



### Jo Hinde RVN

Jo has worked in the veterinary industry since 2007 and has always had a special interest in rabbits. She started her own company, LagoLearn, that provides rabbit specific CPD to veterinary professionals in both the UK and internationally. She also spends a significant amount of voluntary time working with charities and parliamentary groups to highlight animal welfare and is proud to be a council member and officer of the British Veterinary Nurse Association. Jo attends many events, gives lectures and writes articles for the veterinary industry as well as the general public and schools. She has received several awards over the years including the Blue Cross Veterinary Nurse of the Year in 2014, an RCVS Innovation Award winner in 2017 and the IFAW Animal Advocate Award in 2017.

# Webinar Review: How to set up and market nurse clinics

Presented by **Libby Sheridan MVB MRCVS**

Reviewed by **Jo Hinde RVN**

## Overview

Libby provides a great overview of what's needed in order to provide a range of good quality nurse led clinics. The presentation starts by thinking about client care – what's important, to who and why. It also covers the steps needed to create a marketing plan including research, implementation and measuring the efficacy of the clinic. It ends by explaining the importance of frequent reviews so that you can adjust your plan for future clinics.

## Why good client care matters

The webinar starts by identifying what our clients want from their veterinary clinic. In general, this is thought to be good clinical knowledge, professional standards and good patient care. These are all part of an assumed base line for the client but what sets each clinic apart, is the more emotional attributes such as empathy, compassion, trustworthy and caring. These really add value to the clinical services that you provide and can attract new clients to your business which is vital considering our industry is currently seeing less new clients and more new practices opening. Owners are also doing more research before choosing which veterinary practice to go to. This is often a mixture of word of mouth and online investigation, but how your staff appear both in person and on the phone are a vital part of your practices image. Nurses are the perfect patient ambassadors – often viewed by clients as more approachable. This is an important factor when setting up nurse led clinics as they may be seen to be a more relaxed, open way of disseminating information, however it is important to always charge for their professional time.

## First steps

The easiest way to increase client engagement is to reach out to your most loyal owners and encourage them to visit more

often. They will already have a bond with the practice and be keen to help you try new things. This also works as a good set of people for gathering information about what other services they would like you to provide and you could decide to hold some small focus groups comprising of new and old clients.

Research is vital and needs to be undertaken both inside the practice and externally. Once you have an idea for a clinic then speak to your colleagues about it. Make sure it is seen as a joint decision and create a team of people that will work on the project. It is important that you speak to all members of staff and consider how this clinic may affect them and how they may be able to help. Next, you can move on to researching your current clients. This can be done in a variety of ways from informal chats to questionnaires and results in you getting worthwhile feedback which can directly affect your project.

External research is valuable to ensure that your clinic has the best chance of success. See what your competition are offering and speak to your drug/service reps to see if they already have any data or promotional material that you could use. There may even be a specific time of the year that would be the perfect time to hold the clinic – for example national dental month. Don't forget the power of the internet! Simple searches can reveal a lot of information about products and services offered in your area and may help with your planning.

## The marketing plan

This may seem like a daunting undertaking but can be broken down into more manageable tasks. Keep it simple and use the 5 P's to expand your idea: **Product, Price, Place, People and Promotion**. This will give you the foundation of your marketing plan and allow you to narrow down each clinic idea whilst highlighting the specific aims of the

project. From this, you can then assign SMART actions to your project team members: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time bound. By considering these things you are ensuring the best start for your clinic with no hidden surprises.

## But will they come?

Getting people to turn up can be tricky but the key is communication! Use every tool at your disposal including social media, in-house displays, local newspapers, practice newsletters and direct communication with existing clients. Be bold and really shout about the excellent new service you plan to offer. Be specific about its key selling points, think about what makes this clinic different from others and why yours aims to be the best. Again, make sure the whole team are also recommending and referring to the new clinic. Give additional information to all relevant clients at every stage possible but

be sure to record this on their file to avoid bombarding the same people.

## Implementation and tracking

The work doesn't stop once you are ready to launch, it is vital you have a system in place to track the progress of the project and that you schedule frequent reviews. This allows you to reflect on how things are going and share this information with your team. It is important to gather both qualitative and quantitative data from those that have used the new service – this is where a customer satisfaction survey would work well. Use this for a brainstorming session to highlight ways the clinic could be modified and make sure you celebrate the successes you have already had, with your team and the general public. Be proud of what you have achieved!

## Take home messages

1. Research your idea and how it impacts the practice.
2. Create a project team and set SMART goals.
3. Understand the importance of customer care.
4. Consider the main aim of the clinic.
5. Measure and review efficacy frequently as well as implementing changes as needed.

## Changes to implement

As a result of this webinar, I feel that I now have the knowledge to implement a new nurse clinic in the best way. It has given me the tools needed to understand the importance of fully researching a project before jumping in and getting started. I am looking forward to using some of the strategies that have been mentioned and hope to increase my customers satisfaction levels.

# Need help with funding?

## **BVNA Educational Bursary £500**

General furthering of veterinary nurse training/education

## **Kennel Club Charitable Trust Bursary fund £3,000**

General furthering of veterinary nurse training/education

## **Kennel Club Charitable Trust Degree Bursary £3,000**

A contribution to the cost of completing a VN Degree



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