

Do Potential Clients Care About Your Pets?

Opinions are mixed on whether adding your dog, cat, or other animal to your marketing works to your benefit.

Everyone loves pets, right?

Actually, they don't.

In fact, for every dog lover, there's a cat lover who doesn't understand the attraction to canines. And for every dog and cat lover, there's a snake fan who considers the standard house pets boring as can be.

So does using your pet in your marketing actually help you or turn off those who don't share your love of that or any type of pet? Just as opinions on animals differ, so do opinions on the effect of adding them to your marketing.

The true believers

While admitting that quantifying the impact of using pets in terms of closed transactions is challenging, Brett Johnson, a licensed agent and owner of New Era Home Buyers in Denver, says that adding his team members' pets in listing photos gets positive client feedback. He also believes it adds charm and relatability to images—and it aligns with the growing trend of homeowners seeking spaces for their pets.

Even better, Dino DiNenna, CRS, a broker at Southern Lifestyle Properties in Hilton Head, S.C., believes pets can help sell hard-to-move properties. "Appealing to buyers who intend to share the property with their best friends—



the four-legged kind—is one of the best strategies for selling a house that might remain on the market for some time," he says.

"Since pet owners form strong bonds with one another, demonstrating that a house is pet-friendly can be a valuable marketing point," says DiNenna. "Pet owners can be the target market for almost any type of home, and if you take the time to emphasize the features that make a home pet-friendly, it may sell faster."

Others say their bond with their pet helps build bonds with potential clients. "Our dogs aren't just pets; they're part of our family and, by extension, a big part of our business approach," says Debra Dobbs, team leader at the Debra Dobbs Group at Compass in Chicago. "Our team, all avid dog lovers, naturally include our dogs in our lifestyle photos and videos."



“This isn’t a calculated marketing move but a genuine reflection of our lives,” she explains. “For instance, on our website, our dogs have their own special spot, which showcases our love for them.”

“While it’s hard to quantify the exact impact, our shared love for dogs undeniably strengthens our connection with clients,” says Dobbs. “Our dogs are woven into the fabric of our daily lives, and sharing this with clients isn’t just about marketing; it’s about forming authentic, lasting relationships based on shared interests and understanding.”

Justin Baarts, an agent with Engel & Volkers Okanagan in Kelowna, Canada, uses his two dogs frequently in his social media marketing. “I find that posts with my dogs get higher engagement,” he explains. “If I post a simple informative post, I try to use text over an image of my dogs on a hike with a spectacular view. I find it engages the viewers longer, and they’ll absorb the content more effectively.

“I use Instagram insights to track the engagement levels between posts,” adds Baarts. “Granted, my following isn’t massive, but the data is still there. I get seven to eight times more likes if the post has my dogs in it, even if both posts are related to the same content.”

“The dogs allow for a relationship to be formed with the clients before we even meet,” he says. “Real estate can often feel very transactional, and consumers want to feel connected to their agent. If they’re animal lovers, it gives them something to relate to you with.”

Baarts recalls a buyer who had to bring his dog to showings. “I helped him keep the dog entertained in between multiple showings that day,” he says. “The buyer ended up purchasing one of the properties. Fast forward three months later, I gave them a welcome basket for their new home, and in it was a dog toy and a bag of treats.”

“My client said that was the best part of the day because all the dog’s toys and treats were