How to Start With Facebook and Twitter

Diederik Gelderman, BVSc Hons1, MVS

A social networking campaign can be quickly and easily implemented in the workplace. Author’s address: PO Box 3312, Exeter 2579, NSW, Australia; e-mail: dge@turbochargeyourpractice.com. © 2010 AAEP.

1. Introduction
Twitter, Facebook, and the other social media such as MySpace and YouTube are some of the most innovative, inexpensive, fastest, and yet most underused ways to help build your business.

2. Background for the Session
Despite all the positives inherent in the use of social media and in search engine optimization, in the veterinary industry, these tools are hugely underused. In fact, they are rarely used at all and, in the rare cases that they form part of the practice’s marketing strategy, they are poorly used.

In this modern society, >80% of your clients use social media to assist in maintaining their social contacts. The typical user of these sites is between 26 and 44 yr of age and female. This is exactly the demographic of our client base. The fastest growing demographic is the >55 yr olds.

The use of these media also increases with the remoteness often associated with our equine-owning clients.

Google and other search engines are now the second most common method (after referrals) for potential clients to view and experience your practice before the client makes their initial visit.

Knowing the basics about the social networks and the search characteristics of the search engines enables veterinarians to add these marketing strategies to their armory.

The basics of search engine optimization will be discussed in the oral presentation, as well as how to quickly, easily, and inexpensively increase the practice’s website search ranking and hence increase the chance of a potential new client choosing to visit you and not a competitor.

3. Social Media Utilization
- Step 1. Set up a Facebook account
- Step 2. Set up a practice Facebook account
- Step 3. Set up a practice Fan Page
- Step 4. Set up a Twitter account
- Step 5. Set up a Twello/Twitter account
- Step 6. Set up a MySpace account
- Step 7. Set up a YouTube account
- Step 8. Link all the accounts
- Step 9. Start making posts and keep the sites fresh
- Step 10. Encourage clients to become “fans of…”
- Step 11. Start adding clients and their photos to all the sites
- Step 12. Start a practice blog (either from you or from a “practice pet” or “client pet” and link it to the social sites
4. **Practice Website Optimization**

- Step 1. Ensure that your website has the feel that you want it to portray to your clients
- Step 2. Organize as many “in” links to the site as possible
- Step 3. Ensure that the site is active and constantly changing
- Step 4. Place as many downloads on the site as possible
- Step 5. Create a “case of the month,” “competition page,” or similar concept that clients will visit regularly
- Step 6. Create a page that has previous newsletters and mailings
- Step 7. Start a practice blog (see step 12 above)