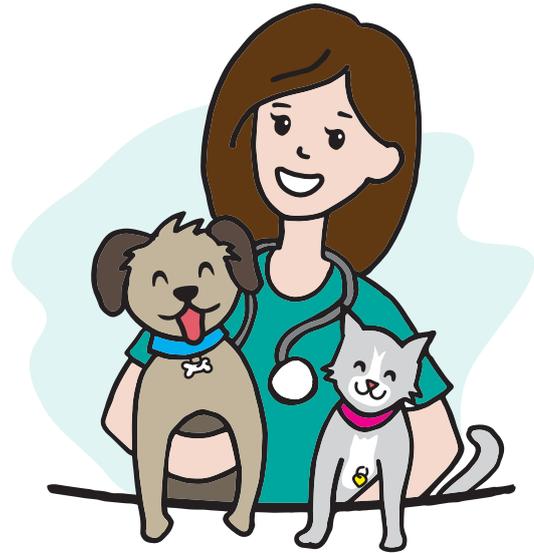


V+ VETERINARY CLINIC

Venturing out on her own with LEEP support

“I wanted to be a vet my whole life” said Sally Antonios, owner of V+ Veterinary Hospital, located in Betchay in the suburbs of Beirut. “Veterinary medicine is a male-dominated profession in Lebanon. I was stunned at the number of discouraging comments I got, telling me ‘to find a profession that suits women’ or ‘only men should be vets’”. “There was a prevalent perception that women were not physically strong enough to be vets, but I wasn’t going to let anything stand in the way of my dreams”, she added.



After 8 years of education, Sally joined an exceptionally busy veterinary clinic in Lebanon called “Animals”, located in Hazmiyeh which is 6 kilometers away from Betchay. She progressed quickly and became responsible for the clinic’s daily operations. Five years into her career, she started wondering what to do next. While many vets choose to work within an established practice, Sally decided to venture out on her own.

“I didn’t know where to start, I just knew that there was a high demand in Betchay because there was no veterinary hospital there” she said. “However, I needed to secure the financing because I didn’t have the means to start my own practice nor did I have the required collateral to get a business loan”.

LEEP’S MATCHING GRANT ENABLED SALLY GET A LOAN

Sally was attending a medical conference at the Hilton Hotel when she heard about a roadshow organized by BLC Bank at the same venue. She attended this event and learned about different business loans offered for small businesses. Sally took this as an opportunity and presented her proposal for starting a vet clinic. She was informed about UK Aid’s Lebanon Enterprise and Employment Programme that was supporting Lebanese businesses in expansion and employment creation. Sally needed approximately \$40,000 to launch her business. Through a combination of her personal finances, a loan from the bank and a grant from LEEP, she was able to kick-start the business.

In March 2019, within weeks of getting the LEEP grant and loan, Sally started her very own veterinary hospital by transforming a toy store. This hospital was equipped with a variety of supplies, medical equipment, laboratory instruments and drugs. She also had other over-the-counter goods such as pet food supplies. It was officially ready for the big launch on April 16, 2019.



Seeing her dream coming finally true, Sally said:

"I was a lot more excited to get the loan when I heard that LEEP could provide 50% of the loan as a matching grant. LEEP's procedures were much easier and faster than expected. I wouldn't have taken a loan from BLC if it weren't for LEEP. I have now opened my own practice and employed 2 people.

The best thing about LEEP is that, in addition to helping me secure financing for my hospital, it provided additional support in the form of 10 business development sessions with professional consultants."

INCREASING CLIENTS' FOOTFALL WITH CUSTOMIZED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Sally is a vet with limited business knowledge. She realized from the beginning that business coaching was going to be essential to make her venture successful. LEEP's business development services provided her with the exact support she needed. She started her sessions with a business development professional from Management Mix consulting firm. They had detailed discussion with Sally first to understand her needs and the challenges faced by her new venture. Through this engagement, Sally determined she needed particular support in better managing her hospital's staff and accessing customers in the right market. Using this assessment, the BDS professional structured a series of 8 coaching sessions over two months that focused on the following:

Human resources



Helped Sally develop job descriptions for her hospital staff to better align employees' understanding and Sally's expectations



Developed a work schedule for hospital staff to keep operations efficient and cost-effective



Worked with hospital staff on customer engagement and provided training on comforting body language, an essential skill for dealing with pet owners

Access to market

A business ability to survive in a difficult economy is dependent on how efficiently it is able to identify markets and operate effectively. Sally knew that she would need technical support to develop the right business and market strategy. The consultant supported Sally in determining the sales strategy including pricing of services, sales strategy and promotional tactics to increase clients' footfall and loyalty. In this process, Sally was able to achieve the following:



Better understanding of her market space, her strengths and weaknesses, and what opportunities they provided for business growth



Developed a sales strategy for pet accessories to attract new clients



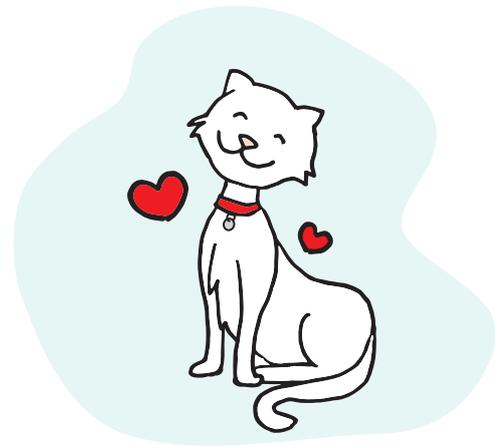
Operationalised a new marketing plan using social media on Facebook and Instagram



Developed of a study for the purchase of an emergency Van that will be equipped to do home visits for emergency interventions



In just few months, V+ Veterinary Hospital is now already considered a very well-established practice as pet owners in the region were happy finally to have a professional hospital in the region. The access to market tactics worked well and both brand awareness and client footfall increased!



In less than 8 months, Sally has provided services for over 1000 customers and their pets.

4 STEPS TO BENEFIT FROM A LEEP GRANT!



Acquire a loan from a bank or other financial institution



LEEP grant matches up to 50% of the loan



10 Business development sessions offered by LEEP to improve the business



Job creation