

Standing Out by Being Outstanding: Elevating the Client Experience

Peter Weinstein, DVM, MBA
PeterWeinsteinDVMMBA@gmail.com

Introduction

In the modern veterinary landscape, the client experience is not merely a support function to medical care—it is central to practice success. As pet owners increasingly regard their pets as cherished family members, they expect not only excellent clinical outcomes but also an exceptional, empathetic, and seamless service experience.

The truth is simple: clients can't always judge the technical quality of medical care, but they can always judge how they feel when interacting with your practice.

To truly stand out in the business of companion animal veterinary medicine, practices must go beyond satisfying clients—they must delight, engage, and build enduring trust. This proceeding explores how veterinary teams can create outstanding, client-centric experiences that foster loyalty, differentiate their brand, and drive long-term success.

1. Building Emotional Connection: The Foundation of Client Loyalty

1.1 Leading with Empathy

Outstanding client experiences begin with empathy. Veterinary visits are emotionally charged events for clients; their pets' well-being is deeply personal.

Actionable strategies:

- Train all staff, from reception to doctors, in empathetic communication techniques (active listening, validation, emotional mirroring).
- Recognize and respond to clients' emotional cues—whether it's anxiety, grief, or excitement.
- Use language that is compassionate yet informative, avoiding jargon unless explained clearly.

1.2 Remembering the Personal Details

Exceptional client experiences hinge on personalization:

- Greet clients and pets by name upon arrival.
- Keep records of preferences (e.g., favorite treats, specific concerns, preferred

communication method) and refer to them proactively.

- Send handwritten notes after significant visits (surgery, euthanasia, pet birthdays) to acknowledge milestones or offer comfort.

These small gestures build relationships that extend beyond the clinical transaction.

2. Communication Excellence: Clarity, Consistency, Care

2.1 Proactive Communication Across All Channels

Clients should never feel 'left in the dark.' Outstanding practices communicate:

- Pre-visit instructions: Clear information on what to expect.
- Real-time updates: For hospitalized patients, surgeries, or delays.
- Post-visit follow-ups: Personalized check-ins after procedures, with direct access to staff for questions.

Modern practices leverage multi-channel communication: phone, text, email, and app-based messaging—allowing clients to choose their preferred method.

2.2 Education-Driven Consultations

An exceptional experience involves empowering clients through education.

Outstanding teams:

- Use visual aids, models, and handouts to explain diagnoses and treatment plans.
- Encourage client questions without making them feel rushed.
- Frame recommendations as part of a shared decision-making process, reinforcing trust.

When clients understand the 'why' behind recommendations, compliance improves and satisfaction soars.

3. Creating a Seamless, Stress-Free Environment

3.1 The Physical Space as Part of the Experience

The design and ambiance of the practice directly affect client perception:

- Fear-Free and Cat-Friendly Certifications: Practices that incorporate stress-reducing layouts, separate waiting areas, soft lighting, and soothing sounds immediately stand out.
- Amenities: Comfortable seating, refreshments, pet relief areas, and play areas for children enhance comfort for all visitors.

An outstanding client experience begins the moment clients step through the door.

3.2 Minimizing Wait Times and Maximizing Convenience

Respecting clients' time is a critical differentiator:

- Offer online appointment booking, with same-day availability when possible.
- Provide curbside check-in, express checkout, and mobile payment options.
- Use digital forms and pre-visit questionnaires to reduce time spent in-clinic.

If delays occur, proactively communicate wait times and offer updates. Clients are far more forgiving when they feel informed and respected.

Conclusion

Outstanding client experiences don't happen by accident—they are crafted intentionally, through every interaction, policy, and decision.

In the business of companion animal veterinary medicine, standing out is about making clients feel seen, heard, and genuinely cared for at every stage of their journey with you. From the emotional connection, seamless convenience, and compassionate care to the personalized touches that surprise and delight—each element adds up to an experience clients will remember and share.

By elevating client experience to the forefront of practice strategy, veterinary teams not only differentiate themselves—they build lasting, meaningful relationships that drive loyalty, referrals, and sustainable growth.