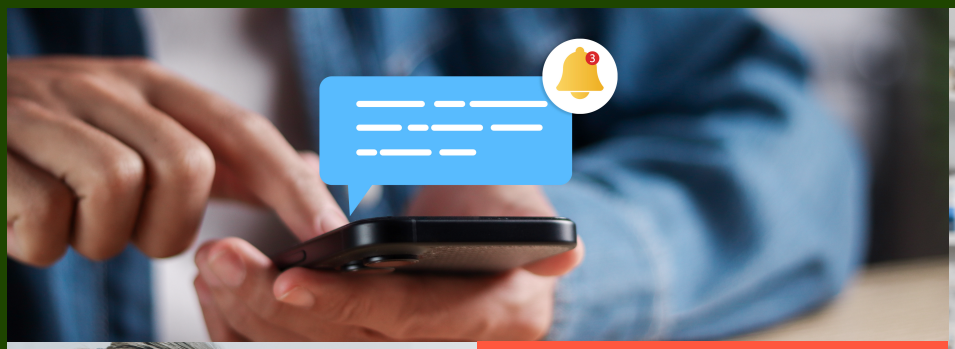












BEYOND THE BARK

Communications That Transform Clinic Success

A report detailing the communications driving the biggest impact for veterinary clinics and their clients today.

otto

INTRODUCTION

A note from Otto's CEO, Zeynep Young

Veterinary teams are busier than ever, balancing the pressure to deliver excellent medical care with the constant churn of phone calls, paperwork, and client communications. At the same time, clients' expectations have shifted. They want the same digital conveniences they experience everywhere else in their lives — from booking a doctor's appointment online to confirming a dinner reservation by text.

This report looks at how client engagement is shaping the way clinics thrive today. Drawing on Otto's data across 5000+ clinics, alongside broader industry research, we've identified five key things clinics can do to engage positively with their clients and thrive as we move into 2026.

The data is clear: clinics that embrace digital engagement aren't just keeping pace with client expectations — they're reducing the burden on their teams, increasing adherence to treatment plans, and improving owner satisfaction.

Table of Contents

pg 3 Driving Full Appointment Schedules

pg 6 Reducing Client No-Shows

pg 11 Streamlining the Intake Process

pg 14 Enhancing Efficiency and Connection During Appointments

pg 17 Strengthening Bonds with Pet Owners

pg 20 Unlocking Growth with Otto



Pet owners want digital engagement options.

Looking specifically at data related to increased use of client-facing online booking tools and website widgets, pet owners are making it clear that they want flexibility in how and when they engage with their clinic. Otto's data shows 87% growth in utilization of online appointment booking in 2025.

Additionally, offering tools like online booking are proving to be a key driver for attracting new clients to your clinic. Research shows that 60% of consumers book their appointments online, especially with younger generations.[1] For example, 76% of Millennials are more likely to choose a provider who offers online scheduling.[2]

23.3%

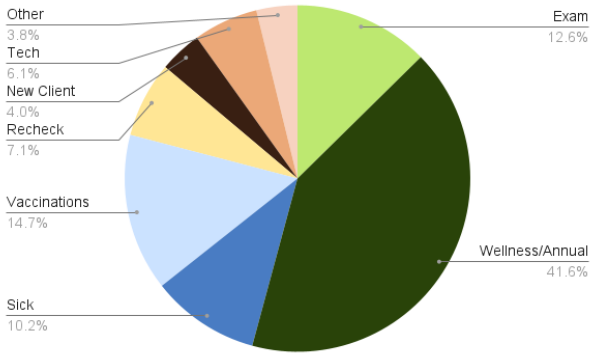
of online appointment bookings are made by net new clients.

37.4%

of online appointment bookings are made after the clinic's open office hours.

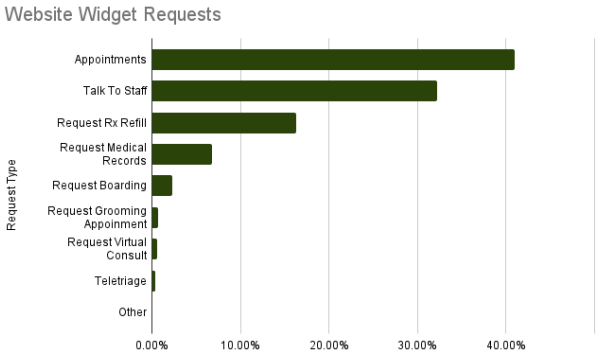
Clients are open to booking a variety of appointments online.

Over 40% of appointments booked online are “Wellness / Annual Exam”, followed by “Exam”, “Vaccinations” and “Sick” visits.



Website widgets are supporting asks that would otherwise take timely phone calls.

The top two engagements are requests to book an appointment and to chat with a staff member, followed by refill and medical record requests.



Putting it into practice

Bonita Vet Hospital
“Direct Booking has paid for itself. Being able to generate more appointments with new clients in particular has been a benefit.”

Bluegrass Animal Hospital
“The pet owners are very happy. Now most people just want to get a text and be done, so Direct Booking has been helpful with that.”

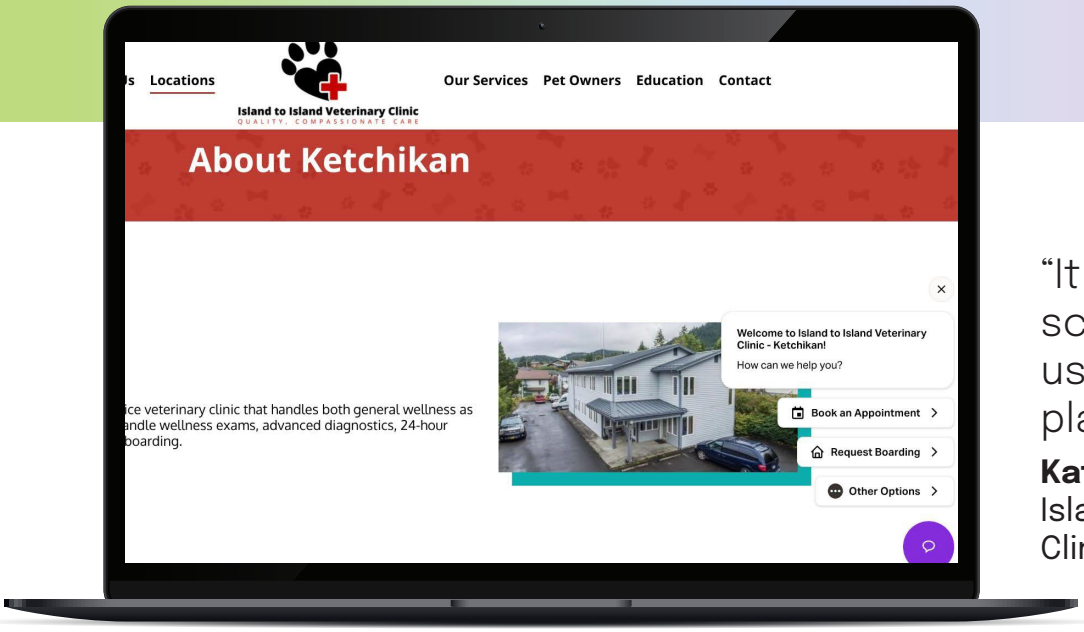
Muddy Creek
By adding engagement channels and communications, they saw a 15% increase in appointment volume over the first year.

Island to Island Veterinary Clinic
"When I saw the first appointment scheduling via direct booking, I got really excited... It looks on the schedule as if one of us had gone and placed it there."

CAPABILITIES THAT MATTER

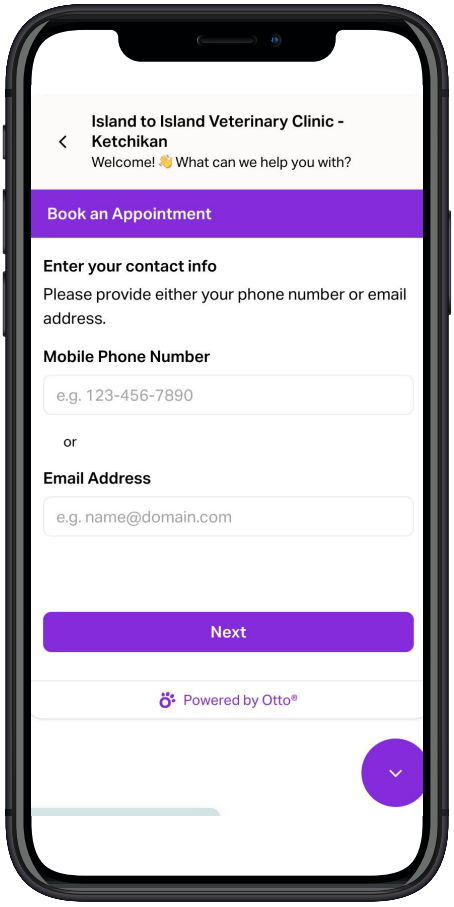
- Direct Booking accessible through your clinic website.
- Customizable set up that fits your clinic’s workflow (including by appointment type, time intervals, room, doctor, etc.)
- Ensure clients can request medications, send staff a message, request a phone call, book boarding or grooming and more through your website.
- Always have a message available in your chat widget about emergency hospitals and clinic contact info in case of emergency.

Real-World Example



"It looks on the schedule as if one of us had gone and placed it there."

Katori, Lead Receptionist
Island to Island Veterinary Clinic



124
appointments January - August 2025

$24,800
estimated revenue ($200 per appointment)

48%
outside of business hours



Personalized reminders - especially those delivered via SMS - are transforming client engagement and clinic efficiency.

Younger pet owners, especially Millennials and Gen Z, are reshaping how client communications needs to happen. Studies show that over 70% of people in those generations prefer digital messaging over email or phone calls for quick confirmations, reminders, or transactional messages.[3] Text messages aren't just more convenient—they get opened quickly, avoided less, and trusted more than email among younger cohorts.

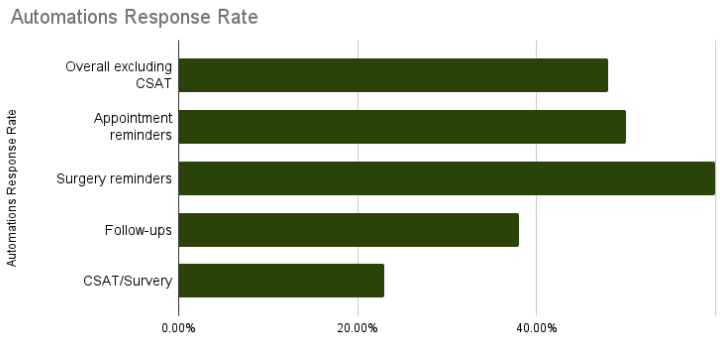
Along with moving beyond reliance on the phone and email to help remind pet parents of appointments and actions needed, clinics must also move beyond single, simple, trigger-driven and time-driven reminders and messages. Otto data shows higher response rates when multiple reminders are provided and tailored to the pet and appointment.

60%
Response rate for surgery confirmations.

50%
Response rate for automations sent 72 hours before an appointment.

Pet owners responded differently depending on the automation.

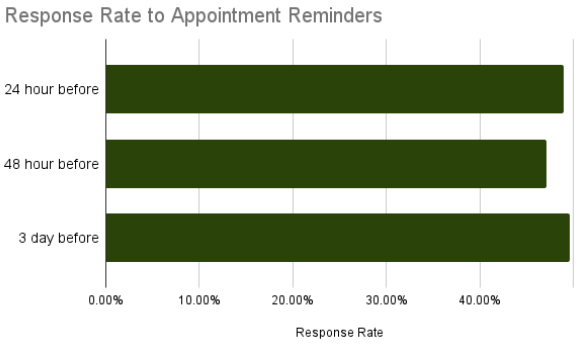
Surgeries received the highest response rate. These are valuable to the clinic and pet and this is reflected in responses. Follow-ups only received a 38% response rate and surveys/CSAT automations received the lowest at 23%.



Timing matters.

Looking specifically at when reminders are sent, we saw the highest response rate to reminders three days before the appointment, followed by 24 hours, and finally 48 hours before.

Some clinics are seeing a 80+% response rate when they send multiple reminders to those who did not respond initially.



Putting it into practice

Far West Veterinary Clinic

By combining automated reminders with personalized follow-ups, Far West saw a 40% reduction in no-shows for high-value appointments, like surgeries.

Muddy Creek

By adding 2-way texting capabilities, they were able to cut incoming calls by about a third.

Vets Pets

Using Otto Text-to-Pay, Holly Springs and other clinics in the Vets Pets organization reduced the burden of no-shows and cancellations.

CAPABILITIES THAT MATTER

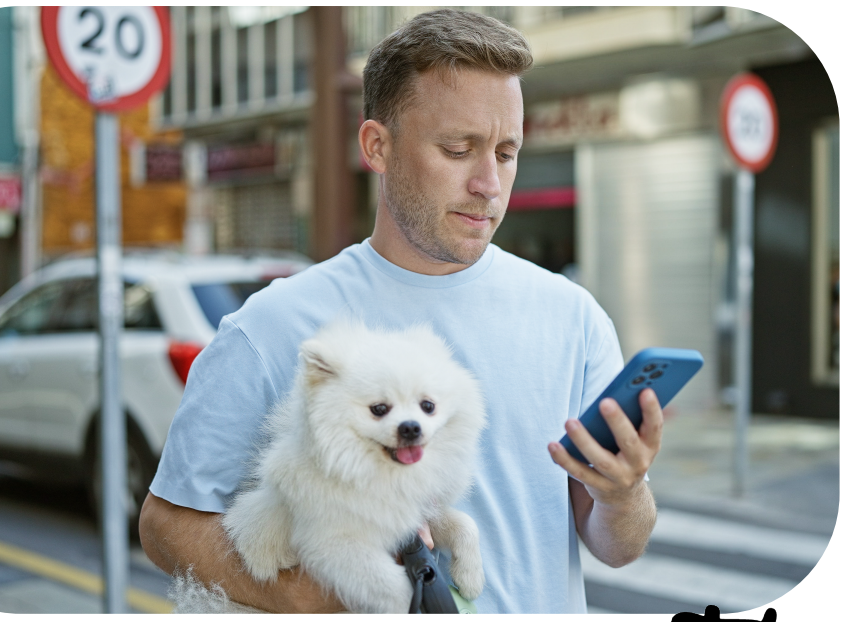
- Ability to communicate using each client's preferred channel (email, SMS, chat, or phone).
- Send from the clinics phone number.
- Ensure there's no limits on character count or extra cost on text messages.
- Customization not just on timing - look for solutions that can customize based on previous responses, appointment type, breed, etc.
- Personalization of automations! Make clients feel known.
- Ability to automatically include forms.
- Easy editing that doesn't take weeks to update.

Clinic Example #1: This clinic has a special reminder automation before annual visits. It includes two automations that have resulted in:

87% completion for first confirmation

100% completion for second

Here are the 4 steps of the reminder:





Step 1

Four days before Sophie's annual visit to her vet, Kurt gets a text from Magical Vet while walking Sophie

Hi Kurt! Magical Vet would like to confirm Sophie's appointment with us on Monday, Oct. 12th at 10 am. Give any pre-appointment medications according to label instructions if applicable. Please refrain from bringing multiple pets to the appointment that are not booked in, as this causes unnecessary congestion in the exam rooms. Our late and no-show policies are in effect. Arrive 5-10 minutes early to check in and avoid any additional fees.

If you do not reply to this confirmation prior to 24 hours of your appointment we will assume you are forfeiting your appointment and it will be filled with another client. Thank you!

Please select a button below:

Confirm

Reschedule appointment

Step 2

Kurt confirms his appointment by clicking the button in his text. This gets sent and confirmed in Magical Vet's system

Great! We look forward to seeing you and Sophie then. You will receive an appointment questionnaire that we kindly ask to be filled out at least 24 hours prior to the appointment.

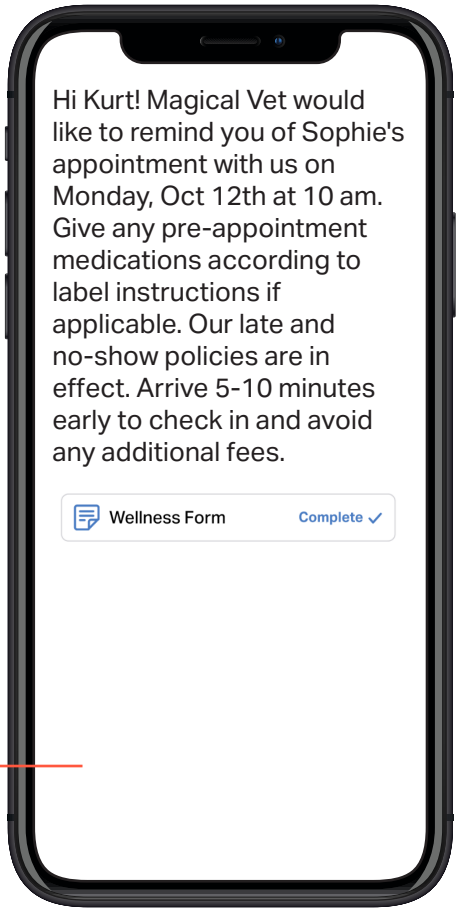


Sophie and Kurt's Story, Continued



Step 3

48 hours before Sophie's appointment, Kurt gets another message with the pre-appointment questionnaire



Step 4

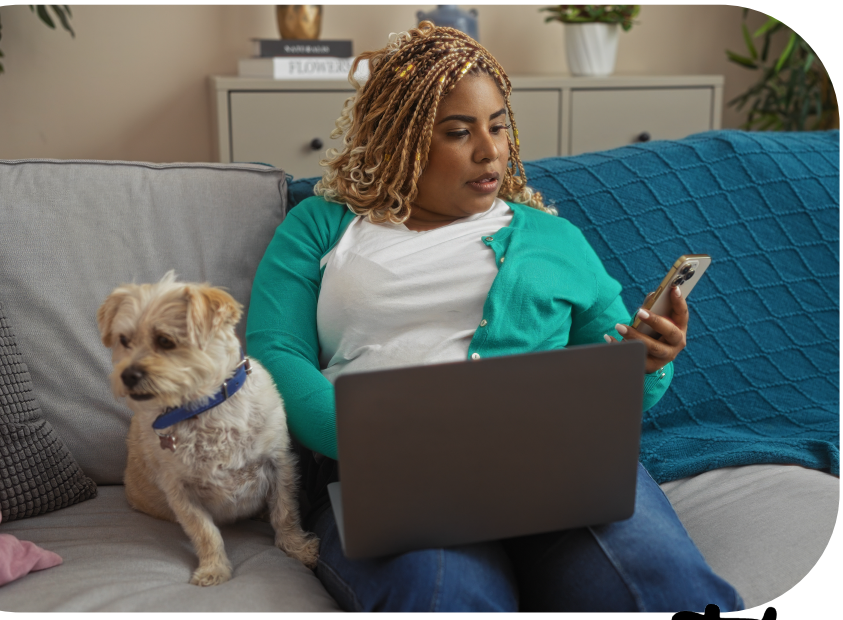
Kurt fills out the form online and submits. It gets automatically added to his appointment in Magical Vet's PIMS. 10-15 minutes are saved per check in, and even higher when it's a new client.





Clinic Example #2: This clinic has a specialized reminder for Vet Tech appointments. It is a two step confirmation sent 48 hours before an appointment with a:

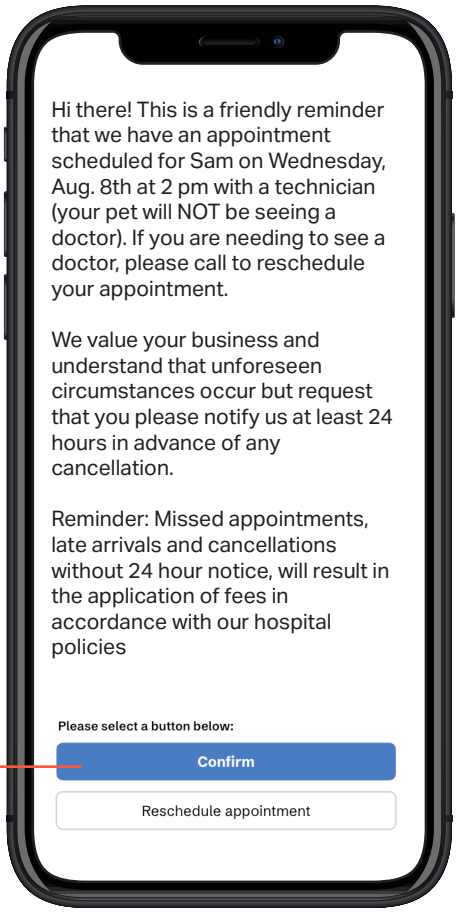
87% completion rate for a simple confirmation sent 48 hours before a Vet Tech appointment





Step 1

Two days before Sam's tech appointment to express his anal glands, Julia gets a text from Magical Vet while watching her favorite show.



Step 2

Julia confirms his appointment by clicking the button in his text. This gets sent and confirmed in Magical Vet's system







Digital forms are transforming clinic efficiency and the client experience.

Vet care is mimicking human healthcare where digital forms are becoming the norm. Research in human healthcare shows that digital intake forms aren't just faster to complete; they're also more accurate, more complete, and dramatically reduce errors compared to paper. One study found electronic forms were 27% more complete, and another showed a 1% error rate versus 32% for paper in consent workflows.[4,5,6]

Digital-first veterinary tools and forms are leading to higher information submission rates in a shorter amount of time. It's also making it easier for pet parents to outline medications, confirm symptoms, and clarify their concerns. That means less backtracking, less typing at the front desk, and more focused time face-to-face.

In veterinary practices, adopting digital forms has been shown to cut time required for check in by 10-15 minutes, freeing up staff to actually connect, not just collect information required.

64%

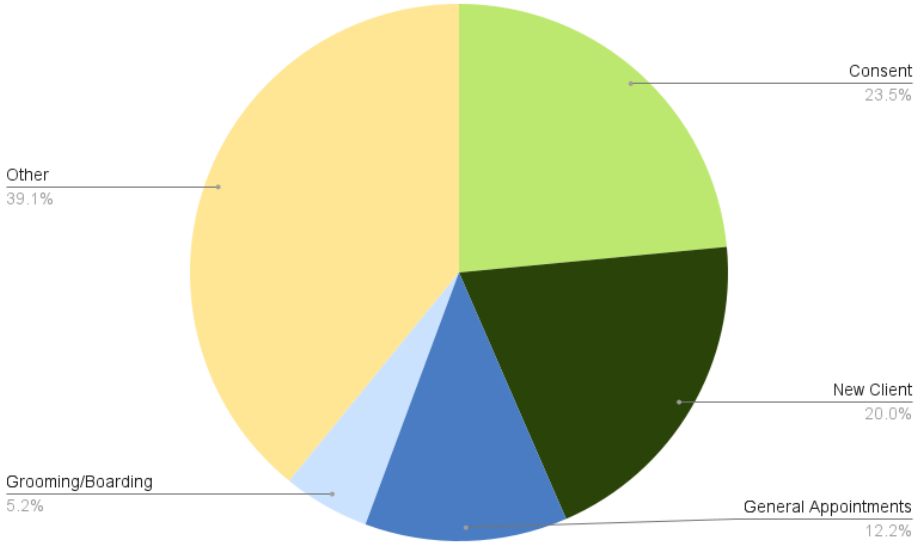
of digital forms sent were completed in 2025

8 hours

Average time it takes for pet parents to submit forms

Clients are open to forms being for more than just appointments.

Forms are used to support a breadth of appointment types, with only 12% being used for general appointments. The majority are used for surgeries or other, more specific appointment types, such as grooming.



Putting it into practice

Far West Veterinary Clinic

Far West's existing forms were turned into digital, auto-synced versions—no extra steps, no manual uploads, no format compromises.

Rolliing Hills Veterinary Service

"With [past solution], we were doing surgery check-ins from about 8:00 to 9:00. With Flow, we usually have everybody checked in by 8:30. So, it's cut that time in half — easily."

Mission Veterinary Hospital

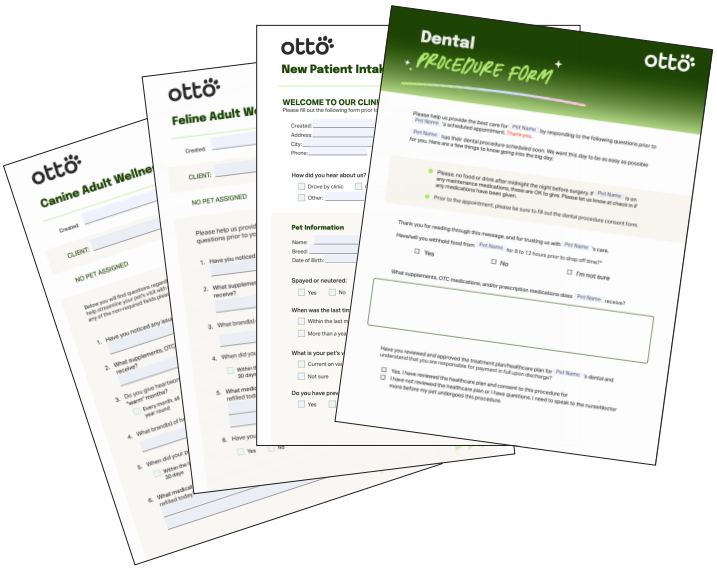
"Setting up forms for people to fill out is so helpful, especially with all the questions already preloaded on there and the ability to be able to create your own forms, whether it be multiple choice or if they can write out their own like sections on it. I think that has probably been the best thing that we have been able to use here. Anywhere ranging from surgery authorization forms to wellness checks recheck, and so forth, especially multi-language ones, it's awesome, to be honest!"

CAPABILITIES THAT MATTER

- Customization of the form by appointment type
- Ability to send forms via SMS/text message
- Ability to build automations with the correct form attached without your team doing work
- Writing the form back automatically to your PIMS for documentation and visibility for the entire team

Examples of Most Used Forms

Here are the best-in-class, most common Otto forms used by clinics.



- New Patient Intake Form
- Canine Ault Wellness Form
- Canine Senior Wellness Form
- Feline Adult Wellness Form
- Feline Senior Wellness Form
- Dental Form

Most Customized Forms

Each clinic is unique, so forms should be customizable to meet different styles of care. Here are a few examples of customized forms used by Otto customers.

Feline Urinary

Otic Form

Dermatology Form



AI scribing and communication tools are the new helper for mundane tasks.

Veterinary teams are stretched thin. Ongoing studies dating back to 2023, show high workload, emotional exhaustion, work-life imbalance, and too many after hours task impact the wellbeing of everyone on the team - veterinarians, technicians, and support staff.[7,8,9]

Veterinary teams are quickly adopting and leveraging AI in new ways everyday. The most common tools for veterinarians and technicians are appointment scribes and notetakers that capture highly accurate notes and save doctors ~30 hours per week on average.

The front desk team is leveraging AI scribes for meetings, AI-generated summaries and to-dos from client calls, as well as AI-drafted chat responses and client email communications.

30

Average number of hours saved by doctors per week using AI scribes

95%

Otto AI scribe accuracy based on user feedback

Scribes have high impact on time savings and team satisfaction

Looking at the top 5 clinics using Otto AI Recap, their client satisfaction survey responses did not change from 3 months before using Recap and the 3 months after. Right now, AI scribes have no impact on client satisfaction but have high impact on team happiness.

100%
of client surveys remain at the same satisfaction level

More detailed notes can help provide better care and context

One of the unique things teams using scribes often comment on is the quality of their notes. Details they would not have noted are often included and reading other's notes is easier because formatting is done consistently.

"I find with AI, I'm able to put more into the SOAP, even in a normal patient, because it records everything that we talked about in the conversation related to that animal. So, my notes are more detailed now with AI than they were before."
- Jeffrey Sachar
Milford Animal Hospital

Putting it into practice

Milford Animal Hospital
"My notes are more detailed now with AI than they were before. And I'm done before the next client walks in."

Beachy Cove
He recalled watching his wife spend Saturdays buried in charts, logging 14 hours on weekends to finish documentation. AI, and Otto specifically, changed that. By capturing conversations in real time and generating usable notes, the clinic reclaimed hours once lost to paperwork.

Otto On-Demand Webinar
Practical Tips to Help Vet Clinics Actually Use AI

Learn real-life ways clinics are using AI today and helping drive adoption inside their clinic.

CAPABILITIES THAT MATTER

- Accurate recordings by AI trained on veterinary terms
- Custom templates
- High levels of security
- Ability to record on a variety of devices (mobile app is a plus)

A price point that your clinic and doctors will be able to sustain long term

AI Resources - Recording in Progress Exam Room Notification

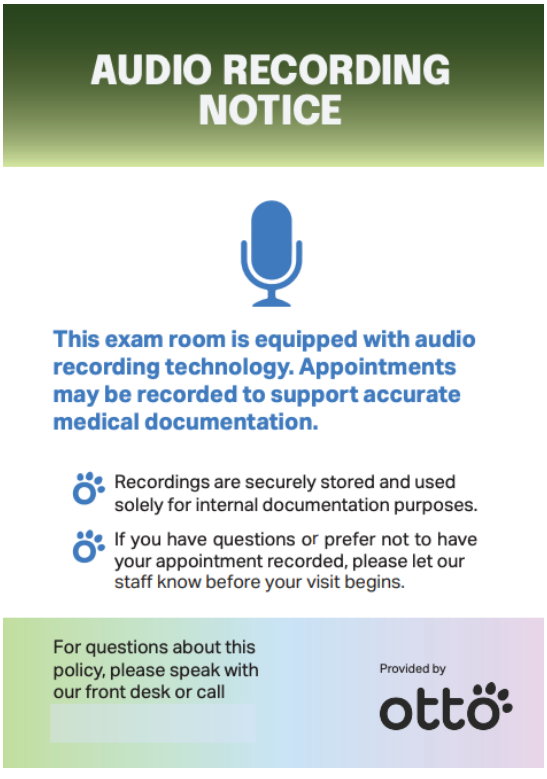
Not an Otto customer and looking for an AI scribe to tryout?

Get a 21-day free trial of Otto's AI Recap appointment scribe. Use it long-term for the lowest price in the market.

Get started at otto.vet/otto-ai-recap

Need a notification of "recording in progress" for your exam rooms?

Scan the QR code to download our free version here.





Client loyalty depends on more than just the care delivered during appointments.

Client loyalty depends on more than the medicine delivered in the exam room — it's built in the quiet space between visits. Research in veterinary medicine shows that clear, consistent communication strengthens trust, satisfaction, and long-term retention.[10,11] When pet parents feel informed and connected, they are far more likely to return for preventive care and follow recommended treatment plans.

Our data shows the same pattern: more personalized Otto messages sent between visits consistently generate meaningful engagement. Clinic emails see an average open rate of 51%, far higher than typical industry benchmarks, while lapsed-client notifications drive an 8% re-engagement rate on their own. In other words: ongoing and tailored communication isn't just "nice to have" — it's a proven driver of loyalty and return visits.

15%

Of clients who received a lapsed client notification scheduled an appointment within 90 days.

4.87 Stars

Of clients respond to CSAT automations, and with a 4.87 out of 5 star average rating for all our clinics that's not just people complaining - the majority are people who are sharing their love.

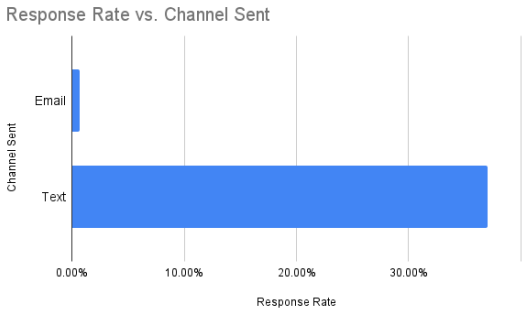
Service reminders bring clients back.

Reminding clients of what services their pets are due for is no longer a nice-to-have but a key way to bring clients back into the clinic.

33% Of clients respond to service reminders sent via text

Service reminders should be sent via text.

Text reminders are preferred by millennials and Gen Z. Plus it makes it easy to take action right in the moment which means better compliance.



Email usage is increasing but still under-utilized.

Clinics are communicating about more than just appointments. We are seeing more than 300% growth in client communications, and the communications are more custom to the clinic and how they operate.

Top 5 most often customized clinic communications:

- Updated clinic hours
- Advertising available appoints for the week
- Education
- Promotions
- Launch of new services

Putting it into practice



We've had so much fun celebrating you!

With the month of April and PWVA's Client Appreciation Mo coming to a close this week, we wanted to take a moment t express how grateful we are for each and every one of you



Summer is our busiest season, and it's right around the corner! If you've got travel plans ahead of you, let us care for your pet while you're away! Book your reservation today.

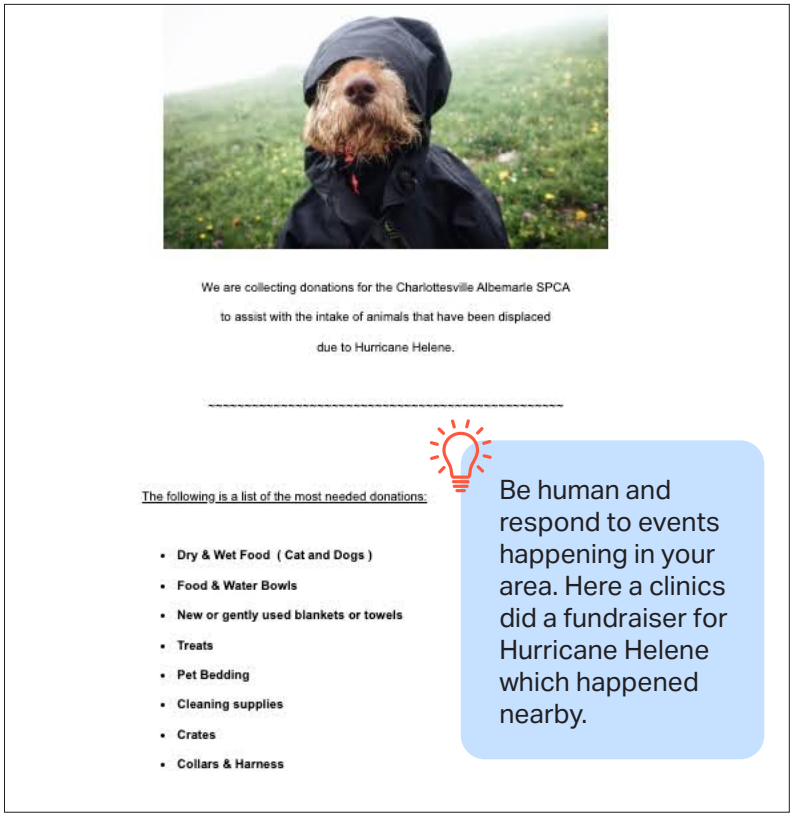
You're pet will love it here.

CAPABILITIES THAT MATTER

- Automate sending lapsed client and service reminders
- Ability to send reminders through text
- Personalization of reminders
- Easy email filtering by appointment type, Appointment date range, pet species, and pet age.
- Easy to use email templates

Real-World Examples

Be creative with your content. Dr. Vogl shares a short video wishing everyone a Happy New Year and shares exciting updates for the clinic.

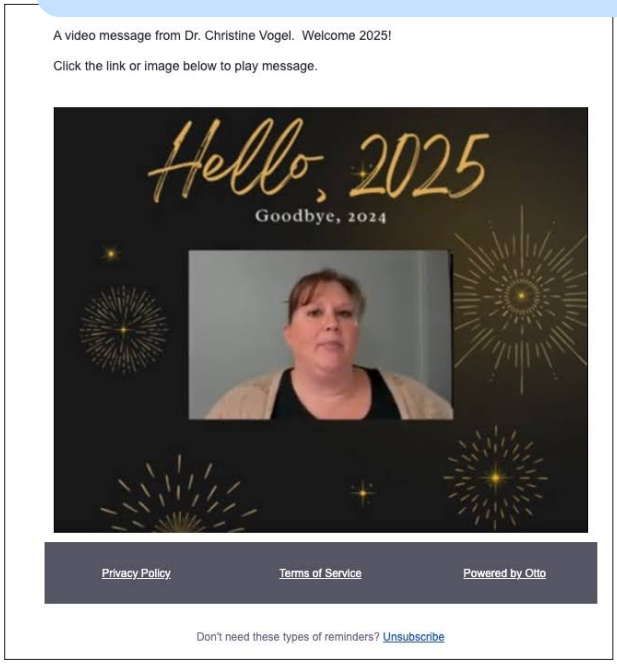


We are collecting donations for the Charlottesville Albemarle SPCA
to assist with the intake of animals that have been displaced
due to Hurricane Helene.

The following is a list of the most needed donations:

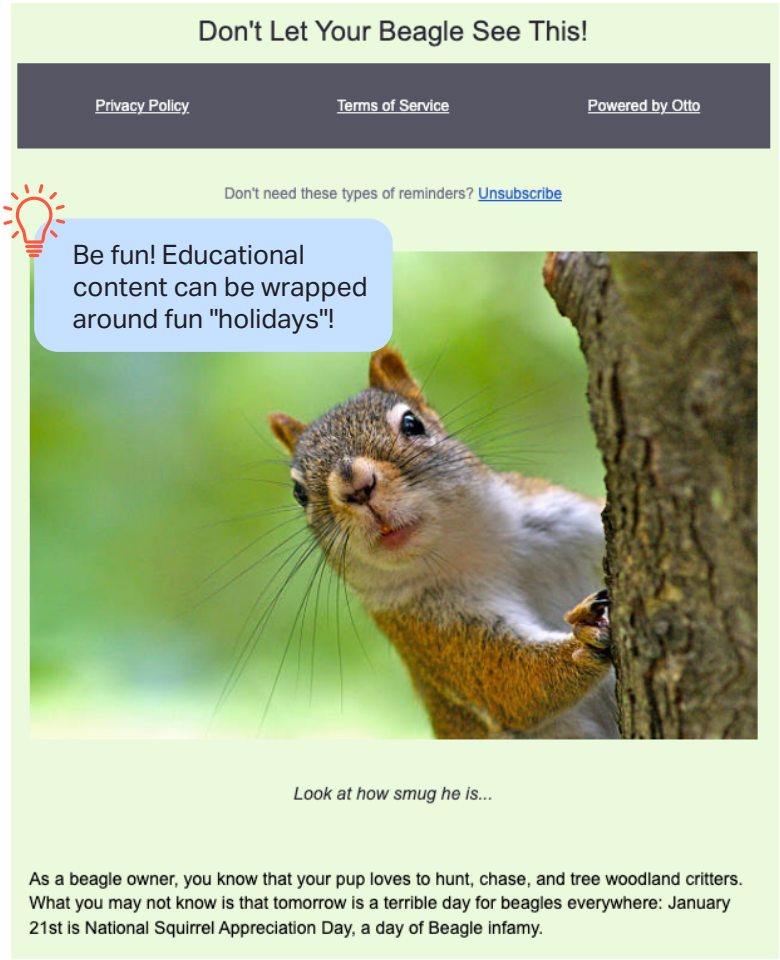
- Dry & Wet Food (Cat and Dogs)
- Food & Water Bowls
- New or gently used blankets or towels
- Treats
- Pet Bedding
- Cleaning supplies
- Crates
- Collars & Harness

Be human and respond to events happening in your area. Here a clinics did a fundraiser for Hurricane Helene which happened nearby.



Keep people easily informed about your clinic holidays and give them contact information if they do need to seek care.





CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The story in this data is clear: the client experience doesn't end at the exam table — it starts with how easy it is to book, confirm, and stay connected between visits. When clinics make those touchpoints digital, simple, and consistent, clients are more likely to book appointments, follow through on care, and stay loyal to the practice. That means more pets get the preventive and follow-up care they need, and clinics keep their appointment books full.

For clinics, the challenge is balancing those client expectations with the very real limits on staff time and energy. Burnout is already high, and the last thing any team needs is another layer of manual work. That's why the future isn't simply "more communication" — it's smarter communication supported by the right systems.

The clinics thriving today are doing three things well:

- **Investing in tools that reduce busywork** so teams can focus on patients, not paperwork.
- **Revisiting SOPs and workflows** to ensure digital engagement fits seamlessly into daily operations.
- **Creating consistency in client communication** so that every reminder, message, or form feels connected and intentional.

The big takeaway? Client expectations are only moving further toward digital-first engagement. Clinics that adapt now — with the right tools and supportive processes — will not only meet those expectations, but also protect their teams from burnout and build stronger, longer-lasting client relationships.

The clinics that win tomorrow are the ones making digital engagement effortless today.

About Otto

Otto is a veterinary technology company focused on helping clinics grow and thrive while protecting team balance. Designed by people who know the realities of veterinary practice, Otto delivers automated client communications, digital forms, direct booking, payment tools, and workflow solutions that integrate seamlessly with leading PIMS to over 5000 clinics. Unlike many platforms, Otto is 100% veterinary-focused, comes with all capabilities available out-of-the-box, and is supported by a team that comes from the veterinary world and has experienced the chaos firsthand. From small animal clinics to specialty and ER hospitals, Otto helps veterinary teams fill their schedule, streamline operations, reduce burnout, and focus on high-quality care.

BOOK A FREE DEMO OF OTTO

REFERENCES

1. https://financesonline.com/appointment-scheduling-software-statistics/
2. https://www.physicianspractice.com/view/online-appointment-scheduling-a-missed-chance-to-boost-patient-satisfaction
3. https://chitchatbot.ai/the-rise-of-messaging-how-gen-z-and-millennials-prefer-to-communicate/
4. https://www.phreesia.com/blog-four-reasons-to-digitize-forms/
5. https://ped-rheum.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12969-021-00551-z
6. https://financesonline.com/appointment-scheduling-software-statistics/
7. https://www.avma.org/news/addressing-causes-burnout-veterinary-medicine
8. https://www.merck-animal-health.com/blog/2024/01/15/4th-veterinary-wellbeing-study/
9. https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/veterinary-science/articles/10.3389/fvets.2025.1437525/full
10. https://www.dvm360.com/view/boosting-client-retention-in-your-veterinary-office
11. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6313907/?utm_source=chatgpt.com#sec5-vetsci-05-00095

BOOK A FREE DEMO OF OTTO

otto