



VETCELERATOR CASE STUDY: A PASSION FOR ANIMAL CARE AND COMMUNITY

## A Passion for Animal Care



### BACKGROUND AND VISION

In the small town of Flatwoods, Kentucky, Guardian Animal Medical Center stands out by making veterinary care affordable for every family. At the heart of this effort is Dr. MJ Wixsom, the owner and veterinarian whose passion for animals and their well-being drives her every decision.

Dr. Wixsom wears many hats—veterinarian, hawk enthusiast, a 5th-grade teacher for gifted children, and what she calls a "master negotiator." When asked if she is a cat or dog person, her answer is simple: **"I'm a person."** This response reflects her commitment not to a single type of animal but to their health and happiness. She is a problem-solver, always searching for innovative ways to care for animals and the community she serves.



## MAKING CARE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

Flatwood is a rural town five miles from West Virginia, known for its scenic rolling hills and small-town warmth. However, with an average household income of under \$19,000, regular vet visits can be a financial challenge for many local families. Dr. Wixsom saw this as a barrier and knew she had to find a solution that allowed pets to get the care they needed without burdening their owners with hefty bills.

Her approach was simple yet effective—she broke down annual check-ups into smaller, more frequent visits. **"We address the most important issues first and take it step by step,"** she explains. This system makes care more affordable and allows her to see her favorite patients more often. It's a win-win, keeping pets healthier and owners less overwhelmed by costs. **"Why should pets miss out on care just because the budget's tight?"** she asks, summing up her passion for animals and their owners.

## A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

Dr. Wixsom's dedication extends far beyond the clinic. Soon after arriving in Flatwoods over 30 years ago, she discovered that local residents were shooting hawks, mistakenly believing they preyed on chickens. Realizing the need for education, she started visiting schools and writing weekly articles for the local newspaper, sharing essential pet care tips and wildlife stories.



These efforts paid off, and she is proud to say hawk shootings are now a rarity. Her weekly articles became a fixture in the community, leading to conversations with readers who had followed her for years. **"I'd run into people who'd say, 'I've been meaning to come in,' and eventually, they would,"** she recalls. Her passion for raising awareness didn't stop there. After seeing plastic waste while diving off the coast of Belize, she began writing about the environmental impact of plastics. **"If even one person reads my articles and decides to cut down on single-use plastics, I've made a difference."**





Dr. Wixsom has also embraced the digital world, evolving her outreach to include blogs and Facebook, where her **"Wednesday Wisdom"** videos—offering friendly, practical pet care advice—have become a sensation. With over 3,000 followers on her clinic's page, her passion resonates far beyond Flatwoods.

### NAVIGATING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK WITH INTEGRITY

Dr. Wixsom's approach is built on education and honesty, even when it means delivering difficult news. My target clients include those who want to be educated and trust me more than Dr. Google.



She doesn't shy away from telling pet owners the hard truths—Her approach is to sit down and talk to people, and she answers their questions. If the dog's fat, She tells them it's fat. If it's got tartar on its teeth, she tells them that it's going to die of heart problems if they don't do something about it. While this honesty has led to a few one-star reviews, Dr. Wixsom takes it in strides." **First off, you have to read those. There's nothing somebody will say that doesn't have a kernel of something you need to hear. So first, you have to hear it.**" She prefers to address feedback directly, turning online reviews into conversations where possible. **"You have to own what you need to own and then move forward."**

### FINDING THE RIGHT CLIENTS

For Dr. Wixsom, the ideal clients are those who genuinely care about their pets and are willing to listen and learn. **"I want clients who trust me to help them make the best choices for their pets,"** she says. Her success lies in her authenticity and dedication, qualities that naturally attract like-minded pet owners. She doesn't just offer services—she builds a community of passionate pet parents who share her values.



## A PRACTICE BUILT ON TRUST

Through all her efforts—from splitting up care into manageable visits to educating her clients at every turn—Dr. Wixsom has created something special in Flatwoods. Guardian Animal Medical Center thrives because of routine care and the deep relationships she has built with her clients, many of whom she now considers friends. **"It's about trust,"** she says. **"They trust me with their pets, and I never take that lightly."**

Her commitment extends to the most challenging moments as well—Dr. Wixsom takes emergency shifts at a local clinic. **"I could pay someone else to do it, but I need to be there when these animals need it most."**

Whether in the exam room, in her newspaper columns, or in her social media posts, Dr. Wixsom's mission is clear: She's here to teach and guide pet owners to be the best they can be. **"I'm not just fixing problems," she says. I'm helping people understand what their pets need."**

From her humble beginnings with wildlife rehab articles to her social media stardom, Dr. MJ Wixsom is a true testament to what passion and dedication can achieve.



Whether offering advice or sharing lighthearted stories, she continues to make a difference in the lives of pets and their people. **"I'm not done learning or teaching,"** she says. **"If I can meet people where they are—whether it's in the paper, online, or in person. I'll do it because pets deserve the best care, and owners should feel great about their choices."**



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### CLINIC HOURS

Mon, Tues, Fri:  
8:00AM – 6:00 PM  
Wed: 8:00AM – 5:00PM  
Thur: 8:00AM – 7:00PM  
Sat: 8:00AM – 12:00PM