



Lost Our Home Foster Marketing Guide

Original document by Maddie's Fund, the "Companion Guide to Maddie's Fund's Marketing Techniques for Adoption from Foster Care" by Rachel Jones, re-edited for Lost Our Home Pet Rescue use.

When you're marketing a pet for adoption, your ultimate goal is to find an adopter. You do this by making the pet a local celebrity. There are several reasons for this approach. When a pet becomes a household name, it's more likely that their family will find them via word of mouth. The more people who get to know your foster pet, whether it be through photographs, video or stories, the better the chances they will become engaged in helping that pet find a home. When shelter pets become local celebrities, it also gets people talking about your shelter and the plight of long-stay pets in general. With any adoptable pet marketing, your most basic goal is to create an emotional connection between your supporters and the featured pet. Emotional connections are what drive us to act (sharing a post, advocating for a pet, adopting, etc.).

THE 4 "BE"S

1. Be wary of "STOP language": Stop language is essentially a disclaimer (ex. "Has a bite history", "not potty trained", "chews furniture", etc.). Stop language is for adoption counseling, not marketing, even and especially if your dog has behavioral challenges. You'll need to cast the widest net possible then whittle away at inquiries until you find the right match! Full disclosure should be provided in the adoption counseling process.
2. Be omnipresent: Post every place that will let you. Stop short of spam but the more sites, digital and physical, that harbor your foster's face, the closer you are to the right match. The content does need to be engaging but the phrase "out of sight, out of mind" is very applicative here.
3. Be accessible: The more accessible you are, the more likely a potential adopter is to remain engaged. Phone number, email, willingness to travel, quick responses keep people on the hook for your dog (disclaimer: I have never been contacted by creeps though you may be if you are an objectively attractive person and in many of your foster's photos). As a general rule, the faster you plop a foster down in



front of a potential adopter, the better. People are often not willing to work much for an animal they haven't met so it may fall to you to bridge the gap when you get a lead. Once a potential adopter sees your foster in person, they become real and much harder to resist.

4. Be creative: Don't be afraid to try new things! You may strike gold! On a whim, Rachel Jones of Pima County Animal Control emailed a rescue pup's story to a local news station and he got his own feature! Link here - <http://bit.ly/2zjibV>

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

A good bio:

There are so many ways to play this (excluding stop language of course), but you could try...

Painting a picture of your foster's personality...

After some time with Harley in foster he has made it abundantly clear that he is a gentleman, and as such, will henceforth be known as SIR Harley.



HOW WE KNOW SIR HARLEY IS A GENTLEMAN:

Sir Harley has manners. We were worried he had an infection when he didn't pee his first 24 hours with us. As it turns out, he simply prefers not to urinate in the presence of a lady. We also learned he has a bladder of steel.

Sir Harley is grateful. He is so expressive in his gratitude; in fact, he has an injury called "happy tail."

Breakfast? GRATEFUL. Pets? GRATEFUL.

Walkies? GRATEFUL. Nap time? GRATEFUL.

Eye contact? GRATEFUL.



(In Harley's everlasting gratitude, his happy tail was unable to heal so Shadow's Fund addressed it. Harley now displays his gratitude with a happy wiggle butt).

Sir Harley makes everyone feel welcome. As a one-dog welcoming committee, there is no door greeter as wiggly as Sir Harley. If retail stores had Sir Harley mascots, the American economy would be repaired in a matter of days.

Sir Harley does not beg. He understands that "no means no" and he will not push the issue on that pint of Ben N Jerry's. Bonus:

He won't shame you for eating it all in one sitting either.

He knows you are beautiful at any size. Sir Harley rolls with the flow. You wanna sleep all day? So does he. You wanna party outside? So does he. You wanna have an existential crisis because life is an illusion? Sir Harley knows you will calm down if you rub his belly and he will offer it to you gladly. Sir Harley will make some man or woman very lucky when they welcome this class act gentle giant into their home. #adoptsirharley



Telling a story about that one time...

This is Snoopy but you can call him Velcro Lite, Splooter (his sploots are unparalleled. Truly) or Snoop Dogg (but that's kind of a given). I brought Snoopy home for an overnight foster and he instantly took to my boyfriend and I like a baby takes to his parents. His primary objective all day and night was to please, and he did. You could call him from any room in the house and he'd come running with that giant smile on that mammoth head of his to sit at your feet and look up at you so adoringly you couldn't help but feel guilty for being loved this much.





Snoopy is the rare dog who wants to be by your side ALWAYS but also has a natural understanding of personal space. If you're on the couch, he is gonna climb right up on there and sploot next to you - close enough for the scratches but not so close that you're strapped in for a 12-hour Netflix marathon.

His two states of being are "overjoyed" and "asleep" and that goofy smile will follow him into both.

He is a natural couch potato but is versatile in his ability to go from "sploot" to 60 and back again depending on what it is YOU wanna do. Though people keep letting him down, Snoopy holds onto his spirit with a big, heart-melting grin. This boy loves with his whole body and the person who welcomes him into their family will have a lifelong best friend.

Going for the gut-punch...

In general, try to stay positive but a well-written soul crusher may flood you with inquiries (this CL ad has been up less than 2 months and has net 40-50+):

You know how the older you get, the more you appreciate just being with the people who love and understand you? Can you imagine being an animal that exists for human companionship and having to live without it well into your senior years?

Cowboy has lived (if you can call it that) in a kennel for the past 5+ years and it's killing him. He is injuring himself in escape attempts. He is depressed. He is too old for this sh*t. Cowboy is as lovable, smart, goofy and charismatic as they come but people pass him over because he's a senior (strike 1), a pit bull mix (strike 2) and will need a patient and empathetic handler (wouldn't you after sleeping on concrete for 5 years? - strike 3).



Cowboy knows all his basic commands and is clicker trained, a



nose-work champion, and likely graduated top of his class in clown school in a previous life.

His best friend and certified professional dog trainer, Genie Tuttle from Dog Genie, is offering FREE training services and full support to the lucky person who welcomes this smarty pants into their home.

The team at C.A.R.L. ache for him but they can only do so much. What he NEEDS is out. Love and a home will save his life. Seeing seniors live out their golden years in a kennel is one of the most heartbreaking things you'll witness in the shelter world.

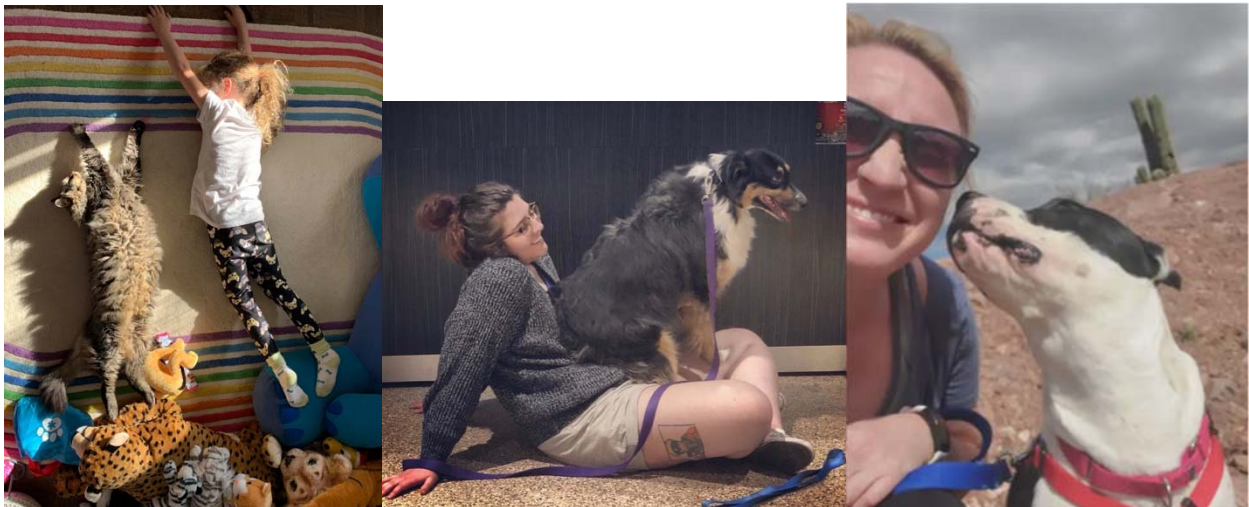
Please save Cowboy from one more day without his family. If you are interested in fostering (even for one night) or adopting Cowboy, please call, text or e-mail me and I will get back to you asap.

PHOTOS

A good photo is Centered. Clear. Happy. We aren't all skilled photographers- and that's ok! This is easily combated by taking one million rapid fire photos at once. Odds are you'll snap something to work with.

The best/most desirable foster photos are:

- A. With people (or other animals if they are dog/cat friendly)
- B. Showcase of your foster's personality





VIDEOS

Videos give the BEST picture of who your foster is. They can offer legitimate proof that you have a very good boy on your hands and cast a spell on potential adopters. Videos have the power to clinch the connection before an official meet and greet happens.

Good quality videos should always be shot in landscape (wide) so hold your phone sideways when taking video. Any number of videos can be uploaded and embedded into an animal's website profile, but video links are also great for other methods of sharing. Try to make your video 1 minute or less, unless the content is really engaging.

If you have editing "skillz" music videos are an A+ idea.

Exhibit A: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRJOaTX4T8M>

Exhibit B: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwsnYQWBcNs>

Videos are now even easier to make using the TikTok app!

A TITLE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Posts outside of social media may warrant a title. A title that is different will set you apart and up your chances of a potential adopter investigating further. Use a title as an opportunity to snapshot your foster pet's personality or dabble in the dramatic.

- Couch Catato Seeking Netflix Buddy
- Meet Sir Harley the Gentleman
- Save Cowboy the Forgotten Senior Dog

Don't go the generic route. Most titles will look like this and most will get passed by. Examples of the "generic route" are:



- My Foster Needs A Home
- Adopt Cowboy
- Pit Bull Available for Adoption

POST TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Obviously. Tag us and ask people to share, share, share! The # of social media sites is increasing by the day. If you have Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Tumblr, Youtube, Imgur, etc., so don't be afraid to go to town. Every form of popular social media provides enormous reach and if you are willing to pay a little bit of money, promoted posts reach even further (by a lot).

Kelly Duer of Austin Animal Center visited Ventura County Animal Services this summer, took 4 dogs out for overnight fosters and experimented with posting their stories to Imgur. Three of her four posts went viral and one was picked up by IHeartDogs.com. You never know what'll take until you try it! Mugzy was picked up by a rescue in Washington shortly after.

THE INTERNET IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE FOR SHELTER PETS

Listen. Basically, any website that will let you post content is fair game for fosters. If you're not sure, I'm not formally encouraging you to post anyway... but you never know until you try!

UPDATE YOUR FOSTER'S SHELTER ADOPTION PROFILE

After you've written up a bio, ask your foster coordinator if they'd be willing to update it on the website for you. Photos in a home and an updated biography paired with your personal contact info are a recipe for success!

CREATE FOSTER SPECIFIC PLATFORMS

Volunteer-and Foster-Created Social Media Pages Social media pages can be created and maintained by volunteers and fosters in order to showcase a particular niche within a shelter, the local area or even their own foster pets! They can be immensely helpful in getting more pets showcased before a wider audience.

Instagram: Instagram is an excellent site to use as a dumping ground for your foster pics and video. I have received some inquiries organically through IG but



my foster account has been most useful as a way to direct interested parties to proof that the foster they are asking about is the best animal in the whole world. Don't forget #lostourhomepetrescue and tag us @lostourhome

MEME-IFY YOUR FOSTER:

People love memes. We don't need to explain this to you.



Try <http://www.memetic.net> or <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>
Slap these memes on a flyer.
Try <http://bit.ly/2uliyS4>

ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE!

1. Caption This: "caption this" means to give a phrase, saying or sentence to describe what is being referenced to. Share a funny photo of your foster and ask your social media followers to caption it. An

example for the photo on the right, "Don't feed me after midnight."

2. Fun-draisers: One of our longtime fosters created a supply drive by allowing individuals to name foster kittens. This would work just as well with foster pups too! It's a win-win, people are engaged and the fosters are well fed!





Two mamas, with 8 kittens between have joined Heckle and Jeckle. Here's the deal: if you donate a case of Purina Proplan Kitten wet food, you get to name a kitten. If you donate 2, you get to name a mama! Who's in?



Facebook/Facebook Pages/Facebook Groups: You can create posts from your own FB page, regularly share your animal on internal shelter groups (so they stay at the forefront of everyone's mind), or you can create a public celebrity page for your animal. Post regularly with new photos, videos, and stories. You can boost FB posts with money so they are seen by a wider audience than just your friends. If you want to do a BIG post, ask for donations to help create a big boost. Include how to find the animal or how to ask more questions. Don't forget to tag us!

<http://www.facebook.com/lostourhome>

<https://www.instagram.com/lostourhome/>

<https://twitter.com/lostourhome>



Out of the box social media: Imgur, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter (tag @LostOurHome), etc.

HELPFUL SOFTWARE TO KNOW

iMovie (or its PC equivalent): iMovie is a video editing software that comes free on Apple computers and is fairly straightforward to learn. If you are so inclined, there are a million tutorials on YouTube, like this one:

<http://bit.ly/2xCOGQk>



Canva.com: Canva is an incredible, versatile and easy-to-use graphic design website. You can create anything from flyers, to collages to Facebook cover photos and Canva makes the process simple. <http://www.canva.com>

TRY POSTING TO THESE WEBSITES

Nextdoor.com: It's like social media for your neighborhood. You have to verify your address and everything. I have gotten inquiries and know several fosters who have found wonderful adopters via Nextdoor.

Reddit: Reddit is a worldwide community made up of a bazillion "subreddits". There is pretty much a "subreddit" for everything. Try posting to relevant ones like: reddit.com/r/fosterdogs, reddit.com/r/dogs, reddit.com/r/*yourcity*, etc.

Be Creative: There are probably plenty other ways of marketing and getting exposure that we haven't listed here. As long as it's safe for you, your pet, and could lead them to their forever home, try out other ideas! And if your ideas are successful, share them with us so we can add them to this list!

Next Steps: Say you've successfully made your foster pet a local celebrity and someone is interested in adopting... That's amazing! We advise all potential adopters to fill out a pre-adoption questionnaire on our website at <http://www.lostourhome.org/adopt-a-pet> from there, our adoption counselors will be in touch! **PLEASE NOTE: Applying does not automatically guarantee an adoption. Our Adoptions Team will review all applicable applications and choose the best match possible!**