



The Veterinarian Revival: 3 Things We Learned at WVC + VMX

Western Veterinary Conference and Veterinary Meeting & Expo
observations from Bader Rutter



Like Thanksgiving and Christmas, [VMX](#) and [WVC](#) are times when the veterinarian family gets together to share stories, talk about the year just concluded and plan for the future. So we were glad to reconnect with our pet-loving family in Orlando and Las Vegas this year.

And, in case anyone was anxious or doubting, VMX and WVC confirmed that veterinarians remain a vital audience and influencer who keep millions of pets healthy.

After witnessing several years of veterinarians losing attention to digital channels, strong attention is returning. Here are some of our observations from VMX and WVC after talking to our network of practicing veterinarians, industry analysts, and petcare sales and marketing leaders.

1. Brands can't bypass the veterinarian-pet owner relationship.

Petcare brands are increasingly vying for recognition among veterinarians, the trusted expert that pet owners turn to most often for advice. Veterinarians, to their credit and positive bottom line, are actively seeking new ways to strengthen the bonds by servicing pet owners in a way that works for them, whether it be at-home delivery or proactive bloodwork with immediate results.

This year, we noticed some new faces at the shows in addition to returning mainstays. Petcare giant [Chewy](#) was in attendance for the first time at VMX, debuting a new veterinarian prescription service to save time for the veterinarian and inch fax machines closer to retirement. The brand alluded to more future veterinarian-centric tools in their pipeline as well.

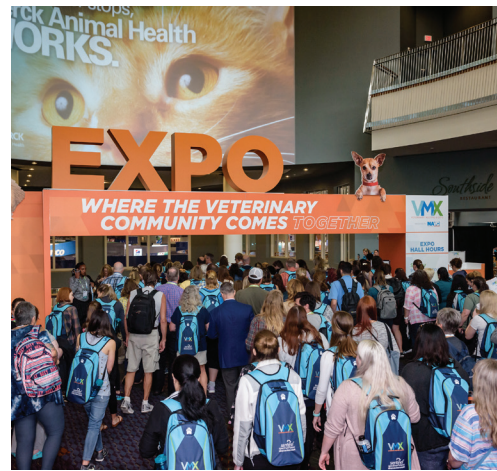
Additionally, Chewy discussed plans to produce high-quality social media videos of veterinarians providing medical advice to pet owners. The move signified that the brand is committed to demonstrating its values and supports the relationship between pet parents and their veterinarians.

2. Brands are increasingly connecting veterinarians and consumers, and gaining valuable data.

Animal health powerhouse [Zoetis](#) was unwavering in its commitment to the owner-veterinarian relationship. Through [Zoetis Petcare Rewards](#), the brand aims to connect thousands of pet owners with pet health solutions and also their veterinary clinics. As Zoetis gets ready to launch Simparica Trio™, this connection will be valuable.

We also noted a separate space entirely devoted to a free tool from Boehringer Ingelheim, [PetPro Connect](#), meant to help veterinarians meaningfully connect with pet owners. The digital interface tool was touted as a win-win for clinics and animal health companies alike, offering easier clinic-patient contact while simultaneously collecting and reporting on useful clinic and customer data.

Whoever solves the crowded PIMS (Patient Information Management System) landscape will have a leg up in creating further connection and data-driven insights.



3. Veterinarians are partners in a brand's mission.

Veterinarians have always been important partners in meeting pet owner needs. Diagnostics leader [IDEXX™](#) demonstrated this trend by leading several veterinarian-focused workshops about marketing veterinary practices to pet owners. Lessons on social media tactics and other strategies demonstrated how brands are helping veterinarians become powerful thought leaders when it comes to driving brand recognition and trust.

[Royal Canin](#) highlighted several new opportunities for better patient interfaces via video or photo consults. We hope they were building demand for an exciting future technology pipeline because the line for reversible canvas bags from their competitor Hill's Pet Nutrition extended around the block. They could use a leg up in another way.

The consensus: Veterinarians are a brand's best friend.

Overall, petcare brands are recognizing how veterinarians are vital to not only keeping pets healthy, but also to offering advice. That authority makes them a critical channel for new products.

Until these major holidays roll around next year, we will keep in touch with our veterinarian family via social media, FaceTime, calls and an occasional visit.



Want to learn how you can leverage the veterinarian in your petcare marketing? Let's connect.

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