



KEEPING YOUR COSTS DOWN WHEN ACCEPTING CREDIT CARDS

The Visa and MasterCard Associations have recently announced an increase in their interchange rates. This is the cost charged to all processors to handle credit card transactions. When the interchange rate increases it typically results in your rates going up. I am happy to tell you if you are a part of the Missouri Veterinary Medical Associations endorsed credit card program your rates will NOT increase.

No matter who your processor is there are several things you can do to try and keep your processing costs down. Some of these are:

- **PIN BASED DEBIT** – Utilizing pin based debit card processing can reduce your cost by up to 65% when accepting check/debit cards. If you currently have a pin pad make sure your staff is asking customers, “Is this credit or debit.” If you do not have a pin pad I would be happy to look at one of your monthly Visa/MC statements and let you know your potential savings.
- **REDUCE HAND KEYED TRANSACTIONS** – Interchange rates increase when you hand key a transaction. If a credit card does not read on the first swipe make sure your staff is trying to swipe it several times before hand keying. If you have an older terminal the mag-stripe reader may be defective and upgrading to a new terminal could save you money. I also encourage you to try and get customers who have large bills to come in to the clinic to pay rather than take a credit card over the phone. This can be a delicate situation but asking them to stop in when they are close by can save you a considerable amount on your credit card fees.
- **ADDRESS VERIFICATION / V-CODE** – If you do have to hand key a transaction newer terminals will prompt you for Address Verification (AVS) and possibly for the CVV2 code. It is important to enter information in these fields to get the best possible processing rate. These are fraud protective measures and the terminal will let you know if the information given to you by the customer is incorrect. If your customer does not know the correct billing address for the credit card or the CVV2 code there is a good chance a stolen credit card number is being used.

Although Visa and MasterCard have raised their rates, a typical Veterinary Clinic should still be able to get their effective rate around two percent. This is very economical when you consider the benefits of getting paid today and not having to send out hundreds of bills monthly.

It has been a privilege to work with the Missouri Veterinary Medical Association in making the credit card acceptance program the most successful MVMA endorsed program. If you have any questions on the acceptance of credit cards please call Mark Thompson at 1-800-890-7563. If you would like to see if the MVMA's credit card acceptance program could save you money on your fees please fax your most recent monthly Visa/MC statement to 1-877-809-4432.