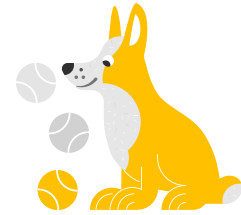


WEEKLY THEME – PRICING (structure and time)

Pricing – bargains and discounts

4 vet visits for the price of 3...

Second dog gets to join the class for free...



Said no vet ever!

So why do we often feel the need to continue to discount our ongoing sessions, or offer 5 walks for the price of 4?

When it comes to marketing, we feel discounting our sessions will often entice people in. We feel we want to help everyone.

We all like an offer, right???

So, whilst taster sessions, an initial offer, beta programs, a specific offer for a rescue/someone who is genuinely struggling all have their place and some one-day sales on courses, when it comes to your ongoing core offering it could potentially have a real negative impact on your earnings.

This means you've essentially watered down you're offering and could end up struggling for time and even then, struggling to feed your own pets.

“I'd rather you charge more, have more time and energy and less clients, then lots of clients who you could potentially end up juggling.”

I'd rather you charge more, have more time and energy and less clients, then lots of clients who you could potentially end up juggling.

Now in the past I've been guilty of the above. So please don't take this post as being condescending or rude. You hopefully know me by now. Take it as a piece of good advice, from someone who's tried the discounts, diluted her offering. Someone who tried to please everyone.

If you can truly put your hand on your heart and say discounts are working for you, then good for you. But when it comes to a living breathing animal you are not a bargain, one stop shop.

Below I've gone into some more detail on frequently asked questions when it comes to specific discounts:

Classes

If you are giving an extra place to the owner as a discount for the second dog that could have been sold to someone else at the full price, it makes no logical sense. When you bring two dogs to the vets, buy two bags of dog food there isn't a specific discount. Of course it may be an easier upsell, but the only time I'd do such an offer is if you have free spaces (that haven't been filled) but can use this to build your portfolio (do you mind if we use you on our video at the end?).

1-2-1

Whilst selling single sessions may be easier, in the long run there may be less time commitment and when working out the how much how many (and admin time) it can become a logistical nightmare! So many go onto offering 'packages' I've always disliked this phrase and then I attended an American dog training marketing course and found a new way to present my offering. They used the word 'programmes' and this was the first time I heard this phrase used.

It was a lightbulb moment and I put up my hand and agreed with excitement, I'd been doing this for so long but didn't have the guts at that time to teach others.

Lots in the room started to almost disagree with the speaker – see new concepts take time! I stuck by this concept and have seen now in the industry 70% of dog trainers are now doing this! As before I rarely saw anyone do this UNLESS it was a bundle or package with discount. A programme is different it's not discounted, it's not an offer, it's something that will give long lasting results and an amazing level of support for the dog owner.

Special considerations

I (used to) offer a small amount off rescue work HOWEVER this is because I do this as a charitable contribution. Also, there are social schemes in place to help low-income pet owners, I fully support these. But this is different to a general discount.

Free

Now again this may feel like a contradiction, but yes at the beginning I gave my time for free to build my portfolio. However this did not impact my business as it was part of my business building strategy and a way to get experience (people skills). I'd rather have had those free offerings to build my business then discounts as it's so much harder to raise prices once you've set these, whilst free there is no ongoing obligation.

Beta programmes/early bird offering

When we offer a new programme/online training it may be a new concept. The first version may require some 'testing' we call this a Beta programme. Your clients are going to be your very first so there may be a few blips (so essentially, they can be your guinea pigs too). Now it's not to say your Beta programme is a watered-down version but the later version may

include extras/been polished and perfected so can be sold at a greater price point. Your 'founding' clients will also be your best cheerleaders so can really help you to push further courses with the best testimonials and feedback. One last thing though – do work out the costs of your new course and what you need to make. I know a few people in the past who spent hundreds of pounds on Facebook ads to promote their courses and didn't create any revenue. Some though went on to triple that in the second instalment in the course (so in a nutshell will it make money and if not till the second course can you afford to run at a loss the first time around?).

Early bird offerings are a great way to get clients quickly through the door but once again work out profit/loss and try not to p*ss off future people who buy your courses by having a sudden price drop again.

Dog walking (multiple houses)

The dog walking (group) business model has always been the same – offer discounts for multiple dogs. I can understand the logic behind this as there is less travel time and easier to get another dog onboard if the same household. I would personally like to see this change, so dog walkers now charge the same price for each dog but that's a personal view. It's still another dog, another place taken up, another living and breathing creature you account for the needs of its welfare. But again, work out your costs. If it's working for you then great, but if you find taking on multiple household dogs with multiple discounts is really negatively affecting your business, maybe it's time to rethink things or offer a limit.

Pet sitting (multiple pets)

When it comes to multiple pets, I think we need to consider their individual needs and the time. I used to charge per pet, but this seemed unfair when it came down to multiple pet rats/fish or livestock. I'd charge on the nature of the work and time. For example I run a rescue and it's not as simple (in my opinion) as an in and out cat feed. The aviary needs cleaning, it's not the nicest of jobs and all birds need to be assessed for illness/issues. This also comes down to niche. Looking after a specific species of animals or an animal with extra medical needs requires much more skill. These are all things to consider.

Niche offering

As above, having a niche offering requires a particular skill or knowledge, this may mean further study/learning which all takes more time and money. It also means you are more unique and there is a need for pet owners who have a specific issue/need specific issue. Back to my rescue example. Not all vets work with corvids and to find a good 'avian' vet is worth its weight in gold. There are often extra prices, because of the skill and risks involved. I am happy to pay more to have my mind put at ease.