

# Feline Health

Help your customers focus on feline preventive care in their practices

**There are more cats than dogs in** the United States, yet feline health lags behind canine health in most small animal veterinary practices in revenue and patient visits. On average, only a small portion of the 74 million cats in the United States see the veterinarian 1.6 times per year, while their canine counterparts see the vet 2.6 times. According to the latest AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) Pet Ownership and Demographic Sourcebook, the average veterinary spend per animal, per year is \$227 for dogs, and only \$90 per cat. Why is there such a huge difference between the two? Are we to believe that cats are just healthier than dogs? Do cats require less disease prevention than a dog does?



By Todd Brodersen

themselves and do not interact as much. They will not be as lively or responsive. These are traits that most cats possess on a day-to-day basis, and they employ them based on their mood. We tend to see cats as being “in a mood” versus immediately thinking that they may be ill. With dogs, it seems a lot more apparent when they are feeling ill. Could that be the reason for less interaction with a vet?

## Eliminating assumptions

When we take a look at preventative medicine versus treatment, we must start to question the difference between cats and dogs. Is it correct to assume that the indoor cats do not qualify for prevention just because they do not leave the house? What about those felines that have canine counterparts within

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### The impact of independence

The truth is that dogs tend to be far more active than cats during their life time. They are more apt to be outdoors. Many cats never leave the house or apartment. Dogs are also presumed to be needier when it comes to their owner’s attention. Many cats can be very loveable and interactive with their owners, but somehow they maintain that unmistakably independent cat quality.

There is a level of “out of sight – out of mind” when it comes to cats. Cats can hide or mask their conditions far better than dogs. If they want to be sociable, they will, and if they want to be alone, they’ll seclude themselves. When an animal does not feel well, they tend to keep to

the same home? Aren’t they at risk just because the dog goes outside? Many cat owners would not intentionally neglect their pet. They would not usually administer prevention for one animal while leaving the other unprotected if they understood the risks to both to be the same. How do we help our customers to change the mindset of the average cat owner? There are many feline-only products on the market to insure a healthy lifestyle.

Our customers have been facing a steady stream of Over The Counter (OTC), Pet Specialty retail, and e-commerce competition over the last five to ten years, and this trend is not going to stop any time soon. Focusing on this competition is a concern for almost every veterinarian that



# FLIP THE SWITCH Tips

Build Your Business & Value to Your Customer(s)

## PARASITE:

- Ovitrol Plus Shampoo
- Mycodex F&T Shampoo
- Adams F&T Collar
- Breakaway Plus Cat Collar

## HEARTWORM:

- Heartgard for Cats
- Interceptor for Cats
- Revolution for Cats

## VACCINES:

- CaliciVax
- Continuum
- Eclipse
- Fel-O-Vax
- Rabvac

## DIETS:

- Feline Hairball Management
- Feline Senior Care
- Feline Weight Management
- Pro Plan Urinary Tract Health

## MISC:

- Healthy Cat Litter
- Cat Lax
- CliniCare Feline Liquid
- Renal Essentials Cats

### **Collaborative Communication keeps the Customer + ISR + OSR on the same page:**

Help customers by alerting them to the vaccines and parasite control that is paramount in warding off infection or infestation.

I speak with. However, I am continually astounded by the amount of potential business that remains within the existing customer base of every vet clinic in the United States. There are so many pets – cats especially – that do not see the veterinarian enough, or leave the vet clinic unprotected. Why spend time worrying about companies that are competing for your clients when there is still more that you can do with your loyal clients?

## **The cat conversation**

How can we assist our customers in pursuing this untapped market that seems to be at their fingertips? Let's make sure that they are prepared to have conversations about protection, potential health threats, and lastly, products.

A cat in a home with a dog that goes outdoors is at risk for parasites and disease simply through contact with the dog. There is not only a chance of transfer of zoonotic diseases or parasites from dog to cat, but the transfer can also happen from pet to human in many cases. Protection and prevention should be a topic for the entire household. Our customers need to be prepared to have these discussions about the pets that may be at home. Help your customers by alerting them to the vaccines and parasite control that is paramount in

warding off infection or infestation. Know your feline vaccines and the reasons why it makes sense for your customer to mention them. Help your customer understand whole house protection versus focusing on the one animal that is being treated today. In addition to vaccines, there are other products that can also help with this conversation. For example, cat litters such as Healthy Cat Litter can assist with the prevention of disease transfer from one cat to another. This is a product that can be used in the practice or at home.

Treatment areas for cats become more apparent as the cat ages. Some key concerns for the aging household cat are renal issues, weight management, diabetes, and potentially arthritis. When our customers are treating the family dog, they should ask what other pets are at home. There is a misconception by many cat owners that their cat is healthy, happy, and doesn't need protection. It is up to our customers to educate these pet owners. It is up to us to assist in preparing our customers for those conversations. Be prepared to recommend product brands and categories. Help your customer understand the opportunity by using some of the industry statistics in this article. Be their resource. Be their partner. Help them build their business and yours will grow right along with theirs. ■

Todd Brodersen began his animal health industry career in 1991. His experience includes executive level positions in inside sales, sales-force development and marketing management. Todd now operates Same Page Consulting (Omaha, NE). His unique Business Builder program was developed for U.S. distribution companies. Business Builder methods are customer-oriented, generate incremental revenue and successfully support distributor growth. Todd uses sales and operations data, metrics, and analytics resulting in optimized deployments of resources that support best practices in sales, marketing, distribution, and procurement. For more information contact Todd at [Todd.Brodersen@yahoo.com](mailto:Todd.Brodersen@yahoo.com) or visit [www.samepageconsultinginc.com](http://www.samepageconsultinginc.com).