CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A VETERINARY PRACTICE IN PET OWNERS

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Abstract: The research was carried out between November 2005 and May 2006 on a random sample of 187 pet owners, highlighting the main criteria by which a particular practice is chosen. These criteria are influenced by age, level of education, income and sex. Regardless of the factors earlier-mentioned factors the most important in the criterion for pet owners is the competence and skill of the veterinarian and attending staff, and was rated as highest by 39.03%. The overall equipment of the practice rated highest in 14.97% of the analyzed sample. Other criteria worth mentioning were: recommendation (word of mouth) from friends and other pet owners (13.9%), location, (11.79%) and examination fee (10.16%) (fig 5). In the analyzed sample, the less valued choice criteria were: range of services rendered 5.88%, kindliness of the staff 3.20% and schedule 1.07%

INTRODUCTION

Direct market studies allow the establishment of concrete manifestation of demand, product structure, location, periods of high demand, intention of purchase, hierarchy of similar products, changes in the shopping habits that occur in time, motives of demand, buying impulse, reaction of the costumer to different market phenomenon. It must be understood that no tow costumes are alike and the reaction obtained from the same service may vary as well. A general conclusion can be drown, that people perceive the quality of service according to culture and similar past experiences.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study took place between November 2005 and May 2006 and involved evaluating the criteria by which pet owners choose a particular veterinary practice. For this purpose a questionnaire had been developed to highlight the pet owners, preferences. This questionnaire included the following parameters: staff competence and skill, the overall equipment of the practice, recommendation (word of mouth) from friends and other pet owners, range of products and services, kindliness of staff and the schedule of the practice. The study was carried out on 187 randomly picked pet owners from Cluj-Napoca. The studied sample of pet owners was classified according to:

- age: of 187 persons 88 (47.05%) were between 18 and 35 years; 25 (13.36%) between 50-65; 10 (5.37%) over 65 years.
- sex: the sample was composed by 87 (47%) men and 100 (53%) women
- education level: for this parameter has been taken into account middle and high level of education, thus, 117 persons (62.56%) of middle education and 70 (37.44%) with higher education.
- Income: from this point of view, the sample was divided in three categories:
-a) between 300 and 1000 lei / month – 146 persons (78%)
-b) between 1000 and 2000 lei / month – 39 persons (20.85%)
-c) over 2000 lei / month – 2 persons (1.05%)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of this sample of 187 pet owners for the establishing of choice criterions in choosing a particular veterinary practice have highlighted different aspects influenced by the studied segment of population. It is mentionable that regardless of age sex, level of education and income, most highly parsed was the competence and skill of the veterinarian and staff (39.03%; 73 persons) (chart 1).

Criteria of choice in a veterinarian practice.

The overall equipment of the practice has influenced 14.97% (28) persons of the studied sample (chart 1) other criteria considered important were recommendation (word of mouth) from friends and other pet owners. Other criteria worth mentioning were: recommendation (word of mouth) from friends and family (13.9%), location, (11.79%) and examination fee (10.16%) (chart 1). In the analyzed sample, the less valued choice criteria were: range of services rendered 5.88%, kindliness of the staff 3.20% and schedule 1.07%.

The marketing concept was conceived in the 50’s [McKiterick,1957] and upholds the fact that for companies to achieve their own goals they must determine the needs, and desires of their intended customer, to satisfy he’s expectations in a more effective manner, than the competition.

An effective managerial guidance can only be founded on the basis of correct information. This information that the manager has access to refers to his work-force, aptitudes, creativity and overall knowledge, products, accessories, components, financial
resorts, etc. Another category of information is that regarding the knowledge of the necessities, expectations, resources and facilities that can provide motivation for the potential customers, as well as information regarding the eventual competitors. A final category is represented by information concerning the internal environment of his company as well as the external environment of the civil society (laws, rules, regulations, orders, etc.) constantly the manager is subjected to the pressure of change. These changes, according to the concourse of events in which the enterprise is can be favorable or unfavorable. These pressures can come from exterior or internal sources. [Cernea, 2004]

Another possible key to success is consists of providing the customer with certain products and services that prove the acclaimed efficiency and determine the future consolidation of the enterprises reputation. [Drucker, 1973]. Veterinary practice implies in all its aspects quality. From providing consulting services to the usage of pharmaceuticals that are effective and don’t determine unsafe and under standard animal products and by-products.

The manager has to show a clear commitment to improvement, commitment that must be passed on to the employees [Oakland, 2001].

CONCLUSION

A global view of the result of this study highlights some of the particularities of choosing a veterinary practice:

1. Age has greatly influenced choice. It has been noticed that in people of 18 to 35 years have taken into account at some level all analyzed criteria. People of 35 to 50 have not indicated at all “work schedule“ although a significant number of people (12) take into account, recommendation (word of mouth) from friends and other pet owners. In 50 to 65 years less important seemed to have been “kindliness” and “work schedule”, the highest priority being the “examination fee” and only after “the competence and skill of the veterinarian of the veterinarian and attending staff”. Persons over 65 years indicated three parameters, highest being “location” followed by “consultation fee” and only then the “competence and skill of the veterinarian and attending staff”. People over 65 indicated only three parameters: the heist being ”location” followed by “consultation fee” and interestingly enough “range of services rendered”

2. Sex did not influence the choice criteria the situation being similar in men and women. Although it seems that women take greater interest in the “overall equipment” “recommendation (word of mouth) from friends and other pet owners”, “location” and “consultation fee” than men.

3. Regarding the level of education, it has been noticed that people with middle education have chosen all the investigated parameters, as those of higher levels, dismissed ”work schedule”, and “range of services rendered”, choosing instead “staff kindliness”.

4. Income influenced decisions, fact testified by the fact that persons with an income of 300-1000 lei/ month took into consideration all the criteria; as those with an income of 1000-2000 lei/ month mostly chose competence, and equipment, location and consultation fee were discarded. In people with income of over 2000 lei/ month competence was favored before everything else.
BIBLIOGRAPHY