CRAFTING A PUBLIC NARRATIVE

DONT's ✖

✖ STOP SIGNS
Avoid blatant stop signs like, "No other pets," "No cats," "No kids under 12," etc.

This includes thinly veiled stop signs like, "Buffy would do best in a house with adults or older children"

LABELS ✖
The language we use is the lens through which potential adopters see the pets in our care. Always mention the pet first, and focus on them as an individual, not their disability, condition or behavior. For example, "a dog who is recovering from distemper," instead of, "a distemper dog," or "a cat who is fearful," instead of, "a flight risk."

NAUGHTY

✖ ENTIRELY NEGATIVE
Be aware of pet profiles that lack any or adequate positive information. "Sasha is an eight-year-old cat whose owner didn't want her anymore."
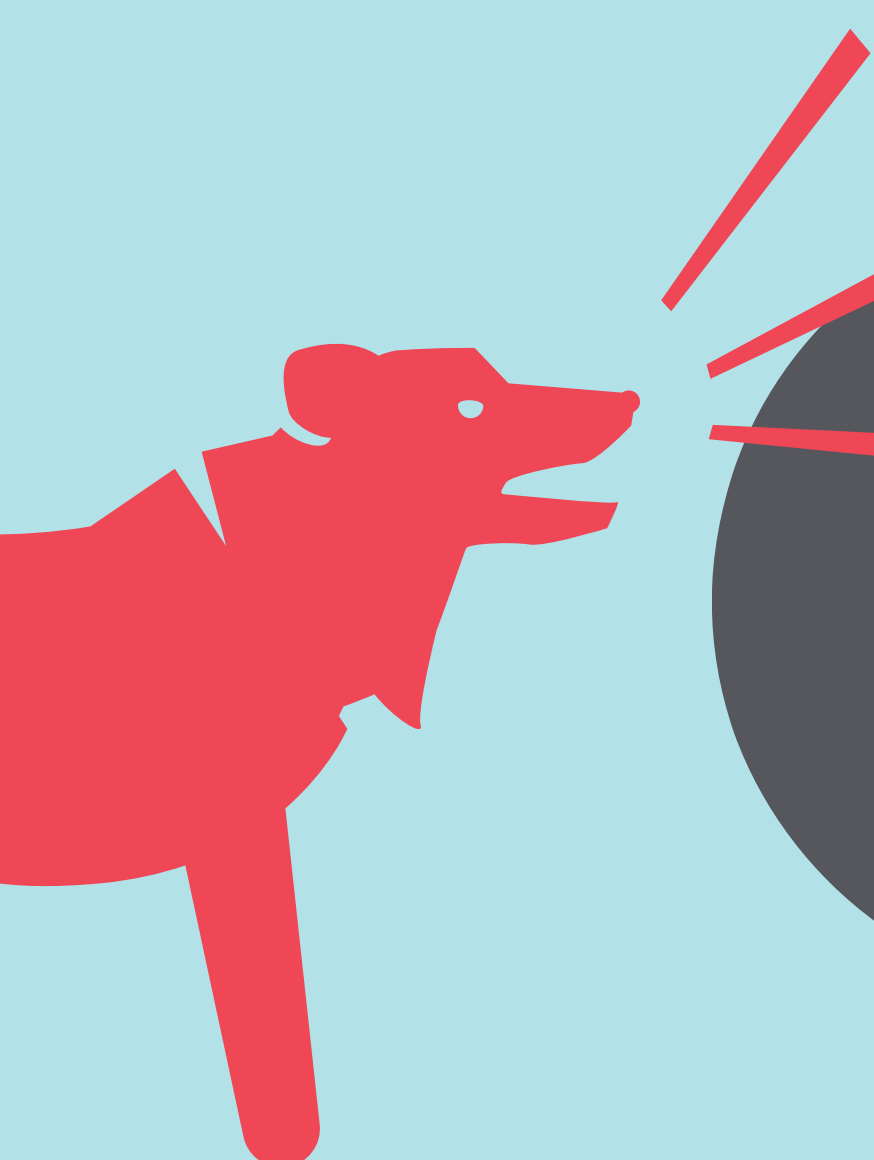
BURIED POSITIVE INFO ✖
If you're going to use stop signs, don't lead with them.
"Peanut warms up slowly to new people and doesn't like men, but once he bonds with you, he's a great dog."

✖ UNDESIRABLE KENNEL BEHAVIOR
"Carlos is highly kennel reactive and leash reactive"

✖ SAD STORIES
In research used to develop its public service campaign, the Shelter Pet Project learned that an over-reliance on heartbreaking stories of pets portrayed as abandoned, neglected or abused tended to alienate many adopters.

BLANKET RESTRICTIONS ✖
Avoid blanket restrictions based ONLY on behavior observed in shelter.
"Thrasher is aggressive towards other cats in the shelter and should be an only cat."

✖ NEGATIVE CONTEXT
"Otter has bitten two other dogs but he can be safely managed by the right owner."

RATING & RANKINGS ✖
"Fugazi has a two star rating for cat interactions but a five star rating for people interactions."

✖ PROJECTING NEEDS
This includes household and owner specifics like:

- "Java would do best in a quiet home without a lot of activity."
- "Fern is looking for an active owner who loves to hike, run, and be outdoors."

QUIET

INDUSTRY JARGON ✖
You may be familiar with acronyms like, "TNR," and phrases like "ear-tipping," or "reactive", but the general public may not know what they mean.

ABC ?