



## Jonesboro Animal Hospital enlists the assistance of Veterinary Metrics, Inc. for a Smart Move

*Jonesboro Animal Hospital is one of Veterinary Metrics, Inc.'s oldest and most loyal customers ... and for good reason. Their partnership with Veterinary Metrics (Vet Met) recently earned them more than \$100,000 in revenue in only a month and a half. With an investment of only \$7,500, the Change of Address and Win-Back program was a smashing success.*

*Vet Met, a data and marketing services company based in Atlanta, Georgia, helps veterinary practices generate incremental revenue from their practices' existing client base by uncovering missed service and product opportunities and driving operational efficiencies. The company has made an unprecedented leap in the animal health market, enabling practices to market to individual clients and their pets by collecting, standardizing and analyzing practice-level data.*



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### Smart move

Vet Met helped make 2002 a financially rewarding year for Jonesboro Animal Hospital. Dr. Don McMillian, Jr.—co-owner and practicing veterinarian at Jonesboro—was relocating his practice to a larger, more sophisticated facility not far from his existing location where he and his father had been practicing for 35 years. The transition would ultimately be a smart move for his business, accommodating additional patients and much easier to access for clients, but McMillian was concerned about the timing and how it might affect Jonesboro's annual revenues. He also wanted to ensure all of his current clients would know where to find him. That's when he made another smart move by turning to his marketing partner, Veterinary Metrics. "If I hadn't used Vet Met, I probably would have written my own letter notifying clients of our new location and sent it out to everyone in our practice management database. And I would have missed a huge opportunity to use this event as a chance to talk to my clients about their pets' overall health and well being," said Dr. McMillian.

Vet Met helped Jonesboro take full advantage of this communications opportunity. First, they segmented the practice's database into categories:

- *Cats and dogs that were compliant with veterinary recommendations*
- *Cats and dogs that were past due for services and those that had "slipped through the cracks" without a scheduled reminder record*

Together, Vet Met and Dr. McMillian customized the message for each group, focusing on the importance of wellness services to pets' long-term health. They provided a clear call to



action to visit the practice. And offered incentives for taking action. The response was more than Dr. McMillian could have predicted:

- Vet Met sent a total of 2,944 mailers that generated \$132, 588 in less than two months—an increase in revenue that put Jonesboro up 3 percent for the year.
- 1459 Win-Back mailers were sent to clients who weren't in the reminder database. The practice reclaimed 149 of those pets, which will translate into approximately \$45,000 in revenue over the next three years. That means Vet Met's mailer helped actually increase Jonesboro's patient population.
- Responding Win-Back clients brought in an additional 130 non-targeted pets to bring them up-to-date on services, generating even more revenue.



"People and their pets came in for everything. Some wanted to just see the new building. For others, the wellness message really hit home, so they brought their pets in to receive vaccinations and additional wellness diagnostic testing. We're reinforcing that message in the exam room," says Dr. McMillian. "We've also seen an increase in dental appointments in response to the dental coupon we included in this mailer."

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## Light years beyond traditional reminders

Jonesboro initially enlisted Vet Met's services to expand the effectiveness of their annual vaccination reminders in June 2001. Vet Met's programs operate on the principal that if you have an important message to tell, clients want to hear from you. Reminders are just a small piece of that communication. As Dr. McMillian explains, "Before Vet Met, we sent out our own postcard reminders for first, second and third vaccination reminders, but we had little means of tracking their success and they limited our communication with clients. We also tried a service that distributed our vaccine reminders as an add-on to their animal health magazine. Unfortunately, clients thought it was nothing more than unsolicited mail."

## A picture of performance

Before working with Vet Met, Jonesboro had no effective means of tracking the success of their internal client communications. In fact, the only tracking method they used was process of elimination. "If we sent fewer second reminders than first reminders, then we knew we had succeeded in getting some clients to comply. And again, if we sent fewer third mailers, then we must have received more responses to the initial mailing or additional responses to the second mailing," explains Dr. McMillian. Today, Jonesboro receives detailed reports on each campaign that scientifically represent the success of each program.

So much more than a reminder service, Vet Met's proven communications programs are making a difference at Jonesboro Animal Hospital. The company extracts and analyzes Jonesboro's practice management data to uncover missed service and product opportunities. And it segments individual pets into categories, such as those that are due or overdue for



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services and those that are delinquent in purchasing proper parasite prevention medication. Instead of sending a blanket, one-size-fits-all postcard, Vet Met sends a customized letter to clients explaining the risks of non-compliance with veterinary recommendations and coupons that offer incentives for additional services that can prolong the health of their pets. Dr. McMillian is impressed with the flexibility and value of Vet Met's communications services: "Instead of sending vaccination reminders, now we're promoting wellness visits. Through the mailers we're educating clients about potential health risks in their pets and recommending additional diagnostic services to uncover hidden illnesses. We're reinforcing this message in the exam rooms, and nearly 50 percent of the time, clients are authorizing us to do the additional tests. We're finding abnormalities 15 to 20 percent of the time, including undiagnosed urinary tract infections." Vet Met is helping Jonesboro keep its pet population healthy.

## Words of wisdom

According to Dr. McMillian, most veterinarians know they need to consider a wellness screening program, but they often don't know where to start. "Everybody thinks about wellness screening programs. They think, 'I'll do it next month.' But because we're so focused on treating the animals in our practices, 'next month' never materializes. We started with replacing our reminders with Vet Met's services, and the success of that program pushed us to implement the wellness testing program, and take part in seasonal programs, such as dental health." Vet Met makes it so easy—all they need is access to a practice's practice management software, and they can begin instantly making a difference that ultimately will increase practice revenue and improve animal health. In fact, Vet Met's data and marketing services have proven so effective they can actually quadruple a practice's investment in only twelve months.

Dr. McMillian is also pleased with the image Vet Met's targeted communications portray. As he explains, "The quality and professionalism of Vet Met's mailers represent my practice well. Unlike the magazine reminder service we tried, with Vet Met we aren't forced to endorse products we don't necessarily want to support."

## Stemming revenue loss

The AAHA recently published new canine vaccination guidelines that suggest dogs receive vaccinations once every three years. Practices stand to lose a considerable amount of revenue in light of these changes. According to Dr. McMillian, "Vet Met is insulating us from loss of revenue because the wellness message broadens communications beyond vaccination reminders. They can actually help increase the frequency of visits." More frequent visits translate into a healthier pet population and sustained—and in many cases increased—practice revenue.



800.752.1055

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