a beloved pet or offering financing options to help with vet fees can make a big difference.

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 ease their distress and start to build a more sympathetic relationship.





## Pay attention to customer feedback

When customers leave feedback, take it seriously. Most customers expect to receive some sort of reply within a week. Replying more promptly can elevate your feedback response from good to amazing.

Try offering a real-time chat window where customers can leave their compliments or complaints and respond to them as soon as they arrive. This level of responsiveness will definitely make an impression.

Your customers are the life blood of your veterinary office. Without people 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, one all clinics should take seriously.







## NEW RESEARCH SHOWS LIVE CHATS CAN INCREASE YOUR BOTTOM LINE - Vet Candy Staff

Live chat tools allow for communication between sellers and buyers. They are popular instruments for e-commerce sites that don't have the advantage of face-to-face communication that brick-and-mortar stores do. New research in the INFORMS journal *Information Systems Research* says these live chats can actually increase sales and boost profits.

The study, "Impact of Live Chat on Purchase in Electronic Markets: The Moderating Role of Information Cues," looked at data from Alibaba on consumers' purchase decisions of Apple and Samsung tablets from March through June 2013.



“We found live chat can increase purchase probability of tablets by 15.9%,” said Xue (Jane) Tan of Indiana University. “We see that human interaction results in better sales performance.”



Tan, Youwei Wang of Fudan University and Yong Tan of the University of Washington say the fact that sellers and buyers cannot speak in person, like brick-and-mortar stores, leads to uncertainty about product quality and seller credibility. Live chat tools allow e-vendors to communicate with customers in real time.

The data source, Alibaba, has a reputation of being similar to eBay, where feedback is collected after each transaction. The data consisted of consumer browsing, live chat and purchase histories. The live chat tool is moderated by existing information cues: product sales volume and seller feedback score.

“ Sellers with limited feedback benefit more from live chat conversations than sellers with a lot of feedback. And products with high past sales volume sell better after live chat, indicating a reinforcement effect,” continued Tan. “It is interesting that a seller can sell multiple products with varying levels of sales performance, and the seller feedback is measured based on all products.” ”





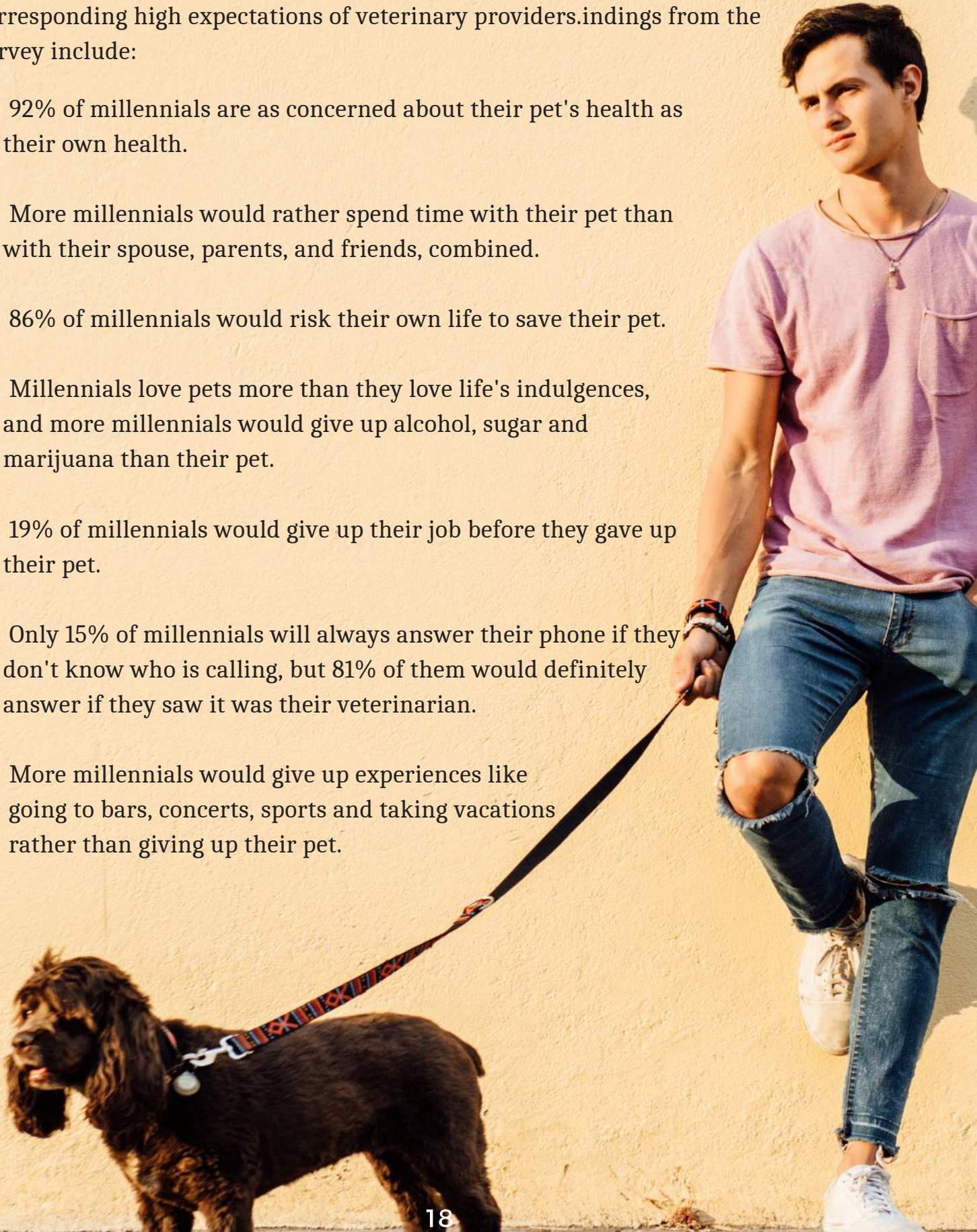


# Study Shows millennials demand personalized care for their pets

- Vet Candy Staff

Weave, the leader in customer communication, revealed the results of a new, independent survey regarding the significant relationship millennials have with their pets, and the corresponding high expectations of veterinary providers. Findings from the survey include:

- 92% of millennials are as concerned about their pet's health as their own health.
- More millennials would rather spend time with their pet than with their spouse, parents, and friends, combined.
- 86% of millennials would risk their own life to save their pet.
- Millennials love pets more than they love life's indulgences, and more millennials would give up alcohol, sugar and marijuana than their pet.
- 19% of millennials would give up their job before they gave up their pet.
- Only 15% of millennials will always answer their phone if they don't know who is calling, but 81% of them would definitely answer if they saw it was their veterinarian.
- More millennials would give up experiences like going to bars, concerts, sports and taking vacations rather than giving up their pet.





- 81% of millennials want their vets to automatically recognize them when they call, but 72% have had to wait while their vet looks up their account.
- Millennials love pets more than they love tech, and more millennials would give up social media and their smartphones before giving up their pet.



Millennials have grown up with technology, and expect that tech will enhance all experiences throughout their lives, including everyday purchases like veterinarian care for their animals," said Brandon Rodman, CEO at Weave. "Millennials require tailored services, and that starts with better, more customized communication from their veterinarian clinics that is clear, kind and timely. You can't provide personalization without the right technology.





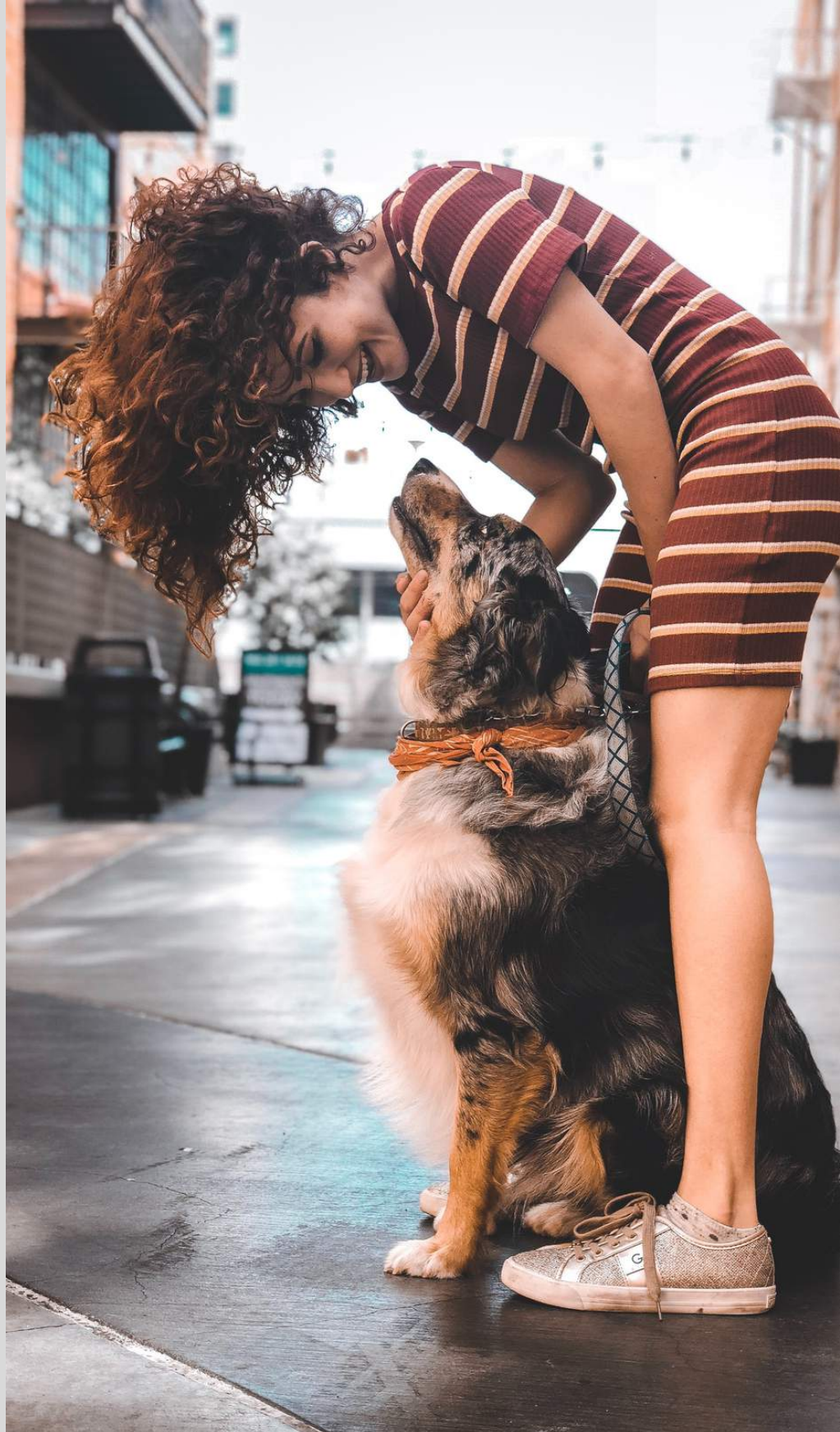


# HOW TO HANDLE FRAUDULENT REVIEWS ON ONLINE PORTALS?

## - Vet Candy Staff

Consumers who use the internet to learn about products are increasingly looking at online reviews to make purchasing decisions. The growing interest in online product reviews for legitimate promotion has been accompanied by a rise in fraudulent reviews; these are reviews placed by firms that artificially inflate ratings of their own products, or reviews by firms or third parties that give lower ratings to competitors' products.

A new study sought to determine how consumers respond to potentially fraudulent reviews and how review portals (e.g., Amazon, Expedia, TripAdvisor, Yelp) can leverage this information to design better fraud-management policies and increase consumers' trust. It found that portals that include fraudulent reviews are more likely to boost buyers' trust.



The study, by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and the University of Washington, is published in *Information Systems Research*.



“Consumers rely on the content of online reviews to make decisions about purchases, and about 15 to 30 percent of all online reviews are estimated to be fraudulent,” explains Beibei Li, professor of information systems and management at CMU's Heinz College, who led the study. “But beyond creating algorithms that detect the initial fraud, researchers have not fully explored what review portals do once fraudulent reviews are detected.”

Indeed, there is no consensus among firms regarding what to do with these types of reviews. Some review portals delete fraudulent reviews, others publicly acknowledge censoring fake reviews and sue firms suspected of posting them, and still others make the fraudulent reviews visible to the public with a notation that they may be fraudulent.

In this study, researchers sought to determine how review portals should display fraudulent information to increase consumers' trust in the platform. Specifically, they engaged in three exercises based on an experimental restaurant review portal they designed and implemented; a reservation system that used real data; and a behavior tracking system that determined amount of time consumers spent on each page, number of clicks, and number of restaurant pages visited. They also identified which restaurants were chosen by which consumers.



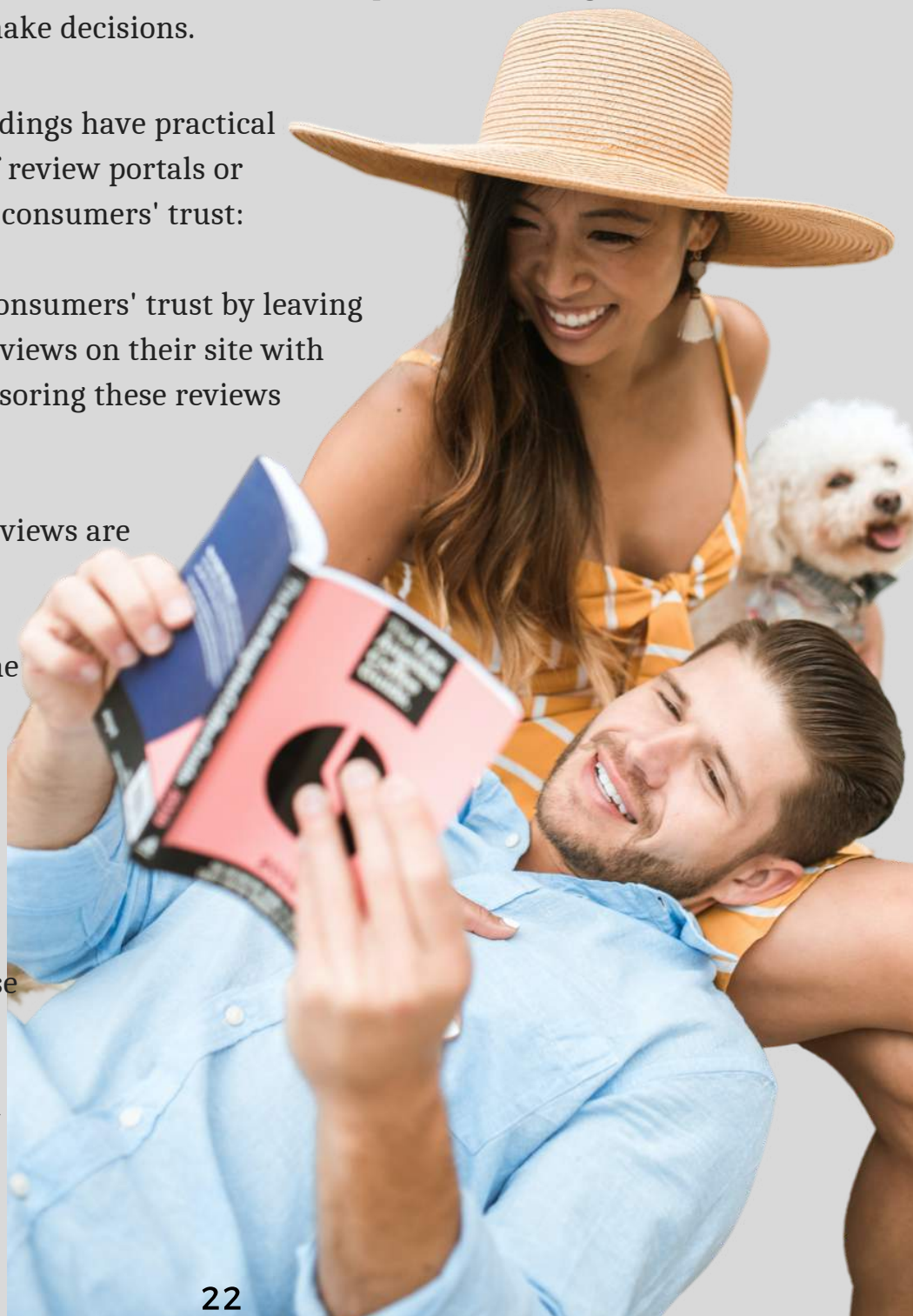


The study found that consumers tended to trust the information provided by platforms the most when the portal displayed fraudulent reviews along with nonfraudulent reviews, as opposed to the more common practice of censoring suspected fraudulent reviews. The impact of fraudulent reviews on consumers' decision-making process increased with their uncertainty about the initial evaluation of product quality: When consumers were very uncertain about a product, they treated fraudulent reviews as an important supplemental source of information for decision making.

The study also found that consumers weren't influenced by the content of fraudulent reviews: When they chose to use this information, they couldn't distinguish between different types of fraudulent information (e.g., malicious negative reviews or self-promotional positive reviews). This suggests that firms would benefit by using a method that incorporates the motivational differences between positive and negative fraudulent reviews to help consumers make decisions.

The researchers say their findings have practical implications for managers of review portals or platforms who wish to boost consumers' trust:

- Platforms can increase consumers' trust by leaving potentially fraudulent reviews on their site with comments instead of censoring these reviews without comment.
- Potentially fraudulent reviews are best displayed when managers use a decision method that decreases the burden to consumers.
- Any decrease in trust a platform may face from admitting to users that there is fraud on its site is balanced by an increase in trust from consumers who already thought there was fraud and now see that something is being done to address it.





The authors acknowledge limitations to their study: In their work, they used Amazon Mechanical Turk--a crowdsourcing marketplace that helps people and businesses outsource their work to a workforce that can do the tasks virtually--instead of observing actual consumers. And they analyzed only settings in which reviewers had no prior knowledge about the portal they were using.

“Our study advances understanding of how consumers respond to fraudulent information online and furthers the state-of-the-art practice in the industry for handling fraudulent reviews,” explains Michael D. Smith, professor of information technology and marketing at CMU's Heinz College, who coauthored the study. ”







# NEW RESEARCH FINDS COST TRANSPARENCY CAN INCREASE SALES 20%

- Vet Candy Staff



Businesses don't typically disclose information to consumers on how much it costs to produce a product. However, new research in the *INFORMS* journal *Marketing Science* provides evidence that doing so can increase consumers' purchase interest by more than 20%.

The study, "Lifting the Veil: The Benefits of Cost Transparency," conducted by Bhavya Mohan of the University of San Francisco and Ryan Buell and Leslie John of Harvard Business School, found that cost transparency can increase sales, but only when done voluntarily. They also found that cost transparency increases purchase interest even when prices are unexpectedly low or high.

"Even if prices aren't exactly what the customer might envision, the customer appreciates the act of cost disclosure," says Mohan, a professor in the marketing unit at the University of San Francisco.

"It's all about the psychology of disclosure and trust," said Buell, a professor in the technology and operations management unit at Harvard Business School. "Cost transparency represents an act of intimate disclosure and fosters trust. Heightened trust enhances consumers' willingness to purchase from a business."

The researchers conducted six experiments to illustrate the effects of cost transparency.

Cost transparency conveys more sensitive information to consumers than operational transparency alone by referring to the disclosure of the costs to produce a good or provide a service. But it can be risky because it makes the business vulnerable to experiencing negative consequences such as consumer ire or supplier price increases.



One experiment was a partnership with a dining services organization of a large university in the northeastern U.S. in which a month of lunchtime sales was studied. That organization revealed the costs of producing a bowl of chicken noodle soup, including the cost of each component and the total cost. Cost transparency is associated with a 21% increase in the probability of buying a bowl of soup with the probability increasing from 2.3% to 2.8% per customer.

Another experiment looked at a private online retailer and their sales of a leather wallet. For three of the wallet colors, the online product detail page included, among other information, the costs incurred to produce the wallet. The company mistakenly failed to use the graphic on two of the colors for the wallet.

**We compared the daily sales between the wallet colors before and after the graphic was introduced over a 92-day period. The infographic increased sales of the wallets by 22%," said Buell. "These studies imply that the proactive revelation of costs can improve a company's bottom line.**





# **DR. JILL LOPEZ**

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**Dr. Jill Lopez, is the founder of Vet Candy – a broadcast media company that delivers world class content, engaging voices, and inspirational messages curated by a network of top influencers and experts.**

**She is also an award winning marketing professional who has worked for Fortune 500 companies, global pet product manufactures, and the largest nonprofit animal welfare agency in the world.**

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