

## NCVEI Update: Website Improvements & Client Communication

### **The importance of communicating with your clients**

Study after study in all walks of life demonstrates the importance of good communication. This is as true in scientific fields as in more obvious professions such as teaching or the law. Strong evidence in the human medical field demonstrates clearly the relationship between communication and more positive medical outcomes. Obviously this holds true for veterinary medicine as well. If your clients understand the value of what you are recommending, they are more likely to accept those recommendations. And they need to understand clearly the at home care instructions you give them.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 8.6% of Americans are unemployed. The flip side of this, of course, is that 91.4% still have jobs. But even those with jobs are skittish about spending these days. Communication is more important now than it ever was. People need to understand WHY your recommendations really matter.

Some people are born with good communication skills but anyone can learn them with a little effort. The four key elements of good communication are:

- Non-verbal communication
- Open ended inquiry
- Reflective listening
- Empathy

Visit [ncvei.org](http://ncvei.org) and check out the communication tools—these include online CE about the above critical communication topics complete with some very entertaining videos.

### **Website improvements**

Thank you to all of you who have responded to our user surveys over the past few months. We are in the process of translating your comments into improvements to the site.

Several of you wanted to know how many users had responded to a particular question so you could take that into account in using the data—we have now added that feature to our results graphs. The left axis will show you the population represented by the data you are seeing (US average, Western region, etc) as well as the year of the data results and the number of respondents for that data point.

Over the next few months you will see the following changes:

- A new “look and feel” with updated graphics and clearer descriptions about the resources available
- Easier navigation—less clicking, more descriptive titles for the tools
- Quicker user profile set up
- Expanded resource section—so if you don’t like the results you get when you compare your practice to others, what can you do about it?

We’ll be continuing to run our user survey—please let us know if you have any more comments or ideas.

### **QuickPolls**

There’s been a lot of talk in the veterinary media about staff layoffs so in April’s QuickPoll, we asked:

**Have you laid off any members of your support staff due to the impact the recession has had on your practice?**

Most of you said no—here are the full results.

No	67%
I’m thinking about it	14%
Yes-1 or more receptionists	5%
Yes—one or more technicians or veterinary assistants	10%
Yes—other staff members	4%

This month we want to find out if you’re seeing a change in the payment options used by clients during the last six months. Are more using pet insurance? Or medical payment plans? Are you holding more checks? Visit the NCVEI website ([www.ncvei.org](http://www.ncvei.org)) and look for the QuickPoll in the lower right hand corner.

If you have any ideas for future QuickPolls—some burning question you’ve always wanted to know—please email us your ideas to [info@ncvei.org](mailto:info@ncvei.org).

As always, if you have any questions or comments about anything the NCVEI is doing, please e-mail us at [Info@NCVEI.org](mailto:Info@NCVEI.org) or call 847-925-1230 for assistance. If you know any other members of the veterinary profession who still haven't utilized the NCVEI's FREE benchmarking program, please pass this e-mail message on to them. The more users of the benchmarking tools there are - the better the results for everyone!

The National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues was founded in January 2000 with a mission of raising the economic base of veterinary medicine. A wide-ranging group of benchmarking, pricing and communications tools as well as other resources are available, free of charge, at [www.NCVEI.org](http://www.NCVEI.org). The Commission is a not-for-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors representing the three founding

organizations: American Veterinary Medical Association, American Animal Hospital Association and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. Funding is provided by members of the NCVET's Sponsor Council that includes Merial, Hill's Pet Nutrition, Veterinary Pet Insurance, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Bayer Animal Health, CareCredit, Simmons Educational Fund and the Western Veterinary Conference.

