



Client Education Through Online Videos or Online Classes

Article by Roxanne Hawn

More people now prefer online learning over reading instructions or other types of how-to, trainings or formal academic coursework. Video is everything, or so it seems. Especially for younger veterinary clients, YouTube serves as a major educational portal. If you think poorly of Dr. Google, you don't even want to know what Professor YouTube has to say.

Online education itself is big business, with robust academic portals to provide a place for everything that used to be the exclusive domain of a traditional classroom—from lectures and class discussions to homework submission and grading.

However, you don't need a platform that elaborate to begin offering online veterinary client education. Here are some ideas on how to control the pet-care narrative for your clients through judicious use of video and other online content.

Video content

Start by brainstorming the types of things you say to or teach clients all the time.

Instructional videos. Veterinary clients want to do things right. It's important for the health and safety of their pets, but it's also important for compliance. People who understand how to do what their pets need are more likely to follow your recommendations.

Hands-on instruction before checkout or upon pick-up remains a critical part of patient care and client education. Video simply supports what you're already doing. People can watch videos again and again from home to double-check their technique and boost their confidence.

Make a list of the most common things your team teaches clients how to do. Here are a few considerations:

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- Brushing pets' teeth
- Cleaning ears
- Fitting no-lick collars
- Trimming or grinding pets' nails
- Providing wound care
- Finding and removing ticks or fleas
- Giving pets pills or medicines

You can create edited videos with voice-over instructions if you have the interest and ability to do so. However, the truth is that people have become accustomed to more live-feeling conversational and low-key videos. Some people even distrust videos with too much production value.

Hot topic or Q&A videos. Think about the latest pet-care trends or topics that keep coming up in the exam room or over the phone and see which ones you feel are important enough to address in a video.

It can be as simple as stating the common question and then answering it just as you would face to face. Keep in mind that shorter videos often perform better in engagement stats versus longer ones.

Videos about bigger issues. If it's a topic that's more complicated and nuanced than can be handled in a soundbite or if it's something new in veterinary medicine that you'd like to explain as a backdrop for services or therapies you now provide, then you could consider a slideshow-style presentation.

Platforms

The decision to use your existing social media platforms or to invest in a true online educational platform depends on your goals. Do you want to use educational videos as part of your marketing strategy? Do you see benefit in becoming YouTube or Instagram famous? Or do you think there is a

need for a more enclosed, private, controlled portal as a value-added or even paid educational service for just your clients?

Let's start with the simplest and move on from there.

Live social media videos (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube). If you have a strong social media following and feel like you're good off the cuff, then live videos make a lot of sense. With just a little planning on what you want to say or show and some research to know when would be a good time to go live, you can toss together a live video that shows how to do something, that explains your personal insights on a hot topic, or answers a common question.

You can promote that you'll be going live in advance to help boost your real-time viewership, but you can also post the video for replay later for any who missed it.

Edited videos for social media or the educational section of your website. If you'd rather have the chance to do re-takes, especially if animals are involved, or to edit video as needed, then you can shoot some conversational-style videos that you polish up before posting to your preferred social media channel or onto your website.

Password protected portal. If you want to keep your hard work embarking on client education so that it's more exclusive and sheltered for only your active clients, then consider how you can post and store videos or other written instructional content into a password protected area of your website. There are privacy settings within YouTube and other video sharing sites that may help. You could even email or text direct links to specific clients upon checkout, for example, to supplement any take-home instructions you provide in the moment.

Online client education classes. Solopreneurs and small businesses of all kinds now see paid online educational content as a viable source of so-called passive income. Yes, it requires upfront investments of time and money, but once the portal is set up, then any revenues you gain from it can continue going forward. An entrepreneurial friend of mind prefers to call these efforts “planned income,” meaning it’s money upon which you can count over time. Think of it like a veterinary wellness plan for ideas.

Typically, online classes include some written materials as well as videos or even audio recordings. You might even include little quizzes or progress trackers in your online class portal.

The platform that many of my entrepreneur friends like is called Kajabi and starts at about \$150 per month for access to its tools, but if you simply search online for “online classes platform,” you can browse through the options, including some that integrate with WordPress, if that’s what you use for your other online content.

It would be your decision if you offer some of these online client educational classes for free or if you will charge for

them. As an example, think of all the things you would say to a first-time puppy or kitten owner that you cannot fully cover in those first wellness visits. You could create a whole course or series of videos to get those clients off on the right foot.

The other online educational content model to consider is a monthly subscription, where a subset of clients pays a little something extra each month to have access to all your online educational content—like a veterinary client study club.

Video tips

There is a great debate between traditionalists from a media background, like me, who believe all video should be shot landscape style and not in portrait orientation. With the narrow upright view that portrait gives, you simply miss too much of the story and context. Yet, with so many people now consuming media and video on their mobile devices, which they most often carry and view upright, video shot portrait-style may provide a better video experience on devices held the same way. Personally, I don’t think it’s too much to expect people to turn their devices landscape to view a video, but you can decide which video view feels



Main Street Veterinary ONLINE PET PORTAL

Create an account



Username or email



Password

Login

most natural to the content you're providing to clients.

Good audio is important, but a lot of people also rely on subtitles if they have hearing issues or if they are watching videos in a noisy public location. Even with ear buds in place, subtitles can be helpful.

Bottom line: Are you a video practice?

Video is not for everyone or every practice. Making videos a strategic part of how you educate veterinary clients and, perhaps, even how you might create a new income stream is fresh. Those who start doing it well before others catch on will have a competitive advantage in the new frontier in providing comprehensive pet care across many channels.

"Oh, your veterinarian is nice in person? Yeah, mine is too, but the veterinary hospital also has a private portal with a huge library of pet-care videos that have helped me feel like a Super Hero Dog Mom."



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