

Once you have decided which charity you are going to support, use it as an opportunity to connect with your existing clients. Keep everybody informed about the cause, why you have chosen it and what activities you are planning to help within the organisation. This could include donating to a pet food bank, placing donation boxes in your reception area or selling tickets for a charity event.

Use multiple platforms – including social media, text messaging and email – to tell clients about your involvement with the charity and encourage them to support you. When the campaign finishes or reaches a significant milestone, send another message to let them know how much has been raised.

A perk that gives back

If time and budget allow, giving staff paid time off to volunteer during working hours is a great way to help out local animal charities. Whether it's cleaning out kennels at a local dog shelter or helping to run a neutering campaign, volunteering gives people a chance to develop new skills and learn from other organisations. It's also a great way to show your team that you care about them and the community in which they work.

Working with your chosen charity, encourage your team to volunteer their skills for particular shifts. You could pass around a 'sign-up' sheet during team meetings, pin one to a noticeboard or send an all-users email. When planning volunteer opportunities, include a mix of daytime, evening and weekend activities to allow for different schedules. Offering a variety



of short (one day) and long-term projects will ensure that everybody stays engaged.

Sponsor events

Sponsoring local events – such as fun runs, dog walks or agility events – can set you apart from the competition and strengthen your name in the community. They also have the added benefits of giving you direct access to your target market and help to strengthen existing client relationships.

As with choosing a charity to support, pick an event that fits with your practice ethos and find out as much as you can about it. For example, who sponsored the event in the past and how successful was it? It's also important to understand what you will

receive in return for your support – a stand at the event or your logo on promotional material, for instance.

Sponsorship doesn't have to be financial – it could be a case of simply 'lending a hand' or donating prizes for raffles and auctions. Remember to promote the fact that you are sponsoring the event on your social media channels, practice newsletter or through an email and keep everybody updated on its success.

Participate in careers events

Besides the obvious benefits of minimising recruitment costs and attracting new staff, school and college careers fairs are a great way to spread the word about your practice. By attending these events, there is also a good chance that you will have your practice name, logo and website printed on the promotional materials.

To make the most of your time at careers events, set up

attention-grabbing displays that make people more likely to stop by. Take along useful and original materials that students can't find online and set up a slideshow or video to give visitors a virtual tour of your practice. This helps to build client trust and increases the chance of their visiting your practice.

Another benefit of participating in careers events is that they allow you to meet potential employees before they even apply for a position – saving you both time and money. You could even conduct short, informal interviews on the stand that allow you to rule out unqualified applicants before they apply for a role. If you are advertising for specific job vacancies, make them identifiable by creating a sign that reads 'Now hiring for...' and list the available opportunities.

Host educational events

Delivering an educational event at your practice is

"Use multiple platforms to tell clients about your involvement with the charity and encourage them to support you."