



How to Effectively Use Email
to Engage with Pet Parents
Tips for Veterinary Clinics



When used correctly, email is a powerful tool for veterinarians to stay connected with pet parents.

An effective email strategy can help clinics stay in touch with pet parents beyond the appointment room. Providing valuable health tips, alerting customers to sales or promotions, informing them about holiday hours, and sharing new care protocols and findings can help build pet parent loyalty and better patient care even when pets are not in the office.

To maximize the impact of your email communication, here are some essential do's and don'ts to consider.

Don't: Blast Email Your Audience Too Often

One of the quickest ways to annoy your audience is by sending too many emails, or sending emails that don't apply to them. Overloading your clients with constant email blasts can lead to unsubscribes and diminish your communication's effectiveness. Don't blast your pet parents with irrelevant information. Before you hit send, ask this critical question...

“If I didn't send this email, would anyone miss it?”

If the answer is “no” then your email isn't providing enough value.



Also, don't just email your entire database the same message. If you're running a special promotion on a joint health product that is only for dogs, you should not be sending that email to your cat-owning clients.

Do: Create Targeted Lists Using Relevant Filters

Instead, create targeted lists using filters to ensure your emails are relevant to your audience. Otto offers helpful filters customized to vet practices like appointment dates, pet species, pet age, and appointment type. By segmenting your audience, you can provide more personalized and pertinent information, increasing the likelihood that your emails will be well-received.

Don't: Use Spammy or Lengthy Email Subject Lines



Your email's subject line is the first thing your audience sees, and it significantly impacts whether they will open your email. Avoid spammy subject lines such as those in all caps, with too many exclamation points and don't use subject lines that start with "RE:" or "FW:" as a tactic to encourage email opens. These types of subject lines are deceptive and can erode trust with your audience.

Do: Customize Your Subject Lines

Craft subject lines that reflect the value you're providing to pet parents. For example, use subject lines like "🇺🇸 4th of July Safety Tips," "Arthritis Tips for [client name]," or "👁️ VIPRate for [client name]." Such subject lines avoid spam filters and clearly communicate the benefit of opening the email. Using personalization tokens such as the pet's name or client's name in the subject line can boost open rates.

 New message

To

Subject   Include emoji's in your subject line to bring some personality and to bolster open rates.

Don't: Send Really Long Emails

In today's fast-paced world, people rarely have the time or patience to read through long emails. Lengthy messages can be overwhelming and discourage your audience from engaging with your content. Many pet owners will read your email on a mobile device so make sure you've tested the mobile experience before you send your email.



Do: Keep Emails Short and Impactful

Keep your emails concise and to the point. Utilize bullet points to highlight key information, making your emails easier to read and more impactful. Short, well-organized emails are more likely to capture and retain your audience's attention. Don't forget to include a call to action. Buttons with calls to action such as "book now" or "learn more" can help direct your audience to what you want them to do next.

Don't: Just Send Promotions

While promotions are an important part of veterinary clinic email strategy, constantly sending promotional emails can turn off your audience. Pet parents don't want to feel like they're continually being sold something.

Do: Provide Valuable Content

Balance promotional content with educational and informative emails. Share your expertise on new treatment options, practices for good health, holiday reminders, and other relevant topics. By making your emails useful, you increase the chances that pet parents will be open and engage with your promotional content.

Don't: Think Email is Too Hard to Use

Some may think creating effective email campaigns is too challenging or time-consuming, but it doesn't have to be. Email marketing is a great way to stand out from your competitors and build loyalty.

Do: Utilize Timely and Relevant Information

Leverage holidays, clinic events, seasonal care tips, and other relevant information to craft short, thoughtful emails. Being timely and relevant makes the process easier and enhances the value of your communication to pet parents. If you have a blog on your website you can also use these emails to direct traffic to your website to read more.



Don't: Always Send Your Email at the Same Time

If you only send your emails on Tuesday mornings at 8:30 AM you may be missing the chance to engage with pet parents who have different email reading cadence.

Do: Send Email off the Hour

Most emails are sent on the hour or on the half hour. Vary the time of your email sends to experiment with what works best for your clinic. An email sent at 4:45 pm on Tuesday afternoon might do better than you think! COVID changed the rules of “optimal sending times” and with increasingly flexible work from home schedules almost any time can be a good time to send an email now.

Don't: Let Your Audience Stagnate

Make sure you are continually updating your email list with new pet parents. If your email marketing system isn't PIMS integrated you'll need to do regular uploads. Once a month is a good cadence.

Do: Actively Build Your Database

Filter your emails to customers who have had an appointment recently - like the past year or two - to ensure your most active clients are getting the email and less likely to view it as spam.

Don't: Keep a Messy Database

Be sure your pet parent names have proper capitalizations and are spelled correctly in your PIMS. Remove hard bounces and unsubscribes from your email database to make sure you've got a healthy list. Otto does this automatically for you to ensure your list is healthy!

Do: User Personalization Tokens

If your database is clean it's safe to use personalization tokens for pet and pet parent names. These tokens can significantly help with email open rates when used in subject lines and preview text.



Don't: Use Email Open Rate as the End All Be All Metric

Historically we regarded email open rate as the #1 most important metric for email performance. This is no longer an accurate metric, now we like to look at click rate instead. Click rate indicates the level of engagement, consider using that instead of open rate as your performance key performance indicator.

Do: Analyze Your Email Performance

Once a month, go through your emails to see which ones your audience liked best. You can use click rate to see what content got the most engagement. Otto's campaign reporting in the Flow reporting tab makes this quick and easy to look at.

Don't: Put Text in Images

It can be tempting to overlay text on top of a header image. If you must do it, make sure you check how it renders on a mobile device. Text that is part of an image is not responsive on a mobile device and can render so small that it's illegible.

Do: Use Images

Images and gifs can give your email some interest, you should use them where appropriate. Do make sure that you have alt text assigned to them. The alt text is what shows up if their email client does not automatically download the images so you'll want to make sure it is something descriptive like "get our 4th of July safety tips" instead of "firecracker email header".

Email can be an incredibly effective tool for veterinary clinics to engage with pet parents, provided it is used thoughtfully. By following these dos and don'ts, you can create email campaigns that keep your audience informed and engaged and strengthen the bond between your clinic and the pet parents you serve.



Don't: Send email with typos

SPAM filters often catch typos in emails and don't even let them appear in inboxes.



Do: Have At Least One Person Proofread your Email

Sometimes it's hard to catch mistakes you've written yourself. Always have at least one other team member view the email in preview view in Otto and review it for spelling mistakes and grammar before you send.



About Otto

Otto is how modern clinics deliver big wins. We offer a comprehensive client engagement platform that helps veterinary clinics streamline communications, improve practice profitability, and increase client satisfaction.



To learn more, schedule a demonstration



Thank You for Reading!



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