

What Every Veterinary Clinic Should Know Heading

INTO 2026

Insights from Wendy S. Myers, CVJ, Founder of Communication Solutions for Veterinarians, Jennifer Quammen, AVMA President-Elect & Chief Veterinary Officer at Otto, and Caitlin DeWilde, DVM & Founder of The Social DVM



No one understands the realities of practice life better than the people living it every day. That's why we turned to some of the most respected voices in veterinary medicine—Wendy S. Myers, Dr. Jennifer Quammen, and Dr. Caitlin DeWilde—to share their forward-looking perspectives on what clinics should be preparing for in 2026.

They outline the trends, challenges, and opportunities that will define the coming year, along with practical steps your team can take now to stay ahead. Inside this guide, you'll find clear, actionable insights you can use to strengthen your workflow, support your staff, build stronger client relationships, and set your clinic up for a more streamlined, successful year.

Think of it as your early advantage: expert guidance to help you move into 2026 with confidence, clarity, and a plan.



Insights from Wendy S. Myers, CVJ, Founder of Communication Solutions for Veterinarians

#1 BECOMING A DIGITAL-FIRST HOSPITAL WILL BE ESSENTIAL

Efficiency and strong client communication hinge on a clinic's ability to embrace digital tools. Online booking, automated confirmations, digital health forms, and AI scribe technology will not only streamline operations but also free teams to have richer, more engaged conversations in the exam room. Going digital is no longer optional—it is the foundation for better care, smoother workflow, and a more modern client experience.



#2 FILLING THE SCHEDULE WILL REQUIRE SMARTER, MORE STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Traditional scheduling methods won't meet the demands of 2026. Clinics will benefit from pre-blocking appointment types, adjusting visit lengths based on medical need, forward-booking preventive and follow-up exams, and using waitlists to prioritize timely care. These strategies help eliminate bottlenecks, reduce chaos, and ensure the day runs with intention rather than reaction



#3 NEW CLIENT GROWTH MUST BECOME A CORE PRIORITY



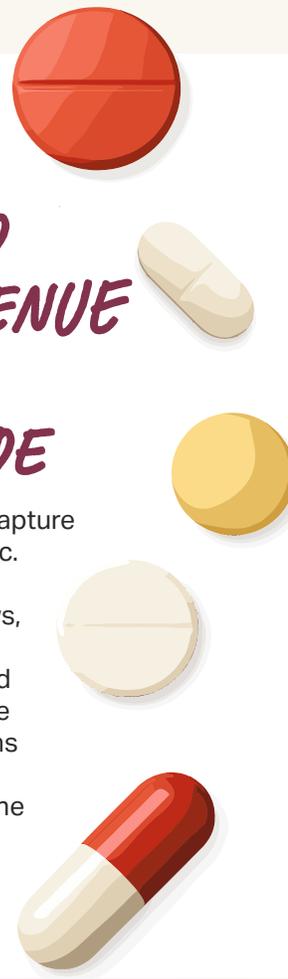
With new-client numbers dipping industry-wide, clinics will need a more proactive approach to attracting and converting pet owners. Online booking makes it easier for new clients to engage, while strong phone-skills training helps teams convert inquiries into appointments. Paired with community involvement and consistent, strategic social media engagement, clinics can rebuild momentum and bring new pet owners through the door.

#4 STAFF TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT WILL DIRECTLY INFLUENCE CLINIC SUCCESS

Soft skills—communication, problem-solving, emotional intelligence—are no longer “nice to have.” They are essential for navigating increasingly complex client interactions. In 2026, leading practices will schedule protected training time, build peer-mentorship programs, and reward skill development. Investing in people not only improves performance, it strengthens culture and reduces turnover.

#5 MEDICATION ADHERENCE AND PHARMACY REVENUE WILL NEED A MODERN UPGRADE

Outside pharmacies continue to capture revenue that could stay in the clinic. Practices can shift this trend by improving refill-reminder workflows, implementing autoship programs, optimizing in-clinic dispensing, and consistently promoting their online pharmacy. Better adherence means better patient outcomes—and a healthier financial foundation for the practice.

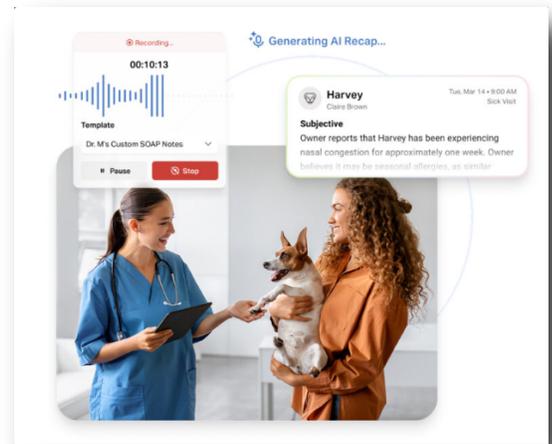




Insights from Dr. Jennifer Quammen, AVMA President-Elect & Chief Veterinary Officer at Otto

#1 AI WILL BECOME PART OF EVERYDAY VETERINARY PRACTICE

Artificial intelligence is shifting from a helpful “extra” to an essential part of clinic operations. Tools like Otto Pilot will support veterinary teams by automatically documenting visits, summarizing medical conversations, managing follow-ups, and reducing administrative work across the clinic. Practices that embrace AI early will see major gains in efficiency and team well-being.



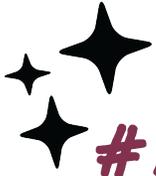
#2 HYBRID CARE WILL MOVE FROM TREND TO STANDARD

Clients are increasingly comfortable with blended care models. In 2026, clinics should expect virtual rechecks, teletriage, remote updates, and digital consults to be routinely integrated into traditional in-clinic visits. Hybrid care will become a core part of how practices deliver convenience, accessibility, and continuity of care.



#3 PREVENTIVE CARE WILL BECOME MORE PERSONALIZED

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#4 DATA WILL PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN CLINICAL DECISION-MAKING

Veterinary teams will rely on more complete and connected datasets than ever before. Diagnostic results, medical records, wearable data, and home monitoring information will merge into a clearer, longitudinal view of each patient's health. This more holistic data picture will lead to faster diagnoses, better recommendations, and more confident decision-making.

#5 NEW CARE MODELS WILL HELP CLINICS MANAGE RISING COSTS



As pet care expenses continue to climb, practices will adopt flexible, accessible financial models. Monthly wellness subscriptions, bundled care packages, chronic-care memberships, and decision-support tools will help clients understand and manage costs while ensuring pets receive consistent, high-quality care. These models will also promote predictable revenue for clinics.



Insights from Dr. Caitlin DeWilde, DVM & Founder of The Social DVM

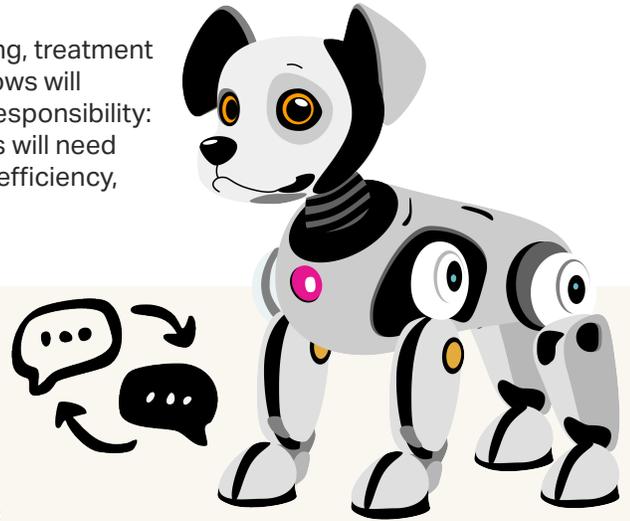
#1 AFFORDABILITY WILL REMAIN A LEADING CONCERN—FOR CLINICS AND CLIENTS



Even as the industry evolves, financial pressure will continue to shape the decisions pet owners make. In 2026, clinics will need to navigate rising costs of care while staying accessible to clients who are increasingly budget-conscious. Expect affordability conversations to become more frequent and more nuanced. Practices that offer clear estimates, transparent communication, flexible payment options, and value-driven care plans will be best positioned to maintain trust and compliance.

#2 AI WILL EXPAND BEYOND SCRIBING—AND TEAMS WILL NEED GUIDANCE TO USE IT SAFELY

AI won't stop at documentation. Tools that help with client messaging, treatment summaries, triage support, data analysis, and administrative workflows will become more common. With this growth comes a new leadership responsibility: teaching the team how to use AI confidently and responsibly. Clinics will need guidelines, training, and oversight to ensure AI enhances accuracy, efficiency, and client communication—without replacing human judgment.



#3 PERSONAL CONNECTION WILL MATTER EVEN MORE IN THE AGE OF AUTOMATION



As AI takes on a larger share of routine tasks, client expectations for personalization will climb. What will set clinics apart in 2026 is the human side of care—warmth, empathy, and meaningful communication. Teams that blend efficiency with authentic relationship-building will deepen client loyalty. Every tool, from AI to automated reminders, should support—not dilute—the feeling that each pet and pet owner is genuinely known and cared for.



#4 PRACTICES WILL NEED TO STREAMLINE THEIR TECH STACKS

The average clinic is juggling more platforms than ever: scheduling tools, communication platforms, PIMS, payment systems, inboxes, form builders—and yes, even Otto. In 2026, the winning strategy is simplification. Clinics will focus on consolidating tools, removing redundant software, and choosing systems that integrate cleanly. A leaner tech stack means fewer logins, less training, consistent data, and a smoother workflow for the entire team.

#5 MARKETING WILL SHIFT FROM “MORE CONTENT” TO “MORE IMPACT”

Filling schedules and driving client engagement will always matter, but the approach is changing. In 2026, the emphasis will shift to quality over quantity—targeted messaging, educational content that supports decision-making, and marketing that directly reinforces trust. The goal is not to post more but to post what matters: reminders that reduce lapses in care, updates that support preventive medicine, and content that keeps appointments booked with the right clients at the right times.



No clinic can predict every challenge, but with the right tools and foresight, you can navigate whatever comes next. Let these expert recommendations guide your conversations, shape your goals, and spark new ideas for the year ahead. Your team, your clients, and your patients will feel the difference. Here's to a smoother, smarter, stronger 2026.



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