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Writing for Local Veterinary Hospitals

By Brian Konradt

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Freelance writer STANLEY BURKHARDT has a passion for animals. He loves animals so much, he crafted himself a new career. For the last eight years, Stanley has made a career out of writing for local veterinary hospitals -- and getting paid for it.

Burkhardt admits, "I am probably the first writer you have met who has written for veterinary hospitals. My opinion is that many writers don't see the profit or work potential in writing for vet hospitals, and don't attempt to secure work from this industry. The other reason is that writers try many approaches to secure work in this industry and fail."

Burkhardt has overcome these obstacles, and many more. Now he's ready to spill his secrets. He has penned an ebook, "Profiting on Puppy Love & Cat Care: A Freelance Writer's Guide to Writing for Local Veterinary Hospitals & Practices," in which he shows writers how they can craft a career out of writing for local veterinary hospitals, just like he has done.

Burkhardt says, "I think it's important to know that I had no experience or knowledge writing for the vet industry, when I first started out." If you harbor a deep love for animals and enjoy writing and researching, Burkhardt says you are already "halfway there to breaking into this industry."

The other skill is selling. "Selling is considered by many beginning freelance writers to be the 'curse' of commercial writing because it usually requires you to spend more than half of your time selling yourself to prospective clients -- and swallowing many rejections -- than spending time writing." In time, selling becomes easier. "Most of my work now comes from referrals and word-of-mouth," says Burkhardt.

Burkhardt has perfected the way he secures first-time clients in this industry; he advises to "use locality in your favor." He says, "Take a trip to your local hospital and see if it presently uses any types of print materials. If not, what kinds of print materials do you think this hospital can benefit from? If it has print materials, how can you improve these existing print materials, or what types of print materials would

work better in place of these existing print materials?"

Burkhardt always attempts to arrange a meeting with the owner of the hospital. "I tell the prospective owner I'd like to meet with him for 20 to 30 minutes to discuss, in detail, how I'd be able to boost his profits and productivity, and how he and his clients will both benefit. I've never met an owner who'd refused to spend some time to find out how I'd be able to boost his profits."

After the first meeting, Burkhardt gives himself a few days to work on a proposal in which he outlines how he is going to meet the owner's needs — whether it's solving a problem, boosting sales, or increasing productivity — through various writing projects. Burkhardt will either mail his proposal to the owner or arrange a second meeting. Nine times out of ten, Burkhardt's proposal usually nabs him a first assignment from a first-time client. "I always pitch a newsletter as the first project. Once the owner sees how a newsletter contributes to the success of his hospital, I am usually given more writing assignments."

As a writer for five local veterinary hospitals — two small in size and three big in size — Burkhardt prefers to sell his services to the larger veterinary hospitals. "Larger veterinary hospitals have more needs to be fulfilled and more problems for you to solve...They're more likely to need internal and external materials that will help boost their sales and increase their productivity."

Burkhardt writes all sorts of copy for vet hospitals, but his favorite and most lucrative is writing newsletters. "Every vet hospital needs them. A newsletter can increase the hospital's sales by pushing products and services, create rapport and build trustworthiness with pet owners by showcasing the exceptional pet care and treatment the hospital offers, and constantly remind pet owners of the hospital's existence by writing information that is so useful and timely that pet owners take the newsletter home with them." Burkhardt charges between \$300 and \$1,500 per newsletter, depending on its complexity and size.

Burkhardt admits that writing for veterinary hospitals is not a top-paying industry, compared to writing for other industries. But he was never in it for the money. "I often wonder if copywriters who write for tar manufacturers, bottling companies, packaging plants, chip manufacturers, cancer-causing cigarette companies, or shady politicians have any interest in the stuff they write or they do it just for the money. I can't find interest in any of those things and have stayed away from such manufacturers and industries. I think the same is true if one is to write for vet hospitals. You must have an interest — at least to write for the long term. If you love animals, have a curiosity as to how hospitals treat and care for pets, and a sensitive spot to help people, then you can break into this industry and make a good living."

Burkhardt's ebook, "Profiting on Puppy Love & Cat Care: A Freelance Writer's Guide to Writing for Local Veterinary Hospitals & Practices" is a primer to break into this industry. His ebook sells for \$9.95 at WritingCareer.com, an online ebook store, found at

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Pet Insurance. Warning: A Visit To Your Vet Can Severely Damage Your Wealth.

By Michael Challiner

The Chinese year of the dog started last January. And according to Chinese tradition, anyone born in the following year, will be honest and loyal. They also aren't much concerned about wealth. This could help to explain why there are 5.2 million homes owning dogs without pet insurance cover. As many will have discovered to their cost, they're leaving themselves exposed to enormous veterinary bills.

The average cost of treating a dog following a road accident is £379 and the cost of just a scan could exceed £1,000. And as Veterinary science becomes more advanced with breakthroughs in medicine and surgery, the cost of owning an dog can potentially increase.

There is no National Health Service pets and if your dog is ill, detailed diagnostic tests, surgery, medication and care can mean an unexpected shock to your pocket. Studies have shown that on average, an insured pet owner makes a claim every three years.

But do take care. Pet insurance policies vary widely in terms of their cover, the excess you have to pay, the maximum costs that can be reclaimed each year and various exclusions.

So when you're on the net shopping for pet insurance, it's important to swot up on the small print. Don't automatically fall for the cheapest. Cheap premiums customarily reflect limited cover. For example, not all insurers will cover your pet for life. This means that if your dog's problem requires ongoing treatment, then cover ceases at the twelve-month stage.

Take Sheila Follows' spaniel, Bonny. Seven years ago Sheila wisely took out insurance cover for Bonny as soon as Bonny joined the family as a pup. All was well until the first spring. Then, Bonny developed a skin allergy and later that year a hip problem. Treatment has been ongoing ever since requiring regular visits to the local vet.

Sheila says, " Bonny has to have a special diet and regular injections to control her allergies. The bill from my vet is usually between £375 and £450 per month so my decision seven years ago to take out insurance, proved to be one of my best investments. My insurance premium is just £15 per month and I'm not sure what we'd do if we weren't insured!"

Sheila's policy is a Budget policy issued by Pet Plan and covers lifetime conditions for up to £4,000 each year. Pet Plan also have two other pet schemes - their Standard Policy will pay out up to £6,000 per year and their Supreme Plan provides unlimited cover. So you can see that even within the same insurance provider, you can be faced with several policies to choose from.

So there's lots of choice. Some policies even provide protection for kennel fees, or boarding fees if you become ill or even pay your cancellation fee for your holiday if your pet becomes ill before you travel.

Our advice is to look at several pet insurance web sites. Better still, print off their schedule of benefits and terms and conditions. Then spend forty minutes comparing their premiums and look closely at what you'll get for your money. We know it'll be a bore but a little extra effort now will be rewarded with

a great deal and your peace of mind.

And if your dog could talk, he'd say thanks too. But perhaps a big lick will do!

Postscript

If you receive either Council Tax benefit or Housing Benefit, the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) will provide veterinary treatment free of charge.

At the moment there are some 5.8 million households that fulfil these eligibility conditions with just over 7 out of ten of homes served by either a PDSA PetAid practice or a PetAid Hospital.

There are 328 PetAid practices and 4 PetAid branches plus 43 PetAid Hospitals.

Brokers Online provide you with a huge amount of information on pet insurance (

) and cheap life insurance (

)

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