



Back Where They Belong

***Making It Easy for Owners to Find
and Redeem Lost Pets: Tech Tips and
Communication Strategies***

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Think Like the Public

While it may seem like a simple and logical thing to do, our communities don't always feel empowered to approach, leash (or otherwise contain) and help a lost animal find its way back home.

If a community member does make the decision to help the pet, they may initiate a post on social media, but then take to the shelter, thinking the pet's guardian will look for them there.



Let's Start at the Very Beginning

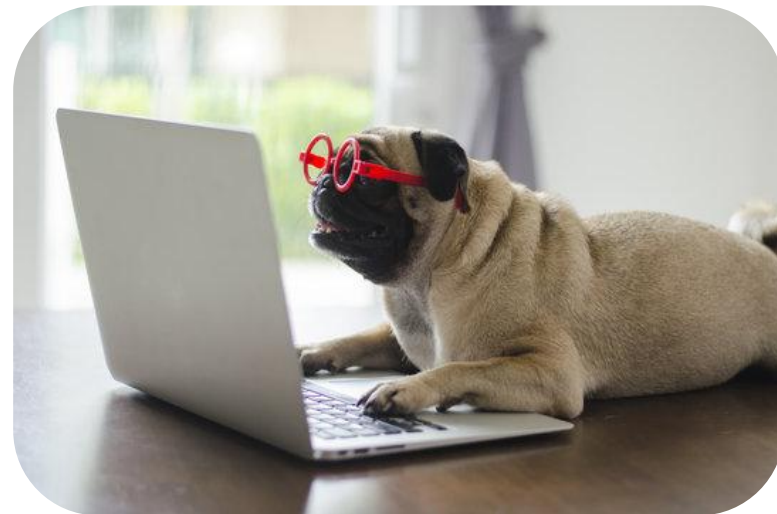
Before you begin any RTH comms, review your current information and think of your audience.

- Is it easy for the public to understand? (Give it to someone not in animal welfare to read through and see if it makes sense.)
- Keep the language at an 8th grade reading level, or simpler.
- Avoid “cute” animal headlines.
- Consider other dominant languages in your community.
 - Do you need to translate to another language and provide a bilingual piece to be inclusive of the population you serve?



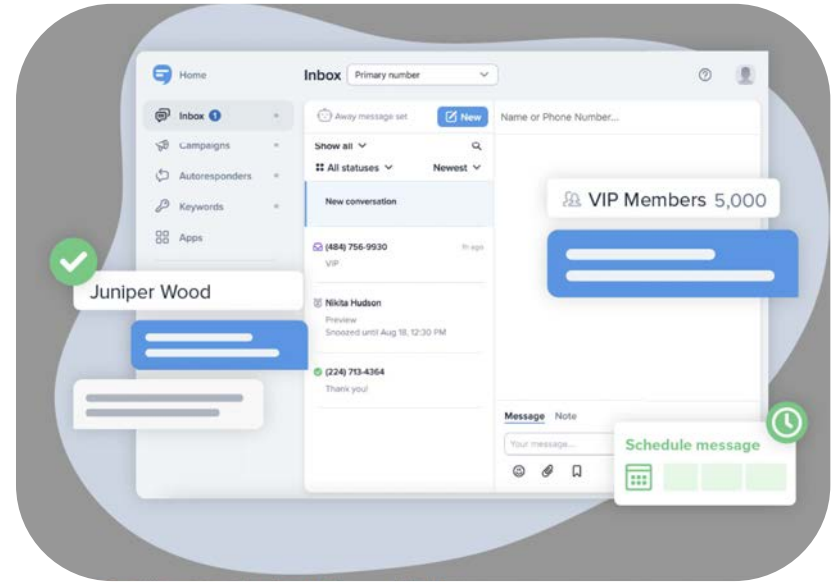
Website Test!

- Find a friend that doesn't Google cat memes all day.
- Ask them to search your website.
- Give them a list of things to find.
- Have them provide feedback on how easy it is to find information!



Be Accessible

Update your RTH instructions, as well as encourage staff to text vs calling the number on the tag, to facilitate a quicker response from the pet parent.



Empowering Through Information

Make your Return to Home communications as standard as your Adoptions information.

On social media, consider dedicating a day each week to talk about this important topic in different and fun ways. You have Senior Sunday, why not Found Fridays?



Think Like Bob Barker

Find ways to insert “learn how to save lost pets” (or “help pets stay out of shelters”) into more of your communications.

List all available comms where this can be inserted.

Always linking/QR Code to your page giving step-by-step instruction on what to do if they find a wandering pet.



Outreach and Events

- Create flyers for use by ACO's and/or your outreach team, with step-by-step instructions **in addition to QR codes.**
- This information is great to have available to staff year-round, and especially important around 4th of July and other regional events or national holidays when pets tend to go missing.



Outreach/Events

- Ask local “mom and pop” pet businesses or local veterinarians you’re familiar with if they would consider utilizing your flyers or magnets with information on what to do if pets go missing or what to do if one finds a lost pet.
- Add RTH information to adoption packets, charity dog walk swag, use Lost Dog Awareness Day (April 23rd) as an additional day to talk about it.



Get Creative

Potential Campaign themes:

- **Be a lost dog's best friend.** Dogs are there for us, let's be there for them.
- **If they could talk, they would ask for your help.** Roaming dogs aren't always homeless, help them get home.
- **He's looking for a way home. You can help.**
- **"Do you know where my people are?"** If you see a wandering pet, lend them a hand.
- **He never learned to ask for directions.**



Informing Through Media Relations

Create informational campaigns so community members know what to do if they see a lost pet, take precautions before a pet goes missing and learn how to search for a lost pet:

- Use your pet of the week TV opp to remind viewers: “Can’t adopt or foster? You can save lives by helping pets stay out of shelters, visit [____.org](#)” and use that page to inform of what to do if they DO find a pet in their area.
- Use Fashion Week or other segments on seasonal fashion trends to talk about collars and tags: “There’s one accessory that will never go out of fashion and that EVERY animal shelter thinks you should have for your pet..”



Media Relations

- Re-Use that “reunion” footage as B-roll (background footage) for an RTH story:
 - *“Our hearts will never forget the love between pets and their humans. If you find a pet wandering, please take these steps before coming to the shelter... and to help your pet be more easily found, remember the following...”*
- Follow up with re-union family and re-pitch on what the family learned to protect their pet from getting lost and how to make it easier for them to be found.
 - “Family bonds run strong, learn from one joyous reunion, on how to keep your pet from going missing.”



Additional Pitches or Advertising Campaign Ideas

- **Spring:** The flowers are blooming, and everyone is spending more time outdoors. Do you know what to do if you encounter a wandering pet?
- **Lost and Found** (end of school year): Water bottles and jackets are easy enough to replace, pets on the other hand, need your assistance to get back to their families or find new families of their own. Here's how community members can help.
- **Sometimes, all who wander are indeed, lost:** Playing off the signs "All who wander aren't lost", use this pitch if you live in areas where this phrase is popular.
- **You don't have to be Ryan Reynolds to consider yourself a superhero:** Summer Superhero movie launches (Deadpool 3) Know how to help wandering pets get back home so they don't enter an already overcrowded shelter system.



Include Staff in RTH Campaigns

If you can, create a small celebration to kick off your new focus on RTH and include volunteers:

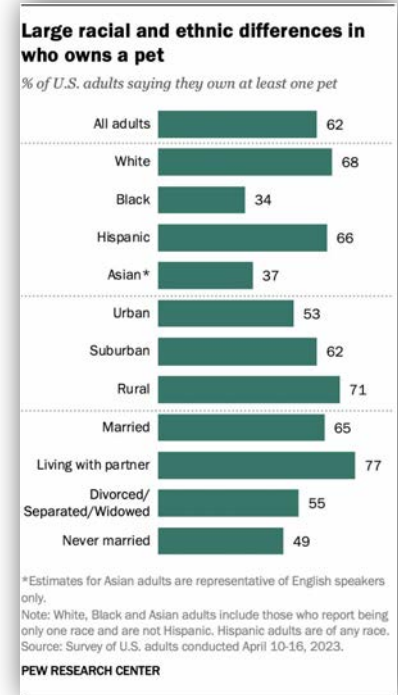
- **Home is where the heart is!** Invest in new collars and/or heart tags available to staff. Print off your RTH instructions on postcards packaged with the gifts so they're reminded of the information you're giving the public.
- **Make stickers or buttons for staff to wear: Ask me about Return to Home** and provide cute magnets with brief instructions/QR code on what to do if you find a wandering pet to all that ask a staff member about RTH
- **Mission: RTH:** Ask volunteers to become familiar with the RTH steps/page and ask them to please spread the word/provide link on social media whenever they encounter a post where someone has found a pet. Spreading the information is the most important step.



Multicultural Considerations

As our population continues to grow (the two or more races category leading the pack) it is imperative that we understand the nuances and differences within multicultural groups and how information affects them.

- Lack of functioning shelter systems in their homeland
- For Latines, awareness of pet topics can largely depend on acculturation levels
- Education plays a role
- History plays a role
- Regional differences exist
- Majority of Americans think of their pets as family members - Pew Research Center



<http://tinyurl.com/D2B1>
Resources

To Recap



**¡Gracias!
Thank You!**



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