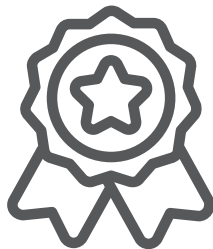




THE SIDE EFFECTS OF **GIVING**



BY STACEE SANTI, DVM

When I created Vet2Pet for my own clients, my initial goal was simple – to help them remember their pet’s critical health care, while juggling their busy lives. As a veterinarian, I was frustrated by the lack of compliance in my well-meaning clients – I knew they wanted to remember to give

their pet’s heartworm preventive, but they repeatedly forgot. Since then, Vet2Pet has evolved to an all-in-one, customizable client engagement platform that hospitals across the globe are using to communicate with their clients and make caring for their pets easier. After downloading your

hospital’s customized app, your clients will have instant access to their pets’ reminders, communication with your hospital and much more. One of the perks that clients, and hospitals, love most is Vet2Pet’s loyalty program.

THE VET2PET LOYALTY PROGRAM

Loyalty programs are fairly new to the veterinary industry but have been used by other businesses for decades. Personally, I have enjoyed Amazon Prime, Kohl's Cash and Sephora in the past several months. Now that veterinary hospitals are discovering loyalty program benefits, they are realizing not only how much their clients love being rewarded, but also how much their teams love doling out rewards.

Here's how it works: With Vet2Pet's loyalty program, clients earn a stamp for every \$100 spent per invoice, and when they collect 20 stamps (i.e., the equivalent of \$2,000 spent in your hospital) or whatever limit you set, they are rewarded with a \$100 credit they can apply toward a future visit. The top benefits of this simple program are that you can reward your best clients – the kind who bring you Christmas cookies – and your best clients visit more often, as they try to rack up more stamps to unlock their reward. Clients love being rewarded for providing the best healthcare for their pets and often purchase additional items, such as the pet food or parasite prevention you recommended during their appointment, to earn their next stamp. Another popular way to use the loyalty program is to allow clients to “round up” by donating to a local charity. This is a win-win all the way around.

THE LOYALTY PROGRAM STUDY

It was obvious that clients loved getting free rewards from their veterinary hospitals, but an unexpected “side effect” soon became apparent – veterinary team members seemed to enjoy giving the rewards just as much. Could this act of giving be not only an investment in bonding clients to hospitals, but also a way to fill a team's internal compassion tank? Could giving be better than receiving? I'm all about the numbers, so Vet2Pet surveyed 264 team members at hospitals that use our loyalty program, to see if these side effects of giving could be verified. Check out the results:



- ✓ More than 85% of veterinary team members surveyed feel that loyalty program participation helps clients feel more connected to their hospital.
- ✓ Team members report conversations regarding their loyalty program are a positive experience for themselves (82%) and their clients (89%).
- ✓ More than half (62%) of the respondents believe that a loyalty program can help people take better care of their pets.
- ✓ 58% of veterinary team members surveyed reported the loyalty program makes their job more enjoyable.
- ✓ 73% of team members involved in a loyalty program report that they feel better connected to clients.
- ✓ 67% of team members report the client was distracted from the invoice total in a positive way.

Continued



BENEFITS TO YOUR TEAM

A lot of encouraging takeaways are packed into these numbers. Let's break down the most important side effects your team members can experience as they reward your clients.

CONNECTION: People love feeling included as part of a team, group, or family. When clients join your hospital's loyalty program, they instantly feel connected. When team members help a client sign up for the loyalty program, thereby creating that connection, they share the emotional benefits. In today's veterinary market, finding unique ways to connect with clients is priceless. Not only will your clients feel more bonded to your hospital, but your team members will also enjoy the connections they are creating with clients.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES: Let's face it – between saying the final goodbye to a loyal client's pet, placating Mrs. Pennypincher and narrowly avoiding Chico the Chihuahua's lunges, your veterinary hospital can be a stressful place. Any program that can bring positivity to your team members' day is a worthwhile investment. Presenting a client with their invoice may be one of the most difficult parts of your front desk staff's job, but if a larger invoice translates to more rewards (i.e., more stamps), the client's emotional response changes and the interaction is more positive. The conversation suddenly focuses on the reward the client has earned, instead of their large bill.

BETTER PET CARE: How often have you purchased another item or two to reach the next \$50 mark, so you can receive more Kohl's Cash? In my mind, those items are practically free when I factor in the money I'll save down the road. Similarly, clients frequently add another box of heartworm preventive or bag of food to bring their invoice to \$100, so they can receive a stamp. In a profession where inadequate pet care is a daily reality, helping clients provide better care for their pets is infinitely rewarding to veterinary team members.

JOB SATISFACTION: Helping your team feel happy and fulfilled is one of every leader's top priorities, although making this a reality can be an ongoing struggle. With daily stress and burnout constantly threatening to dampen your team's spirits, a program that increases job satisfaction and fills their compassion tank will be appreciated. Although a few more pleasant client interactions or helping a pet owner decide to purchase important parasite preventive to better care for their pet may be small pieces of your team's day, they can add up to an overall better experience and sense of fulfillment.



SHOULD YOU IMPLEMENT A LOYALTY PROGRAM NOW?

You may be wondering if implementing a loyalty program now will confuse your clients, as they adapt to protocol changes and curbside care. On the contrary, I think we can always benefit from more positivity, and a loyalty program is the perfect way to forge connections between your team and clients, cultivate positive interactions and garner team excitement about helping your clients provide better pet care.

Our study results show that embracing and focusing on a mindset of rewarding inside the practice can result in increased happiness in team members. Your staff members always bear a heavy load but adapting to new protocols over the past months has undoubtedly been challenging, so adding a new, positive element to their daily routine will help. Thankfully, Vet2Pet's loyalty program is easily understood and helping clients sign up takes only a few minutes. In fact, only 10% of survey respondents felt that a loyalty program made their job more difficult and only 6% said the loyalty program slowed down the checkout process.

Your veterinary team deserves to know how much you appreciate them every day, but since they are working harder than ever during this challenging time, showing your gratitude is especially important. The Vet2Pet loyalty program can help you show your clients – and your team – the appreciation they deserve. ■