



9.1.2. THE HOTTEST GLOBAL PET CARE TRENDS AND ISSUES EVERY VETERINARY PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO KNOW IN 2022

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What are some of the hot veterinary topics and pet trends pet owners will be talking about in 2022?

1. Impact of corporatization and consolidation on veterinary practices.

In the US, it's estimated that about 25% of all practices are now owned by a corporate consolidator, accounting for approximately 50% of all client visits (December 2021, Brakke Consulting).

In December 2021, the current corporate veterinary ownership was:

- 2,500 - Mars (Banfield, VCA, Blue Pearl, etc.) (US)
- 2,000 - IVC Evidensia (UK)
- 1,200 - National Veterinary Associates (NVA) (US)
- 500 - CVS (UK)
- 450 - Vets4Pets (UK)
- 400 - Thrive Pet Healthcare (US)
- 350 - Medivet (UK)
- 300 - Southern Veterinary Partners (SVP) (US)

In human medicine, according to the Modern Healthcare 2018 Report, 47% of physicians in 2016 had an ownership stake in a medical practice, down from 53% in 2012. Hospital acquisition of physician practices have shown to increase prices and funnel more care through hospitals.

Potential Benefits of Veterinary Consolidation / Corporatization

- Exit strategy for retiring veterinarians



- Better data collection and analysis
- Technological advancements at scale
- Upward mobility of veterinary professionals
- Increased pay and benefits for veterinary professionals
- Potential to standardize and improve patient standards of care and client service
- Increased accessibility to veterinary care
- Political and organizational influence

Potential Risks of Veterinary Consolidation / Corporatization

- Competition for veterinary support staff
- “The decline of independent medical practice and lack of physician-owned hospitals have negative implications for continuity of patient care, quality and innovation and cost.” Modern Healthcare Report 2018
- Long-term price increases? Decreases?
- Loss of autonomy and independent treatment decisions?
- Referral pressure and increased reliance on specialty-care?
- Decreased pharmaceutical and therapeutic innovation and diversification?
- Political and organizational influence?

What about the cost of veterinary care? Will consolidation improve access and reduce costs to pet owners? According to the Access to Veterinary Care Coalition December 2018 report:

- 29 million dogs and cats live in households that rely on SNAP
- Average 2.2 pets per household
- Households with lower income more likely to have only one pet
- 80% of lower income families viewed the pet a “family member”
- 75% of Americans working full-time “lived paycheck-to-paycheck”
- 58% households either have less than \$1,000 in their account or no savings account at all – slightly up from the 57% in 2017. 32% have no savings at all. (December 2018 survey from GOBankingRates)
- Pet owners in higher income classes said finances are the reason they don't pursue certain types of veterinary care (i.e. specialty)



- 23% of pet owners reported they had trouble obtaining preventative care in the past
- 80% cite finances as a barrier to preventative care
- 44% who couldn't afford "preventative care" had trouble affording "sick care"
- 74% of all respondents reported not being able to afford "sick care" (no difference between middle class and lower income participants)
- 59% in the highest income bracket did not pursue "sick care" due to finances
- 56% of pet owners stated they could not afford "emergency care" for their pets

2. Humanization of pets and opportunities for better veterinary client communications.

Pet Humanization & Millennials

- Approximately 23 million US households added a pet between March 2020 and May 2021
- Millennials (born between 1981 and 1994) are the generation most likely to own pets, accounting for 32% of all pet owners
- Born 1981-1996
- 73% of Millennials own pets
- 89% of home-owning Millennials also own pets
- 35% of all pet owners are Millennials
- 32% of pet owners are Generation X, born between 1965 and 1981
- 27% of pet owners are Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964
- Just 6% of pet owners are in the Silent Generation
- Tech-Dependent
- Rely heavily on Vet Guidance for Pet Product Purchases - For NOW
- Trust in Brand Integrity & Smaller Pet Product Companies
- Internet Reviews & Purchases
- Millennials Delaying Having Children
- 60% of US pet owners are Female
- 67% U.S. Dog Owners: 1 Dog
- 43% U.S. Cat Owners: Multiple Cats



- Birthday Parties, Pet Sitters/Walkers, Treats, Travel, Toys, Clothes
- Demand for Specialty Care

Humanization Opportunities - Senior pets (Packaged Facts U.S. Pet Market Outlook, 2021):

- 55% of dog families and have 53% of cat families have pets over age 7
- Older pets need age-related care and products, including for the diagnosis and management of these conditions:
 - Joint/mobility problems
 - Cardiac issues
 - Cognitive problems
 - Immune system issues
 - Diabetes
 - Cancer

Adherence to recommendations and treatments is key to successful outcomes with aging pets.

- Soft chews
- Flavored medications and supplements
- Powders, pastes
- Extended duration, less-frequent administration
- Multi-functional treats, foods, medications

Humanization Opportunities – Smaller dogs (Packaged Facts Pet Industry Outlook: Veterinary Services and Pet Product Retailing, 2021.):

Percentage of U.S. households reporting to own:

- 11.3% have toy/very small dogs (less than 10 pounds / less than 5 kg)
- 17.4% percent of U.S. households have small dogs (11-20 pounds / 5-10 kg)
- 24.5% have medium dogs (21-60 pounds / 10-28 kg)
- 17% have large dogs (61+ pounds / 28+ kg)

“Everywhere Pets”



- Social training
 - Breed-specific care protocols
 - Individualized care
 - Pet owner concerns about size difference:
 - Vaccines, medications, food, nutraceuticals, treats, boarding
 - Surgery, anesthesia, dentistry and oral care
 - Exercise and physical activities
 - Toys and accessories
 - Subscriptions, on-demand, in-home
 - Less about brand, more about quality and ingredients
 - Pet food, massages, physical therapy, alternative therapies (acupuncture, class 4 laser, supplements, etc.)
 - Differentiated services for brick and mortar
 - Website reviews impact decisions
3. Telemedicine and telehealth developments in veterinary practice.

Telemedicine and telehealth continue to be hot button topics for the veterinary profession around the world. This is largely due to:

- Public Demand
- Technological Progress
- Regulatory Challenges
- Public Safety
- Professional Liability

4. Social media changes and opportunities for veterinary practice marketing.

The continued popularity and progress of social media platforms pose both opportunities and challenges for veterinary practices. Email, text messages, and social media platforms present considerable growth opportunities. Most veterinary practices should begin by critically assessing their website functionality for demand capture. SEO, location, hours, and other basic business data should be routinely monitored and updated. Regular content posting in the form of blog posts, videos, and images should be a priority followed by social media outreach. Google, Yelp, and Bing continue to dominate the US search market and are the primary drivers of business growth. Practice and veterinarian online reviews, particularly Google and Yelp in the US, are the single



biggest factor in attracting and capturing new clients. Most practices should hire an SEO firm and have them:

- Optimize your site's keywords
- Optimize your listings on all key search engines, including Yelp and Facebook
- Implement an automated customer review prompt

- Email communication:
 - REMINDERS! We're still far from optimizing our current client base.
 - POSTCARDS are alive and well.
 - EMAILS continue to serve as both the primary mode of connection as well as a backstop to text messages.
 - Our client admission forms ask in what order they prefer to be contacted: Phone, Email, or Text?

5. Veterinary student debt, worker shortages, and solutions for lean processes within veterinary clinics.