



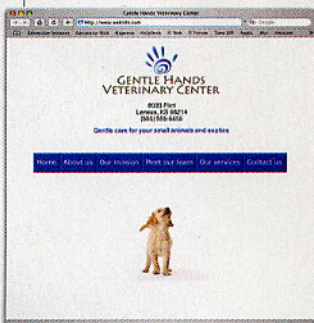
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**Marketing messages:** Before you develop marketing materials for your practice, get your ideas on paper. This will help ensure you create stronger bonds with clients and project the image you want. Marketing samples created by Angie Seat

## Identity inspiration

*Think about your practice's identity and how you want to connect with clients before embarking on a marketing campaign.*

**B**efore you begin any type of marketing initiative, your practice team should develop a written document that defines the identity you want the practice to project. "Without this foundation, you may get out of sync with how you want clients and prospects to view the practice," says Linda Wasche, founder and president of LW Marketworks Inc. in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. Remember, you want your practice description to be specific and inspiring and build emotional bridges based on the needs and wants of the marketplace. Some issues to consider:

> Your practice mission and vision. Why are you in business? What do you aspire to be?

> What service areas do you cover? Are any unusual? For example, do you offer holistic care?

> Your desired identity or image. Do you want to be the leader in diagnostics? The Mayo Clinic of the pet world? Your area's foremost expert in avian care?

> What phrases describe your practice and team best? "Treatment doesn't start until we have answers." "We stress preventive care and client education."

> What are the key messages you want clients to hear about your practice? "We honor the human-animal bond." "You'll see a veterinarian in less than 10 minutes."

The decisions you make as you answer these questions form the basis for consistent, high-impact marketing messages, Wasche says. And once you have your ideas on paper, you can apply them to specific marketing and client communication tools. ■