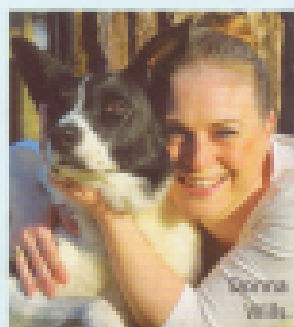


Crowdfunding – a cost-effective way to kick-start your career expansion

FIRST came across crowdfunding platform Kickstarter a few years ago, when I saw some innovative ideas ranging from printable housing for Africa to a mini spacecraft that was so affordable anyone could join in space exploration. It sounds incredible, but they were successful.



Donna Wills

This fuelled my imagination, as this new method of funding is for anyone – all you need is a unique idea. Kickstarter is a leader in crowdfunding, but many sites exist, so you can find one to fit your needs. It gives you full guidance, encouragement and support every step of the way.

You have to prepare your pitch, as you're asking everyone in the world to back your project. As a backer, you become an investor. This is not like with banks where you have to invest large sums of money for very little return – you invest whatever amount you choose and in exchange, receive unique rewards. It's often a great bargain and these rewards are sometimes not available at any other time.

You get to join the project journey as it unfolds from start to finish, and know it's because of you it is here today. You can pitch for any amount of money, but you have to get all your funds in less than 60 days, so you must be realistic. If you don't get the fund goal then the project ends, you get no funds at all and the backers get their money back. This is great protection for the backer as it means he or she doesn't lose out because you didn't reach your goal.

So, while your project is running you need to do all you can to market your campaign. This is brilliant as it also helps publicise the end product. Social media is a big help. The crowdfunding site will give you tips on how best to do this, but, again, it's your imagination that will help here – it doesn't have to cost anything.

My project idea was born from my career as a veterinary nurse. Seeing pets that weren't exceptionally great at being handled and were nervous in the consultation room was always a little sad. More correct handling as a puppy was always the most effective route to getting a confident and happy dog that was comfortable with being examined.

When I became an animal physiotherapist, I learned good, effective massage techniques. I had to use these as part of treatment and regularly showed owners what to do to help with successful rehabilitation at home. Owners loved learning

Donna Wills RvN and animal physiotherapist, encourages nurses to think outside the box when expanding their skills and activities suggesting crowdfunding – raising small amounts of money from a large amount of people – can help get ventures off the ground.



Donna Wills using Kickstarter to try to make a puppy massage DVD idea a reality.

the techniques and their dogs loved receiving the massages. But it did take some practice to get it right, and there is no better way to learn than actually seeing something being done, rather than just reading about it or looking at pictures.

So, my idea was born – a puppy massage DVD designed to teach owners how to massage their new bundles of joy in the comfort and privacy of their own home.

Rather like the very popular baby massage new mums often do, owners will be able to form a strong bond and learn to confidently and correctly handle their puppy.

I believe this will be great for the consultation room, so vets have happy, confident puppies to examine. Of course, there are the other well-known benefits of massage too, including

endorphin release, increased circulation and much more.

My DVD would provide a good grounding, so if the owner has to learn any therapeutic massage techniques in future from a professional, they will have a better understanding of how to do this.

Visit www.kickstarter.com/projects/877499266/puppy-massage-dvd to see the project and maybe even "back" the DVD. I'm also on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. I'm a vet, so I'm already in support of my project.

While you are there, you can take a look at the thousands of other projects and see if you may be inspired to find one of your own. It's a very exciting way to get your own ideas off the ground and make dreams a reality.

Revised study guidance

THE Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has published revised guidance on the study of veterinary nursing that sets out what graduates are expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

The guidance is one of a series of subject benchmark statements that describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas and in respect of particular qualifications.

The statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes.

Although they do not represent a national curriculum in a subject, or prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment, they do allow for flexibility and innovation in

INTERNATIONAL veterinary nursing courses and qualifications can now be accredited by the RCVS, following a decision by its veterinary nursing education sub-committee.

The sub-committee has agreed a framework for accrediting awarding organisations and higher education institutions delivering veterinary nursing qualifications wholly or partially outside the UK.

The changes were approved in principle by VN council members at a meeting

curriculum; their students would need to have a requisite amount of time gaining first-hand clinical experience in training practices; and we would need to be satisfied their graduates meet the set of skills and competences we expect from all newly qualified veterinary nurses," she said.

The sub-committee has also clarified and formalised the registration rules for veterinary nurses who wish to join the UK register, but who qualified outside both the European Union (EU) and

to pass both pre-registration theoretical and practical examinations.

All registrants trained outside the UK, including those from EUSA countries, will have to go to the RCVS to have their documentation checked and will be subject to the main tenets of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses, explained to them.

Registration will not be confined to staff members from the RCVS veterinary nursing department as a condition of the code has been a

RCVS to accredit overseas nursing qualifications