

How to Build A Brand and Tell Your Story in Veterinary Medicine



Sue Ettinger

Whether you are a practice owner, associate veterinarian, practice manager, or specialist, you need to communicate effectively about who you are, what you do, and the unique value you bring to your team and your clients.

Why create a brand for you or your practice?

People do business with people they know, like, and trust. You want your clients to know, like, and trust you. There is an incredible amount of information out there in veterinary medicine. If you do not provide value to your customer, someone else will. Build relationships with your clients, and provide information of value that will serve their needs (not ours).

When you create your brand, whether individual or for a practice, be you. Be your own individual you. It will be 100% original and cannot be copied.

Clarify your position and message: The Problem You Solve

You need to clarify your message so customers your customers (clients, team) will listen and understand it. It must be simple, relevant and repeatable. We want to get clear on what problem you solve.

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- What value do you bring?
- What problem do you solve?

The goal is to be as clear and concise as possible in explaining who you serve and what it is you do. To do that, use the below template as a guide for helping define what you do.

- I help to (audience) do (topic/problem) so that they can (solution) .
- Make your first attempt at completing this sentence. I don't expect it to be perfect. (Mine has changed many times.) This will be a living, breathing phrase that we work on to help you more clearly define who you serve and how you help them.

Survive and Thrive

Pretty websites and posts on social media do not sell things. Words sell things, and if we do not clarify our message, our clients will not listen. Clarifying your message is not easy, and you may feel like you are on the inside of a jar trying to read the label. Can you say your message easily? Can your entire team repeat your message in a compelling way? Can our clients figure out what your offer is within five seconds of visiting our websites? The more simple and predictable the communication, the easier it is for the brain to digest. Story helps us understand, and story formulas put everything in order to the brain does not have to work to put everything in order.

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In Donald Miller's book *Building a Story Brand*, he discusses that the overriding function of the brain is to help an individual strive and thrive. After food and shelter are taken care of, our brains start thinking about relationships (sexual, romantic, and friendships to create a tribe to stick by us) and then the greater psychological, physiological and spiritual needs. Humans are constantly scanning their environment, including advertising, for information that is going to help them meet their needs to survive and thrive.

According to Miller, the first mistake that brands make is failing to focus on the aspects of an offer that will help our customers survive and thrive. We must position our product and services as something that will help people survive, thrive, be accepted, find love, achieve aspirational identity, or bond with the tribe that they will defend physically and socially.

Our brains are constantly sorting through information and we will discard millions of unnecessary facts every day. If you're in a movie theatre, are you going to count the chairs or look around to know where the exits are in case of an emergency? If we're talking about our practice's backstory or internal goals, we become the chairs and not the exits.

The second mistake we make is causing our clients to burn too many calories in an effort to understand what we offer. If we confuse, we lose. If we don't say something and say it quickly they will tune us out. Communication must be simple.

Formula for Clear Communication

1. Key is clarity. We need to identify with the clients wants. What problem are we helping them solve? What would life look if they engage in our product and services?
2. Our enemy is noise, clutter, and confusion. What we think we're saying and what our clients hear can be two different things.
3. We must clarify our message with story.

Tell a story

Story is the sense making mechanism. We are all constantly bombarded with so much information and noise. When we tell stories, we rise above all the noise. Story makes music, out of noise. The brain remembers music and forgets the noise. Like music, we must have filters. If we bombard with too much information in our story, the audience is forced to burn too many calories to organize the data. They will daydream, walk out, or they are putting out. This is why we need to filter. We must create simple relevant messages we can repeat over and over.

Provide value for your clients. We must remember the story is not about us or our practice.

The story is about the client, and we are the guide for the story. We are serving our client's story. The story is not about us. We want to make music, not noise. Nobody remembers the brand that makes noise.

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How do we make our story clear? We must ask three crucial questions.

1. What does the hero want?
2. Who or what opposing the hero from getting what she wants?
3. What will the hero's look like if she does or does not get what she wants?

The marketing grunt test:

1. What do you offer?
2. How will make it my life better (or my pet's)?
3. What do I need to do to buy it?

Sticky Ideas We must make your ideas stick. Make the message clear. People do not buy the best products or services, but they buy what they understand the fastest. Whether with your clients, your team, or on your website, clearest communication will win.

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OBJECTIVES

To successfully build your brand, we will;

- clarify your position and message and define the problem you solve
- focus your message on the idea of survive or thrive
- use story to deliver our message where we are the guide, not the hero

TOOL KIT

What problem do you solve?

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- What value do you bring?
- What problem do you solve?

Clarify your message

- I help to (audience) do (topic/problem)
so that they can (solution) .

Make your first attempt at completing this sentence. This will be a living, breathing phrase that we work on to help you more clearly define who you serve and how you help them.

3 questions of story:

1. What does the hero want?
2. Who or what is opposing the hero from getting what she wants?
3. What will the hero look like if she does or does not get what she wants?

KEY POINTS

Formula for Clear Communication

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3. We must clarify our message with story.

Recommended Books

