



WRITING PET BIOS: **THE 'INTERVIEW'** *strategy*

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Conducting an ‘interview’ is not only super fun, it’s a sure-fire way to inspire some fresh, outside-the-box descriptions. The process is very fluid and versatile, the results are playful, and it can even open the door to exciting visual interpretations for some bonus promo material!

If photos are the cheese, then a memorable, engaging bio is most definitely the macaroni in promoting an adoptable pet! They’re a powerful duo — photos cutting through the clutter of busy newsfeeds to spark an unforgettable first impression, while a bio provides the details that motivate a potential adopter to put wheels in motion. That means that unique, engaging, and endearing are important qualities in a bio. Yet, in the physically and emotionally demanding world of animal welfare where time and resources are often so limited, keeping the creative juices flowing can be a challenge!

The great news is that recharging the magic and landing on a winning bio can start with a very simple exercise or strategy! Conducting an ‘interview’ is not only super fun, it’s a sure-fire way to inspire some fresh, outside-the-box descriptions. The process is very fluid and versatile, the results are playful, and it can even open the door to exciting visual interpretations for some bonus promo material!

..... *Give it a try!*



START WITH WHAT YOU NOTICE ABOUT THE ANIMAL

When you meet this animal or see a picture of it, what immediately stands out to you? From big to small, to outlandish to obvious — jot it all down! Even seemingly far-fetched ideas can become gold! What do you notice about their behavior? Do they resemble a celebrity? What questions could you ‘ask’ this adoptable animal, and how would they answer, based on what you know or notice about them?

You can work in order: you ask the question — what would the answer be? Or, if you already notice something in particular, what question could you ask that would lead to that answer in a creative and memorable way? For example, if they’re the active type, perhaps a park visit is part of their perfect day out, or their favorite color is tennis ball green! Are they more interested in family couch time? What’s the next show on their list to binge-watch? If they’re orange, perhaps they can’t get enough of Orange is the New Black!



A few questions to work with:

- ★ It's Friday night! What are your plans?
- ★ Who is your favorite celebrity?
- ★ If you were a dessert, what would you be?
- ★ Squeaky or bouncy — what do you look for in a toy?
- ★ What's your favorite day of the year?
- ★ What's your favorite season?
- ★ Favorite kind of music?
- ★ What do you value most in a friendship?
- ★ What would constitute a perfect day for you?
- ★ Complete this sentence: "I wish I had a friend with whom I could share..."
- ★ What's your favorite color?
- ★ Beach or mountains?
- ★ Favorite movie genre?
- ★ Car ride or long walk?



JAZZ UP THE EXPECTED OR THE NOT-SO-GREAT

It's understandable that, when faced with recurring animal characteristics and lifestyle preferences, we'd default to the same types of descriptions. But if anything can benefit from a little creative confetti, it's the expected or the potentially less desirable aspects of an adoptable animal.

The interview approach can make it easier to present these aspects in a fresh, engaging, less-intimidating way. A senior pet, when asked what they'd like to be when they grow up, might answer with "I can be anything! 10 is the new 2." Or perhaps they're channeling a famous silver fox like George Clooney, and your questions could position them as a beloved celebrity.

Adopters often want to know what the energy level of an animal is like, and asking creative questions about toy preferences or "a perfect day" can help to reframe common traits in a new and more relatable way that piques interest.

“It's Friday night. What are your plans?”

I'M HOPING FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP WHILST TAKING UP THE ENTIRE MATTRESS IN MY NEW HOME!





TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE

Pet bios are also a great platform for incorporating educational components about pet care, animal welfare, or your shelter, and the interview approach makes it super easy! Try ‘asking’ the pet what their favorite thing is about staying at the shelter. Perhaps they’ll mention their favorite volunteer who takes them on their morning walk, or the vet who “always gives me a treat when I visit!”. It’s endearing to hear about a pet’s favorite people, and inspires a potential adopter to get into those shoes! It also shares an important message about all the love, care, and hard work happening at the shelter.

Ask the pet what their favorite book is, and if they answer ‘The Grapes of wrath’, perhaps they enjoyed the plot AND learned a lot about what foods they can’t eat!

“ *What’s your favorite book?*

I WAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED TO STEINBECK, AND WOW! THE GRAPES OF WRATH TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT WHAT FOODS I SHOULDN’T EAT.



BE FUNNY AND FEARLESS

Don’t be afraid to have a sense of humor and imbue a sense of personality into your bios! This sends an important message about your shelter — that it’s a fun, friendly place to visit, that the adoption process will be rewarding and exciting, and that it’s multifaceted support service for your community.

Even if you don’t publish an actual interview, just brainstorming these ideas can allow you to branch out of the standard descriptions in myriad ways. Go crazy! Feel free to get totally inappropriate or ridiculous with your humor – it’s about the process, after all. Then edit your ideas for a public audience.



TAKE IT ONE STEP FURTHER

What visual options blossom from one of their ‘answers’ that could spark some social media buzz? Perhaps they’re inserted into a picture of the cast of their favorite TV show or put side-by-side with a celebrity they resemble.

If we ‘asked’ to see this animal’s set of most recently used emojis, what would they be? Perhaps a more active dog would use a lot of 🍌 🏕️ and 🏞️. Maybe an older, more laid back cat would favor 📺 🤝 and 🛌.



Sample questions and answers:

WHEN I SAY THE WORDS 'AGILITY COURSE', WHAT COMES TO MIND?

- "Yes, yes, pretty please OMG I'm so excited!"
- "Sure... if I'm watching from the couch. Cardio, schmardio."

WHAT IS YOUR GUILTY PLEASURE?

"US Weekly magazine and sardines. Off the record, please."

IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT, WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

"I'm hoping for a good night's sleep whilst taking up the entire mattress in my new home."

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL TALENTS?

- "I have an amazing singing voice. I perform a solo concert before each meal!"
- "I excel at math and therefore know exactly how many treats are left in your pocket at any given time"

TURN IT INTO SOMETHING VISUALLY ENGAGING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA



Photohound Dog Photography

AN INTERVIEW WITH **BEAZLEY**

WHEN I GROW UP, I'LL BE: ON THE COVER OF VOGUE. I'M TOLD I'M A NATURAL!

IF I WERE A FOOD I'D BE: A SACK OF POTATOES

MY FAVORITE PLACE I'VE VISITED: A LAP!

DRAMA CLUB OR MARCHING BAND? THE BOOK CLUB, SILLY!

PARTY GIRL OR HOMEBODY? HOME WITH A BOOK. AND A LAP.

WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER? #A292229 @ ORANGE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES. ADOPT ME!

