



# SPAY/NEUTER CLINIC MARKETING PLAN

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This document provides a 15-month marketing communications plan for your clinic.

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# PRE-CLINIC OPENING

## THREE MONTHS BEFORE CLINIC OPENING

### Develop your local media list.

List local media outlets and the preferred method of communication (email, fax) in a spreadsheet for each media. (Call and ask for an email address to send press releases.) Some media in your community may include:

- Television stations, including their web page
- Radio stations, including their web page
- Newspapers, daily and weekly, including their web page
- Pet bloggers and columnists
- Local magazines
- Online and print event guides

Find out deadlines for submitting materials to magazines or local event calendars.

### Develop your animal-welfare related outreach list.

List the local animal groups in your community that can help you promote your clinic. These may include:

- Animal control agencies
- Humane societies
- No kill animal shelters
- Rescue groups
- Community/feral cat organizations
- Pet food bank
- Animal sanctuaries
- Veterinarians (veterinarians should be contacted initially about the new clinic, but they may not be interested afterwards in promoting your campaigns)

### Develop your pet businesses outreach list.

List local pet businesses that can help you promote your clinic. These may include:

- Kennels
- Dog trainers
- Pet sitting services
- Pet stores
- Pet boutiques

### Develop your human services outreach list.

List local human service agencies that offer assistance to low-income families and ask them to distribute information on your clinic. These agencies may include:

- Local food bank
- Social service agencies
- Job and family service agencies

**Create email lists (preferably and much cheaper than mailings) for every outreach agency listed above.**

Provide printed information (brochures, fliers, business cards) to these agencies and ask them to make referrals to your clinic.

**Begin laying out a media plan.**

Schedule up to four spay/neuter events for the first year of operations, approximately three months apart, as able. Consider running special promotions during kitten season or during slower times of the year, like February and August, or after the holidays, to drive traffic to your clinic all year-round.

**Know your local numbers.**

Gather statistics for your city or county on the number of dogs and cats euthanized in the previous year or the number of dogs and cats entering area shelters, so that you can use these numbers to deliver your messages for spay/neuter in your press releases.

## **TWO MONTHS BEFORE CLINIC OPENING**

**Announce the new clinic to the media.**

Include information on location of the clinic; who you will serve in the community; who has provided grant funding for the clinic; local statistics; and how this clinic will help reduce euthanasia and the pet population in your community.

**Launch website.**

Provide information on location, opening day, and when you will begin taking appointments.

**Launch Facebook page.**

Start building Facebook fans with all your friends and local animal-welfare organizations. Keep them posted on the progress of your facility – when the cages arrive, when the parking lot is poured, etc. Post at least once a week at this stage.

## **ONE MONTH BEFORE CLINIC OPENING**

**Market your clinic before it even opens.**

Print business cards with your price list to distribute to rescue groups and shelter partners for their distribution to the public. Be ready to start making appointments.

#### **Send out press releases.**

Send out [press releases](#) to announce the new clinic and inform community that you now are accepting appointments for the low-cost surgeries.

Make sure someone is able to answer the phone and take appointments. It's important to get the first few weeks booked before you open.

#### **Send calendar listings to all media.**

Get your clinic added to all of the event and calendar listings throughout the community. Check out local media websites to view their event pages. Don't forget print publications around town, especially bilingual newspapers, community newspapers, and local print magazines that run special events as well as radio and television websites, which now post event listings all year-round.

#### **Keep posting on Facebook.**

Begin posting on Facebook at least twice a week. What can you talk about? New surgical table arrives? The new parking lot gets paved? Does your staff head off to another state for training? Take pictures and post your news on your Facebook page. Get the community as excited as you are about the new clinic.

#### **Schedule a private tour for key donors.**

Thank donors for all their support. Set up a table with light refreshments. The executive director or medical director/veterinarian should say a few words and tour. Give them some business cards with your services printed on them to hand out to friends.

## **TWO WEEKS BEFORE CLINIC OPENING**

**Send press release about clinic opening to all media, providing date, location, grant funders, costs, and information on where people can call to make an appointment.**

[Press release](#) may also include information on grants that helped fund the clinic opening.

#### **Keep posting on Facebook.**

Sample posts may include when the cages arrive, when the parking lots is poured, when staff receives training, etc. Include photos whenever possible.

#### **Update website with headline.**

“GRAND OPENING, (MONTH, DATE)”

#### **Schedule a private tour for area veterinarians.**

Vet-to-vet is the best way to introduce local veterinarians to your state-of-the-art clinic. Have your clinic veterinarian conduct the tour, focusing on best practices, sanitary procedures, and training staff received for the clinic.

Assure these veterinarians that your clientele are generally people who don't take their pets to a vet.

Invite veterinarians either via email or phone calls made by you and your board members.

### **Create some buzz for your new clinic.**

Ask everyone who visits the clinic to join your Facebook page to share information about your clinic with their friends. Get people talking!

## **ONE WEEK BEFORE CLINIC OPENING**

Host an open house before your clinic opening and invite the media, the public, rescue/shelter groups, donors and volunteers.

Talk about the process of opening a clinic; the services your clinic will offer; the number of surgeries to be conducted daily/annually; the special training staff has received; funding that you received to build the clinic in the community; animal statistics in the community; and the births you hope to prevent.

- The tour can be conducted by your clinic director, but the veterinarian should also be available to answer questions.
- Give the media a [press release](#) to take with them. In addition to your information about the clinic, be sure it includes information about how people can make appointments.
- Give the general public, volunteers, and donors a few of those business cards with your clinic services to distribute to friends.

## **TWO DAYS BEFORE CLINIC OPENING**

### **Send media alert to local media for opening day.**

Be sure you have booked appointments for those first few weeks so that there is activity for the media to cover.

### **Call media as needed to encourage them to come out and cover your opening day.**

#### **SAMPLE PITCH:**

“Hello, my name is INSERT NAME. I am the director of CLINIC NAME, a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost spay/neuter services for pets living in (COUNTY or CITY NAME). Our new clinic will open on (DAY, DATE) and start performing up to XX sterilizations a day to help reduce the pet population in our community. We need to get the word out that were here and ready to help pet owners. Can you help us out with a story on the opening of our spay/neuter clinic?”

# CLINIC OPENING DAY

## **Be prepared for media.**

Make sure your clinic is clean and your staff is ready to help clients. While it may be busy that morning, be sure to answer media questions and accommodate them, as needed. Hopefully, providing a special tour the week earlier will ensure they are well-informed and really only want to come out to photograph dogs and cats coming into the clinic that day.

## **Take lots of pictures on opening day.**

- Take a picture of the staff and volunteers. Before you open your doors that morning, capture your staff's excitement by taking a group photo and then taking more photos of them working throughout the day. Use these pictures on Facebook, in a newsletter, or in an annual report.
- Take a picture of your first sterilized pet and post on your Facebook page as well as use for a newsletter, appeal, and future campaigns. Use pictures for future newsletters, direct mail appeals, and advertising campaigns.
- Take even more pictures of people arriving, of clients or staff being interviewed by media, of people and their pets in the waiting room. You are building a portfolio of pictures to promote your clinic.

# POST-CLINIC OPENING

## **FIRST MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

### **Post on Facebook a minimum of two times a week.**

Provide information on the new clinic, open appointments, or upcoming special events or promotions. If a pet owner gives you permission, post a picture of their pet and their pet's story – where they were adopted from, how old they are, etc. Showing a picture of an eight week-old-puppy shows the public even young pets can be sterilized.

### **Send out a new calendar listing to all media.**

This should be your basic template that you send out monthly to ensure you are listed in all community calendars.

Start planning the first of your four annual promotions.

You will find some helpful promotional ideas in this kit.

### **Update your website, as needed, but at least once a month.**

The first month will mostly be about grant opening information, but be sure to include anything special you want to promote during the month. For example, if your Grand Opening month

involves giving away a free microchip with every surgery, be sure it's also mentioned on your website and Facebook page.

### **Don't let things get slow.**

Appointments can dwindle as the newness of your clinic wears off. Keeping your clinic visible in the community requires effort.

- Continue to distribute your business cards with surgery prices or other promotional materials to local animal businesses so they can help you promote your new clinic.
- If some of the local media didn't cover the opening of your clinic, perhaps they had a good reason – maybe there was another breaking news story that day. How do you get their attention? Did you know that it's okay to say, "Will you run a story on our clinic?" Give them a few reasons to cover the story in either a press release or a phone pitch. Here are a few sample phone pitches:
  - SAMPLE PITCH 1: "Hello, my name is INSERT NAME. I am the director of CLINIC NAME, a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost spay/neuter services for pets living in (COUNTY or CITY NAME). We have been open for one month now and have already performed more than XXX sterilizations for dogs and cats in the community. We estimate this has prevented about XXXX unwanted dogs and cats from being born in our community. Can you do a story on our spay/neuter clinic so we can reach more pet owners?"
  - SAMPLE PITCH 2: "Hello, my name is INSERT NAME. I am the director of CLINIC NAME, a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost spay/neuter services for pets living in (COUNTY or CITY NAME). We have been open for one month now and already our clinic has a three week waiting list of dogs and cats scheduled to be sterilized. We are very excited about the community's commitment to reducing the pet population in CITY NAME and want to let them know we have added an extra surgery day (or extra hours) over the next few weeks to help accommodate all the requests. Can you help us spread the word?"
  - SAMPLE PITCH 3: "Hello, my name is INSERT NAME. I am the director of CLINIC NAME, a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost spay/neuter services for pets living in (COUNTY or CITY NAME). We have been open for one month now and already our clinic has already performed more than XXX sterilizations, but we haven't even begun to reach capacity yet. We could provide another XXX sterilizations every month, saving even more lives, if more people knew about our services. Can you help us with a story?"

## **SECOND MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

**Update website, as needed, but at least once a month.**

Why not put a logo and link to the website of every animal organization that is helping you promote your clinic? Ask them to do the same for you.

**Post information about your clinic on Craig's List every two weeks.**

This is a great way to promote your clinic.

**Look for volunteers on Facebook, your website or Craig's List.**

You will need them for your special events and other outreach efforts.

Begin targeting neighborhood communities with local spay walks.

Ask volunteers to pair up and walk through neighborhoods and distribute fliers on your clinic or upcoming special events that may be in their neighborhood or especially for their neighborhood.

**Share stories on Facebook every few days.**

Why not talk about feral cats or share pet care tips for readers? Keep your Facebook friends engaged and use lots of photos to pique interest.

**Keep animal groups informed.**

You have gotten off to a good start, but it's imperative that you stay connected to the other animal groups in the community. Keep a separate email contact list for these groups so you can reach out to them quickly.

**Send your calendar listing to all area media.**

This is your basic information about clinic services, location, phone number and website, but this month should also include information about your upcoming special event too.

**Start promoting your first special event.**

Four weeks before your event:

- Send out calendar listing and/or [press releases](#) about your upcoming spay/neuter event for all media. (Check out our template pages for suggested copy.)
- Post an event notice on your Facebook page.
- Post an event notice on your Website.
- Distribute fliers and posters if you are targeting specific neighborhoods, during spay walks.
- Send emails to your outreach lists (animal-welfare agencies and animal businesses) to tell them about your promotion and provide fliers or other promotional materials to them for distribution.)
- Solicit volunteers for this particular event, as needed, through Facebook, Craig's List, and emails.



Two weeks before your event:

- Send out a [press release](#) to media.
- Repost on Facebook. You can actually remind people once a week for the entire month preceding an event.
- Continue soliciting volunteers, if needed, via Facebook. Craig's List or a press release to the media.

Two days before your event:

- Send out final media alert (request for coverage) about your event.
- Call the media and ask them to promote your event, especially if it's a very visual event, like a "Pit bull spay/neuter day."
- SAMPLE PITCH: "Hello, my name is INSERT NAME. I am the director of CLINIC NAME, a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost spay/neuter services for pets living in (COUNTY or CITY NAME). We are hosting our first spay/neuter event on DATE. Because pit bull terrier-type dogs are the most euthanized dogs in animal shelters, we are offering a free spay/neuter day for 50 of these dogs. Can you picture 50 pit bull terriers lining up in front of our clinic for this surgery? We think this would be a great visual that would also show people how wonderful these dogs are too. Could you help us promote the event and cover the story on DATE?"

**Don't be afraid to ASK the media to do a story, but understand that most media will not do stories about you every month.**

The general rule of thumb for media is one story every six months (unless the story is controversial and then they will be glad to write about you every day). There is enough media around town though to rotate through to keep your visibility high.

**Keep in contact with animal groups in your area.**

Make sure these groups continue to hear from you via email or newsletters. Ask them to help promote your special spay/neuter events.

## **THIRD MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

**Host your special event.**

During your event, make sure someone is taking pictures, especially of pets. Remember, people love to see their pets online and will often share links with friends, helping you build your relationships with the community. Get written permission to use photos of people and pets online or in your materials. Keep a simple photography authorization form handy.

**Promote your accomplishments.**

If your special event results are extraordinary – let’s say you sterilize 65 dogs and cats in a single day – send out another short press release to the media announcing your accomplishment. And share it on Facebook too.

**Keep statistics.**

Know how many pets you have sterilized each day and each month. These will come in handy when you write grants, produce end of year press releases for the media, or need to determine which months are the best months to host special events.

**Share stories on Facebook.**

Ask people at your special event or when they come in on a regular day at the clinic for their feedback on their experiences with your clinic. Get permission to share their feedback; otherwise you can share their stories anonymously on Facebook. Here are a few sample stories you might post.

**SAMPLE STORY 1:**

Sherri Linton says she was nervous about getting her dog Max neutered, but we assured her that her dog would be sterilized by a licensed veterinarian under general anesthesia. Here’s a picture of Max a few hours after surgery. As you can see, he’s ready to go home and get some extra TLC from mom tonight.

**SAMPLE STORY 2 (more anonymous):**

Mary thought her cat needed to have one litter before getting spayed. Her cat ended up having three litters before she arrived at our clinic. Cats do not need to have any litters or go through even one heat cycle before being spayed. Make sure your friends schedule their pet’s appointment for this surgery.

**SAMPLE STORY 3 (completely anonymous):**

About a week ago, a gentleman came into our clinic saying, “My cat is pregnant again. I don’t understand why this keeps happening. She hardly ever gets out.” Of course, you and I know that cats and dogs only need to “get out” one time to get pregnant and the only prevention for this is to get your pet sterilized. Help us spread the word that all pets, both male and female, need to be sterilized to prevent unwanted pet births.

**Begin working on your first newsletter.**

Newsletters can be printed and mailed or sent online via Constant Contact or other online sources. Include lots of photos, stories, success stories, grants, and upcoming events. Issue a minimum of two e-newsletters to supporters, maximum of six annually.

**Update website, as needed, but at least once a month with some news.**

Be sure to post lots of pictures of your first event.

**Send your calendar listing to all media.**

This is your basic information about clinic services, location, phone number and website.

## **FOURTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

### **Pay attention to trends.**

Now that you've been open three months and have one special event under your belt, you should begin to notice some trends or patterns in your business. Are Monday's your slowest appointment days? Are you discovering that 20% of your appointments are no-shows. Now's the time to take action to keep your surgery schedule booked. Here are a few possibilities to fill those slots:

- Offer special rates on your slowest day, like a reduced surgery rate or a free rabies vaccine or microchip, to increase traffic.
- Make your slowest day the day you schedule appointments for shelters, rescue groups and feral cat caretakers.
- Start overbooking by a few appointments each day to compensate for your no-shows.
- Provide more appointments each day for feral cat caregivers.

### **Send a press release out to the media every month on various topics.**

Send a press release out to the media every month on various topics including, but not limited to, kitten season, vaccination and microchipping clinics, pit bull terriers being euthanized at the shelter; the plight of community cats; debunking pet myths, etc. You can find one good story a month to share with the media.

Even if they don't run the press release, it will educate them about your organization and the plight of pets in your community.

### **Continue your relationship with animal groups.**

Be sure to keep the animal organizations and businesses current on your activities via email. Make sure they are Facebook friends, receive your newsletters, and are kept up-to-date on your events. They can help you cross promote your events.

### **Share stories on Facebook every few days.**

Tackle myths about pet sterilization – only one myth per posting please.

### **Send out a new calendar listing to all media.**

This should be your basic template that you send out regularly unless you are running a special program.

### **Begin planning your second special event.**

Will this one be a special one day event or a month long promotion? Each requires about the same amount of planning, but monthly promotions require media releases during the campaign.

**Update website, as needed, but at least once a month.**

Maybe you can start a running tally of how many pets you sterilize each month.

## **FIFTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

**Post information about your clinic on Craigslist every two weeks.**

Alternate between announcing special events, looking for volunteers, or letting people know where your clinic is located and your hours of operation.

**Hold a neighborhood spay walk to inform neighborhoods of your clinic, services or special event.**

Host these as often as you can get volunteers to help to promote your clinic, your mobile or MASH clinics, or an upcoming special spay/neuter event.

**Share stories on Facebook every few days.**

Is kitten season just around the corner? Perhaps sterilizing felines for an entire month is your next event? Here's a chance to talk about the plight of cats – both feral felines and homeless cats in shelters – and let people know you are here to help. Find out how many feral cats might be in your community. Gather some statistics on cats entering the shelters. Keep people informed about the plight of pets in your community.

**Send your calendar listing to all area media.**

This is your basic information about clinic services, location, phone number and website.

**Update website, as needed, but at least once a month.**

If your promotion this month is cats, be sure to have lots of feline photos on the website along with information on the special promotion.

**Start promoting your second event.**

Four weeks before your event:

- Send out calendar listing and/or press releases about your upcoming spay/neuter event for all media. (Check out our templates for suggested copy.)
- Post an event notice on your Facebook page.
- Post an event notice on your Website.
- Distribute flyers and posters if you are targeting specific neighborhoods, during spay walks.

- Send emails to your outreach lists (animal-welfare agencies and animal businesses) to tell them about your promotion and provide fliers or other promotional materials to them for distribution.)
- Solicit volunteers for this particular event, as needed, through Facebook, Craigslist and emails.

Two weeks before your event:

- Send out a press release to media.
- Repost on Facebook. You can actually remind people once a week for the entire month preceding an event.
- Continue soliciting volunteers, if needed, via Facebook. Craigslist or a press release to the media.

Two days before your event:

- Send out reminder press release/media alert (request for coverage) about event to all media.
- Call the media and ask them to promote your event. If this event is a month-long event to sterilize 400 felines, be sure to provide the media with statistics about cats in your community. Then call the newspaper or television station and find out if there is a cat lover on staff who may want to develop this story.
- SAMPLE PITCH: “Hello, my name is INSERT NAME. I am the director of CLINIC NAME, a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost spay/neuter services for pets living in (COUNTY or CITY NAME). We are hosting a month-long spay/neuter event for cats called “Beat the Heat.” Sadly, cats are euthanized at three times the rate of dogs in our local shelters, so we want to sterilize at least 400 cats this month to prevent thousands of unwanted kittens from being born in the spring. We are reducing our rate to \$25 per feline this month, thanks to a grant from PetSmart Charities. Could you help us get the word out about this event?”

### **Keep in contact with animal groups in your area.**

Make sure these groups continue to hear from you via email or newsletters. Let them know when your slow days are and that you are available to sterilize their pets, too.

## **SIXTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

### **Host your special event.**

If this is a month-long event for cats, why not provide a daily tally via Facebook or on your website of how many felines you are sterilizing each day?

### **Take lots of photos.**

Take lots of photos of your feline customers – remember pet parents love to see their pets online. Get permission to use the images, especially if there are people in the picture.

**Keep statistics.**

You should keep statistics daily, but always keep statistics for your special events too, especially if they are month-long events. Let's say you are providing a special sterilization rate over a three day period for large dogs. If you don't keep track of the number of large dogs, you might lump all dogs together and wouldn't have a solid number for this event. These numbers always come in handy when reporting statistics to the press or when reporting back on a grant.

**Promote your accomplishments.**

If your special event results are extraordinary – let's say you sterilize over 200 large dogs in a three day period – send out another short press release to the media announcing your accomplishment. Share it on Facebook too.

**Share stories on Facebook.**

Keep asking people for feedback, but also ask them for their email addresses too. You need to build your email list every month and this only happens from asking people for email addresses and adding them to your contact list. Before they walk out with their sterilized pet, be sure to ask them to become a friend on Facebook. Your business card should include your website and Facebook address on it.

**Issue an appeal letter twice a year.**

One of these letters should be delivered before the winter holidays to reach people at a time when charitable giving is the most high. Share your success stories and let them know how you are helping animals in your community.

**Continue your relationship with animal groups.**

Be sure to keep the animal organizations and businesses current on your activities via email. Send them an email every month or two with information about your upcoming programs. Ask them if they will share your information in their newsletters or Facebook page too. If they aren't operating a spay/neuter clinic themselves, they may want to help you get the word out. Reciprocate by offering to do the same for them.

**Update website, as needed, but at least once a month.**

Update website, as needed, but at least once a month with a current calendar of your activities, locations for mobile or MASH units if you do them, your hours and days of operation, and your services.

**Send your calendar listing to all media.**

This is your basic information about clinic services, location, phone number and website. Be sure to mention the locations and dates and times of your mobile and MASH clinics every month.

## **SEVENTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

### **Contact human service agencies.**

Don't just partner with animal groups; create relationships with human service agencies too. Be sure to include human food banks, social service agencies, and job and family services. Provide them with fliers, postcards, brochures, or business cards on your basic services so that they can distribute to their clients. Ask if you can set up a booth at Job and Family Services or during distribution for a local human food bank. Come prepared to hand out information and schedule spay/neuter appointments.

### **Issue a press release when you reach certain spay/neuter milestones.**

Whether you reach a significant milestone, like the 5,000 pet sterilized or a significant period of time in operation – first six months, first year, and then annually after that – why not send out a press release sharing these milestones with your community? Let them know how many pets you have sterilized over the past six months. Send out a press release when you hit 5,000 and 10,000 pets sterilized. Remember to always post information from your press releases on Facebook too.

### **Begin planning promotions for your third spay/neuter event of the year.**

If you need help with developing promotional materials, check to see if local colleges have graphic arts students who could submit some creative ideas or solicit some creative volunteers through Facebook or Craigslist.

### **Send your calendar listing to all media.**

This is your basic information about clinic services, location, phone number and website.

### **Update website, as needed.**

This month you can include statistics from your six month milestone.

## **EIGHTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

### **Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.**

Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper (daily or weekly) about pet overpopulation instead of sending out a press release this month (see sample in this kit).

### **Continue your relationship with animal groups.**

Send them a copy of your latest online newsletter.

**Send your calendar listing to all media.**

Hopefully, by now you have a solid media list for the calendar listings and know deadlines to ensure you are listed everywhere, every month. This may seem tedious, but keeping your presence known in the community is vital to your success. Ask a volunteer to check all the publications and online resources you send your listings to see if they are posting your information every month.

**Issue press releases.**

Issue press releases when you have interesting stories about people getting their pets sterilized.

**Start promoting your third spay/neuter event.**

Four weeks before your event:

- Send out calendar listing and/or press releases about your upcoming spay/neuter event for all media. (Check out our template pages for suggested copy.)
- Post an event notice on your Facebook page.
- Post an event notice on your website.
- Distribute fliers and posters, as needed, to targeted neighborhoods, during spay walks.
- Send emails to your outreach lists (animal-welfare agencies and animal businesses) to tell them about your promotion and provide fliers or other promotional materials to them for distribution.
- Solicit volunteers for this particular event, as needed, through Facebook, Craigslist, and emails.

Two weeks before your event:

- Send out a press release to media.
- Repost on Facebook. Remind people once a week for the entire month preceding an event.
- Continue soliciting volunteers, if needed, via Facebook. Craigslist or a press release to the media.

Two days before your event:

- Send out reminder press release/media alert (request for coverage) about event to all media.
- Call the media and ask them to promote your event.

## **NINTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

**Host your third special event.**



Always have a (volunteer) photographer on-hand to take pictures for your website, Facebook page, and promotional materials.

**Keep statistics.**

Always keep statistics for your special events. These numbers will come in handy when reporting to the press or seeking or reporting on grant funding.

**Talk about your success – and failures.**

Successes are easy to talk about, but what if your event was not successful? What if you only had 10 people show up for a spay/neuter event in which you were expecting 60? Go back and see what happened. Not enough press? Not enough advance notice to the community? Figure out what happened and be ready to fix it next time. In the meantime, it's okay to share this information with your Facebook friends – and with the media if animals are still being euthanized at record numbers in your community. It can be another letter to the editor about the connection between euthanasia in your community and the low turnout for free and low-cost spay/neuter services.

**Begin working on your second newsletter.**

Gather stories and include successes achieved so far. Again, this can be printed and mailed, but most clinics don't have those kinds of resources. Email newsletters are great and simple to put together.

**Share stories on Facebook.**

Facebook is also a great platform for sharing videos too. Do you have any videos of your events to share online?

**Issue press releases.**

Issue press releases when funders give you money for your clinic operations or for spay/neuter services.

**Update website.**

Update website, as needed, but at least once a month with a current calendar of your activities, locations for mobile or MASH units if you do them, your hours and days of operation, and your services. Put your press releases and letter to the editor, etc. online in a News section of your webpage.

**Send your calendar listing to all media.**

This is your basic information about clinic services, location, phone number and website. Add a sentence about a special promotion, if applicable, like a free rabies vaccination with every surgery for the month.

## **TENTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

### **Begin planning your fourth and final event for the year.**

Consider hosting a special spay/neuter day for your one year anniversary. Why can't you have a holiday that is all your own?

### **Use awareness days and holidays to make your own promotions.**

You're hosting four major special events annually, but you don't have to create an event from scratch.

Host some events during special awareness days/weeks/months.

- Spay Day (the last Tuesday of February, but many groups use the entire month for a spay promotion)
- Be Kind to Animals Week (the first full week in May)
- National Shelter Cat Month (June)
- National Shelter Dog Month (October)
- National Feral Cat Day (October 16)

### **Create your own event from an annual holiday.**

Here are a few holidays that clinics have given a pet spin to:

- St. Patrick's Day (St. Catricks Day), March 17
- Cinco de Mayo (Cinco de Meow), May 5
- No Mother's Day, May
- "No Labor" Day, Labor Day Weekend
- No Father's Day, June
- Happy "New"ter Year. Neuter special of \$20.12 (current year) or the entire month, January
- New'ter Year Resolution – Reduce pet homeless by neutering your pet for the new year, January

See more ideas on the promotional ideas page.

### **Keep in contact with animal groups in your area.**

Make sure these groups continue to hear from you via email or newsletters. Ask them to help promote your special spay/neuter events. Give them credit on Facebook or your website if they have been really helpful in helping you promote the clinic.

### **Begin building your PR and Marketing Plan for year two.**

Using this first year PR and Marketing Plan, begin planning your second year activities. Identify dates and months when you want to hold your events.

Review successes, trends and goals going forward. Under each event or goal, be sure to think about how to get the message to the community.

**Keep posting on your Facebook page.**

Facebook is free and gives you instant access to your supporters. Sometimes, your Facebook friends will become volunteers or donate to your cause.

**Issue a press release debunking spay/neuter myths or talk about current events in your community and how they tie it into your clinic.**

Example: Your local animal control says they are taking in more dogs and cats each month. Issue a press release on how you can help reduce intake through your clinic.

**Don't forget to send out your calendar listing.**

Keep the routine going and know your deadlines. Your clinic name should be listed every month, everywhere there are calendar listings in your community.

**Update website, as needed.**

Remember to add your press releases to your website.

## **ELEVENTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

**Post on Facebook at least twice a week.**

Post upcoming events, interesting stories and photos of pets that come into the clinic; upcoming vaccination or microchip clinics; special promotional pricing and events; unique stories of volunteers, donors, animal groups, or businesses in the community that help or support your clinic.

**Post on Craigslist every two weeks.**

Solicit volunteers for your final event of the year.

**Add to calendar section.**

Still have slow surgical days? Include information in the calendar section of your local community newspaper about low cost spay/neuter appointments for that slow day.

**Issue a press release.**

Issue a press release about how to make appointments for the spay/neuter surgeries to ensure your surgical slots are full on your slow day.

**Keep in contact with animal groups in your area.**

Make sure these groups continue to hear from you via email or newsletters. And don't let them run out of business cards or other materials for them to distribute.

**Continue finalizing your second year PR and marketing plan.**

Take time all month to work on your PR calendar and begin finalizing your second year events and promotions.

**Start promoting your final event of the year.**

Four weeks before your event:

- Send out calendar listing and/or press releases about your upcoming spay/neuter event for all media. (Check out our templates for suggested copy.)
- Post an event notice on your Facebook page.
- Post an event notice on your website.
- Distribute flyers and posters, as needed, to targeted neighborhoods, during spay walks.
- Send emails to your outreach lists (animal-welfare agencies and animal businesses) to tell them about your promotion and provide fliers or other promotional materials to them for distribution.)
- Solicit volunteers for this particular event, as needed, through Facebook, Craigslist, and emails.

Two weeks before your event:

- Send out a press release to media.
- Repost on Facebook. You can actually remind people once a week for the entire month preceding an event.
- Continue soliciting volunteers, if needed, via Facebook. Craigslist or a press release to the media.

Two days before your event:

- Send out reminder press release/media alert (request for coverage) about event to all media.

## **TWELFTH MONTH AFTER CLINIC OPENING**

**Host your final special event of the year.**

You should be a pro by now at marketing your events. Make sure you capture the day through photos and copy to share in your social media. You will want to document your year-end activities.

**Keep statistics.**

The statistics that you have been keeping all year-long will finally be put to good use in an annual report, newsletter, appeal or grant request. Know your numbers.

**Issue a year-end press release with your spay/neuter numbers for the first year.**

Publicize your total annual spay/neuter surgeries in January for the previous year because this is a slow month for news and you will likely get more coverage. Also, media expects “end of year” stories in late December and January.

**Issue your second appeal letter for the year.**

Share your success stories and how you will continue saving lives moving forward. Use stories, photos, quotes, event successes, etc.

**Finalize your PR and marketing plan.**

Using this plan as your guide and building on your successes. Follow this marketing-communications plan for the second year, adding or changing events as needed.

For more ideas, watch our free, three-part webinar on Working with the Media, which provides information on print, radio and television media relations.