

Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic

By: Lucy Fischer



Introduction

I have wanted to be a veterinarian for as long as I can remember. I was accepted into veterinary school as a senior in high school through Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine's Early Admittance Program. Throughout my college journey, I've focused on Animal Science, Spanish, and Risk Management. For my Honors Project, I decided to combine my future entrepreneurial plans with my desire to help animals by designing my own veterinary practice. Since I am passionate about both private practice and shelter medicine, this plan combines the unique aspects of both.

The idea for Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic came from my experience with the Animal Rescue Foundation in Chicago, IL. Seeing the impact that these foster organizations have on the lives of thousands of homeless animals fueled my desire to help make a difference. That is why our clinic is so focused on helping shelters and foster organizations. We are paying homage to the volunteers who dedicate their lives to this neverending work.

This report details the key attributes of a veterinary clinic that bridges the gap between private practice and shelter medicine. It will explore different aspects of vertical integration and various activities the veterinary clinic will participate in to help better the lives of animals.

Topic #1: Bridging the Gap between Shelter Medicine and Private Practice

In the veterinary world, there are many different professional paths. In a non-tracking veterinary school, which is the majority of schools, students study all species and learn comparative anatomy to have a wide breadth of information. After the final test and graduation, veterinarians have knowledge of all species. After veterinary school, newly graduated veterinarians can choose to focus on private practice, public service, specialization, or pursue a whole host of other career paths. For me, the pull towards shelter medicine and private practice stayed strong throughout high school and college. An internship at the Hinsdale Humane Society showed me the impact that shelter medicine can have on thousands of animals. And a long-term job at Timbercreek Veterinary Hospital opened me up to a dream future in private practice. I wanted the stability of private practice with the impact of shelter medicine. I decided that the best way to work at my dream clinic in the future was to create a clinic that bridged the gap between shelter medicine and private practice.

Subpoint #1: Key Aspects of Private Practice

Private practice is what someone would typically think of when considering a veterinarian. It's where the general public takes their dog, cat, bunny, or snake to. Private practice is a clinic owned by one or more veterinarians. They make the decisions for their practice and hire personnel who they feel will most contribute to the success of the clinic. It is typically a small business with 15-25 employees and is a staple of the community. Many veterinarians and other professionals choose private practice because of the freedom of choice into what procedures are performed, closer relationships with their clients and patients, and more flexibility with scheduling. This is typically seen in contrast to corporate veterinary clinics, where the company and its veterinarians are run by a larger organization or the government.



Subpoint #2: Key Aspects of Shelter Medicine

Shelter medicine is significantly different from private practice. It is typically run differently from other types of veterinary medicine, while still maintaining the holistic goal of helping animals with quality care. Shelter medicine focuses on caring for homeless animals in shelters or foster programs who need medicine or surgery before starting their path towards getting adopted. Shelter medicine focuses on high-density medicine, in order to help as many homeless animals as possible, with an emphasis on behavioral analysis

and public health. There are many added challenges with shelter medicine because many shelter animals arrive at the veterinarian with sickness, no medical history, and a fear of humans. Both infectious diseases and behavioral challenges are commonplace in a shelter due to the lack of care, human neglect, and abuse that many of these animals have suffered through. Although shelter medicine is not for the faint-of-heart people, the impact that one veterinarian can have on thousands of animals is incredible. Most shelter veterinarians complete multiple spays and neuters everyday, along with assisting in general medical care for all animals in the shelter and providing low-cost vaccine clinics for the general public. The high-volume nature of shelter medicine makes it a great resource for veterinarians because of the large number of cases seen on a daily basis.



Topic #2: Incorporation of Shelter Medicine

The best of both worlds comes when the benefits of private practice are merged with the impact of shelter medicine. In my clinic, we will incorporate some of the most beneficial practices of shelter medicine in order to help shelters, foster groups, and homeless pets. My list below will detail the different activities and programs that we will be implementing and a description below will explore the importance of each.

1. Monthly low-cost spay/neuter events and vaccine clinics, to assist with preventative medicine.
2. Providing a surgery suite for other veterinarians to do TNR
3. Working with fosters: Free exams and low-cost medicine
4. First exam free for people who adopt from partnering shelters and fosters
5. Interactive kiosk for adoptable pets in our lobby
6. Fundraising events and monthly surgery focuses with donations



Subpoint #1: Monthly low-cost spay/neuter events and vaccine clinics

Our clinic will partner with shelters and the local government to provide monthly low-cost spay and neuter events as well as vaccine clinics. Spaying and neutering is incredibly beneficial for the community and for animals, as it reduces the number of stray animals in the area. Spaying and neutering pets can also reduce behavioral concerns. Although it is so important, this surgery can often cost upwards of \$300 dollars for the anesthesia, veterinarian's time and expertise, sutures, and recovery medicine. To help shelters and foster groups adopt out as many pets as possible to loving families, our practice will host low-cost spay and neuter events with high-quality, rapid surgeries for homeless pets.

In addition to the low-cost spay and neuter events, we will also be offering vaccine clinics for the local community. By partnering with the local government, we will be able to sponsor these vaccine clinics. This will allow many low-income families to receive vital vaccines at a reduced price.

Subpoint #2: Providing a surgery suite for other veterinarians to do TNR

Once we develop partnerships with local rescue groups, we will also be reaching out to community Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) organizations. These are groups that work with the community to capture feral cats, spay/neuter them, and return them. It's a way to reduce the homeless cat population without



euthanizing the current feral cats. It's important to note that our clinic fully supports the goals of TNR and are more than happy to assist their mission. Our clinic would provide a surgery suite for other veterinarians to do TNR. Organizations often have veterinarians and veterinary assistants willing to volunteer their services, but it's often hard to find a location with a sterile surgery suite to complete these surgeries.

Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic will specifically be providing an open surgery suite for TNR organizations weekly on Sundays. Since our hours of operation are Monday-Saturday, the whole surgery area will be free for these organizations. Depending on the season, need, and number of organizations, we will decide how often to rent out our space (for free). Since these TNR organizations are constantly finding, fixing, and releasing strays around the neighborhood, we are predicting a weekly need for the surgery suite.

In return for our room, we are only asking these groups to bring their own supplies and leave our surgery area how they found it. Often, these groups work with the local government to get supplies in return for reducing the number of homeless animals. They are welcome to use our fridge for vaccines, towels for heat control, corn syrup for glucose regulation, and basic supplies. They will be expected to provide the sedation materials, vaccines, tools, and scrubs. Furthermore, our clinic will benefit from this mission by having a direct partnership with the TNR groups. It is always beneficial to network to local groups, especially ones that have as important of an impact as TNR groups.



Subpoint #3: Working with fosters: Free exams and low-cost medicine

Working with foster groups is the basic reason for the creation of Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic. Since our goal is to help as many animals as possible, working with foster groups is essential to the clinic's purpose. We will offer free exams and low-cost medicine to foster groups that don't have a location base. Working with ARF has shown me how valuable a quick veterinary exam can be for foster groups and their animals. Often, these cats and dogs come in very sick and if they are able to get an exam quickly, we can help them get better immediately.

Since our goal is to help fosters without losing money, we will offer drop-offs for foster groups. This means that they will be able to drop off their cat or dog foster whenever they are able to and we will complete the exam whenever there is a break in appointments. This will require some flexibility with the fosters, but based on my experience and research, it is a much better solution than the current situation, where fosters have a short window where the foster mom/dad has to wait for hours in their car with the potential of being seen that day. Many fosters dedicate the majority of their free time to saving animals, and our clinic wants to do our part to assist them. Our goal is to expedite this process and work

directly with fosters to ensure that our clinic is not losing money but is fully able to help as many animals as possible.

The low-cost medicine is important for both the foster groups and our clinics. Often there is a large up-charge on medications so the clinic can earn a profit. We will help out these foster groups by giving them medications at only a slight up-charge from where we purchased it. This means that the clinic will earn some money while still helping foster groups who would have no other option than to go to a clinic that charges full price.

Subpoint #4: First exam free for people who adopt from partnering shelters and fosters

As a way to attract new customers while also promoting shelter adoptions, we will be offering a free first exam for clients who adopted their dog or cat from partnering shelters. This is an approximate \$50 discount for these new pet owners, but the clinic will still generate a profit because of the vaccines, additional medications, and new clients that arise from these appointments. We are hoping to partner with around 5 shelters and foster groups. We will continue to monitor these earnings to determine whether it would be beneficial to partner with more groups in the future.



Subpoint #5: Interactive kiosk for adoptable pets in our lobby

A simple but efficient way to facilitate more adoptions of homeless animals is to make the process accessible. After generating funds from a Kickstarter Campaign (mentioned later), we will use a portion of that money to purchase a kiosk for our reception area. The kiosk will be interactive and will highlight PetFinder, “an internet company that operates the largest online pet adoption website serving all of North America”. PetFinder lists thousands of pets on their website, from shelters and foster groups all over the nation. Clients can scroll through the list of adoptable cats and dogs while waiting for an appointment or if they are looking for a new pet! Even if only one dog or cat is adopted through this Kiosk, it is more than worth it. Every life counts and an interactive tool for adoptions is perfect in our clinic.

Subpoint #6: Fundraising events and monthly surgery focuses with donations

Although we are a for-profit veterinary clinic, we are planning on hosting events to fundraise for local shelters and foster groups. Our current plan is to participate in

community events, organize a Puppy Trot event, host dog yoga in our clinic, and get the community together towards a purposeful mission. Each of these events

Similarly, as a way to generate profit and help animals, we are planning on hosting a couple monthly promotions each year. For example, February is celebrated as National Pet Dental Health Month. For every dental procedure completed in February, we will pledge to donate a certain amount to a shelter of their own choosing. This not only promotes clients to take care of their pet's teeth but will also allow shelters to benefit from the donations.

Topic #3: Business Model

A business model is the basic plan of a company for generating a profit. My business plan included key partners, activities, resources, value propositions, customer relationships, channels, customer segments, cost structure, and revenue streams. Although much of this business model is incorporated into other aspects of my research paper, I wanted to expand on a couple of these topics in this section. I created this business model for Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic for a couple of reasons. First, it will allow me to show a detailed plan to potential future investors. Second, it helps me keep the company's primary goals organized. And third, it allows me to focus on the most important aspects of the business. Below is a brief overview of the value propositions, channels, customer segments, and key partners.

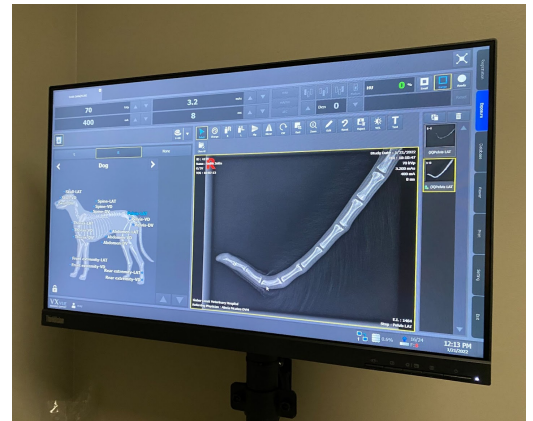
Subpoint #1: Value Propositions

The value propositions are the different aspects of the veterinary clinic that makes it unique. Although the combination of shelter medicine and private practice already makes Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic stand out from typical businesses, our clinic will incorporate other aspects to help differentiate us from the competition.

This begins with our modern facility and equipment. We are planning on having an updated, modern-style facility with a simple but elegant design. It will be bright and simple with sound-resistant walls to ensure that each animal is as comfortable as possible. Our equipment will be state-of-the-art. Digital diagnostic tools are key in current veterinary practices that want to have the best possible equipment for their clients. A digital X-Ray table is a pricey but incredibly important investment for our company. It creates clear radiographs that will help identify illnesses and broken bones.

Likewise, our staff will all engage in continued learning, sponsored by Zoetis PetCare to ensure that our techniques, procedures, and medications are the most effective and up-to-date practices. We will also strive to receive AAHA Accreditation after only a few years in practice. AAHA stands for American Animal Hospital Association and is a national program designed to select 12-15% of veterinary clinics whose practices are up to a certain standard and meet specific guidelines. Likewise, each and every one of the personnel on our team will be fear free certified. This certification teaches our group how to keep pets as comfortable as possible while reducing their stress.

For smaller aspects that we separate us from other practices, we are planning on having separate seating areas for dogs and cats, have the kiosk mentioned early with adoptable pets, and have an app where our clients can do everything they need such as set up appointments, purchase medications, review veterinary articles, and receive notifications all from their phone.





Subpoint #2: Channels and Customer Segments

The channel section of the business model describes how a company will be communicating with and reaching its customer segments. As with the majority of veterinary practices, our focus will be on our store-front operation. The physical building will be the primary source of contact with our clients, as they will have appointments in the building and can purchase food, medications, toys, and more at the veterinary clinic. In order to appeal to the younger generation, we will have an app with appointments and reminders, as mentioned above. We are hoping to eventually have an online pharmacy that will be set-up after we have an initial client base, where customers can purchase prescription diets, over-the-counter medicine, and toys. Our clients will also be able to fill out anonymous surveys on the app that will go directly to our program so we can evaluate how they perceive our practice.

Our advertisements will be geared toward social media campaigns and community events, as these are inexpensive and efficient ways to connect with our client base. Likewise, our connections with local shelters and foster groups will generate a strong client base with our freemium promotion of the initial exam free when clients adopt from our partner companies. We will also offer subscriptions (Puppy Wellness Package/Vaccine Package) and partner with other companies to keep our clients coming back.



Subpoint #4: Key Partners

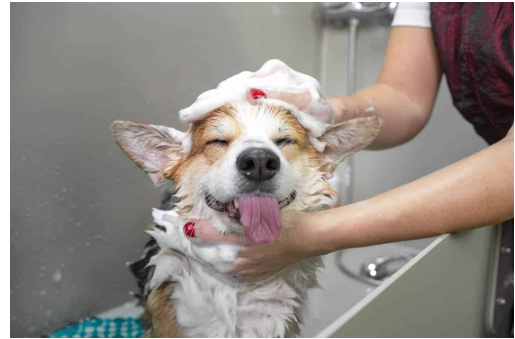
There are many key partners that are involved with a veterinary clinic. For the set-up of the company, our practice will be working with a legal partner to ensure that we are doing everything necessary legally. We will also be working directly with an experienced bank to take out an initial loan. In terms of diagnostic partners, we will work with various laboratories and specialists. We will also need to establish a connection with UPS or USPS to send out this blood work. To diagnose some patients, we might have to send blood work

or biopsies to an outside lab that does specific tests that we won't have in-house. Likewise, CT Scans, oncology work, cardiology work, and clients needing extensive internal surgery will be referred to a specialist at a partnering clinic.



Other partners that would be beneficial include a connection with a local crematorium for patients who are euthanized at the practice. We will be the middleman in this exchange so the clients can receive their ashes and personalized paw print from us if they prefer, rather than having to go to the cemetery. It will also be beneficial to work directly with food suppliers, such as Hill's Science Diet and Royal Canin, as well as medicine suppliers.

Finally, using referral programs will be beneficial towards spreading the word about our clinic and establishing connections. We will likely partner with dog and cat groomers, a specific daycare and boarding company, and a dog walking business to help our clients find exactly what they need for their pet.



Topic #4: Financials

The most important part about starting a business is the financial aspect. The report below details key financial predictions for Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic, complete with fundraising plans, revenue streams, and cost structure.

Subpoint #1: Fundraising

Although the majority of the veterinary clinic will be funded with a Small Business Administrative Loan, we also plan on fundraising to increase interest and revenue. In order to help get this clinic up and running, we currently plan to focus on two major fundraising routes. The first will come from crowdfunding sources. Crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter, GoFundMe, Fundly, and Cuffed can help get initial money for our company. Kickstarter will likely be

our major focus for crowdfunding. We would set a minimum goal of \$1,000 for the creation of the clinic, to help fund purchases of equipment. For any \$50+ donation, we will send a custom T-Shirt with our company's logo. For any \$100+ donation, we would send a custom drawstring swag bag filled with a t-shirt, stickers, and a water bottle from Fischer's Fur Babies Veterinary Clinic. Although approximately 2/3 of all campaigns on Kickstarter failed to reach the necessary amount of money, we are confident that our emphasis on social entrepreneurship will be an important draw towards fundraising for our practice. On the positive side, an average successful project raises from \$10,000 to \$23,000. Other crowdfunder resources, such as the ones mentioned above, could also be sources of funding for equipment and initial renovations.



The social entrepreneurship aspect of our company also plays a role in our second fundraising focus. We are planning on working with local governments to fundraise for our low-cost spay and neuter events, our vaccine clinics, and our work with foster groups. In the past, various local governments have used a portion of their budget that's geared towards public safety for veterinary clinics, in order to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases. Rabies and fecal parasites especially tend to be the focuses for these governments. Therefore, we can use these governmental connections to establish funding for these aspects of our practice. This will generate some income and help our clinic network with the community.

Vaccines for Dogs

the spruce

Core Vaccines

- Rabies
- Distemper
- Hepatitis/Adenovirus
- Parvovirus
- Parainfluenza

Non-core Vaccines

- Bordetella
- Leptospirosis
- Lyme Disease
- Coronavirus
- Giardia
- Canine Influenza H3N8
- Rattlesnake vaccine

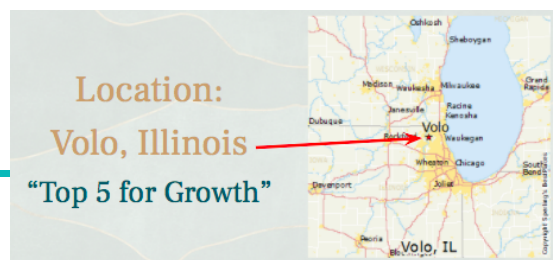
Subpoint #2: Revenue Streams

Every veterinary clinic is composed of various revenue streams that function as a whole to generate a profit. My clinic will focus on 5 revenue streams, listed in terms of profitability. These include: services, asset sales, subscription fees, brokerage fees, freemium model, and advertising.

1. **Services:** Services, in combination with Asset Sales, will be the focus of our revenue stream. Services include veterinary exams, nail trims, anal gland expressions, surgeries, radiographs, blood draws, heartworm tests, and more. These services are vital to diagnosing illnesses and determining the health of each and every animal that comes through our clinic.
2. **Asset Sales:** The purchase and sale of physical property will also be essential to our revenue model. This will include medications, flea/tick prevention, heartworm prevention, vaccines, rabies certificates and tags, dermatology products, ear products, eye products, and more.
3. **Brokerage Fees:** Our clinic will act as the middleman between various companies. With medications, prescription pet food, flea/tick/heartworm prevention, and more. We will gain revenue from brokerage fees associated with these purchases.
4. **Subscription Fees:** Yearly puppy, adult dog, kitten, and adult cat wellness plans will give clients the option to pay for their services monthly. This will include everything involved in a yearly checkup, along with a year's worth of prevention. They will also receive discounted surgeries if they purchase the subscription package.
5. **Freemium Revenue:** For new clients that adopt an animal from our partner shelters and foster programs, we are offering the first exam free. This is approximately a \$50 value for new clients. We expect this practice to bring us additional revenue, as other services during the visit and the value from each new client will continue to bring profit to our company.

Subpoint #2: Cost Structure

To start this veterinary clinic, we plan on either taking out a Small Business Administrative Loan or securing money from family. The Small Administrative Business Loan would be for \$180,000, of which we will pay 10% up-front and the rest over a span of 10 years. This will cover the first-year rent, necessary renovations, equipment, and basic supplies. The monthly cost to rent a 5,000 sq ft building in Volo, IL is around \$6,000 per month. Year one will be our starting phase, securing new clients. Our goal for year two is 12 appointments per day for each of the two veterinarians, with an average invoice of \$150. This will total a yearly sum of 8,760 appointments, amounting to an approximate \$1,314,000 revenue stream for year one.



Topic #4: Additional Considerations

Although most of these points were briefly mentioned earlier in the report, I would like to expand on some of the more unique aspects of our veterinary clinic. Below is a report of our fear free certification, plans for in-house communication, and our personalized app.

Subpoint #1: Fear Free Certification

The national “fear-free certification” program markets itself as “Taking the ‘Pet’ Out of ‘Petrified’ for All Animals”. Our clinic will pursue individual fear free training as well as a comprehensive clinic fear free standard. In this way, all of our staff will be Fear Free Certified Professionals and our clinic as a whole will be a Fear Free Certified Practice. The courses and programs within the fear free certification will provide our company with the knowledge and tools to look after a pet’s physical and



emotional wellbeing while they are at our practice. This individual certification requires at least 9 hours of veterinary education with “stringent testing and annual continued education requirements”, according to the Fear Free Pets website. Our clinic believes in the mission of “fear free” and will be part of the revolution in veterinary medicine, towards alleviating stress and anxiety in pets in the veterinary world.

Subpoint #2: In-House Communication

Our clinic will engage with each other through WhatsApp, which is an app on the phone where groups can send texts to each other. This will allow for fast and efficient communication within our clinic. Oftentimes, in a veterinary practice, due to the enormous amount of moving parts, it can be hard to relay information to the receptionists, vet assistants, and veterinarians at the same time. This form of communication will automatically alert the whole group if something is urgent or if there is a question about anything at all. It is part of our modern-focus and will help our clinic operate smoothly during the day.

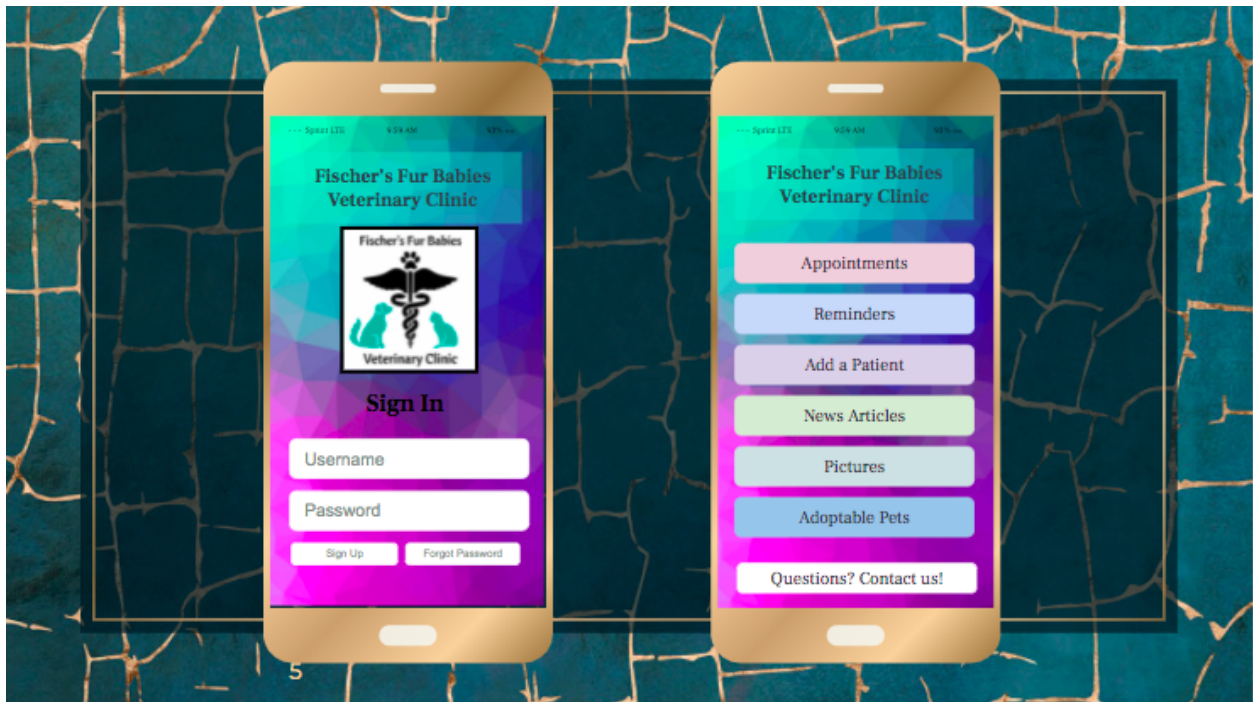
Subpoint #3: Our Personalized App

Our personal app is one of the key attributes that allows us to stand out in a competitive market. There are a few key aspects within this app. First, clients can set up appointments on the app, allowing for fast and easy bookings. They won’t even have to interact with the receptionists in order to schedule a meeting with one of our veterinarians or veterinary technicians. Second, all of our contact information will be located on the app, with our phone number, email, and instructions on where to send previous records or

diagnoses from other veterinary clinics. Third, clients will be able to receive key notifications on their app. Our app will alert them when their yearly exam, vaccines, fecal test, or flea/tick/heartworm prevention is due. Likewise, it will alert them with updates on their next appointment, reducing the number of missed appointments caused by forgetfulness. And fourth, our app will showcase important news articles related to pet health, pictures of our clients and patients, and a list of adoptable dogs and cats at surrounding shelters and foster groups. Overall, our app will make the entire process easier for our customers. It is simple and easy to use and will allow for a more efficient and effective practice. If any client does not want to use our app, we will also have a website on which they can find our contact information to call the clinic or to schedule appointments from the website.

Subpoint #4: Future Growth Areas

Our clinic plans on eventually expanding our offerings. We hope to offer different specialties, such as more detailed in-house bloodwork, rehabilitation, physical therapy, chiropractic adjustments, geriatric support, end-of-life counseling, and more. This would be a large undertaking but would help us support both regular clients and shelter-based clients. We can't wait to see where the future will take our clinic.



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