

VETERINARY CAREER DEVELOPMENT: TEMPLATE FOR A MODEL CURRICULUM

I CHOOSING A CAREER AND CAREER SEARCH STRATEGIES

Do people choose careers or do careers choose people?

Learning the Options

- Practice versus non-practice options
- Breadth of non-practice careers available
- Possible levels of specialization
- Mixing different options

Issues in Career Selection

- Identifying the personal, professional, and financial rewards and opportunities of different career directions
- Career potentials - future pathways
- Possible required or beneficial post-DVM education (*Internships and Residencies, Research and PhD training, Advanced Degrees in Public Health and Business*)
- Timing of career choices
- Matching differences in lifestyle with career directions
- The fiscal pathways of different options

Initiating the search

- Understanding how employers find employees
- Creating a full “self-image”- the art of resume creation
- Creating cover letters that open doors.
- Being prepared for and managing the interview - critical bi-directional information flow
- Strategies for long distance vs. short distance job searches

Personal/professional considerations regarding practice job selection

- Identifying your own vision/mission and matching it with that of the practice at which you have chosen to work
- Availability of a mentoring environment
- Presence, absence and/or types of medical protocols/standards for treatment/surgery
- Determining how the practice’s philosophy about euthanasia (convenience, etc), ear crops, declawing, and other optional procedures fits with yours
- Negotiation factors
 - o Salary (*Production based compensation --(pros and cons; time value of money, current compensation requirements)*)
 - o Contract (*Terms, content, negotiations and legal implications of the first employment contract*)
 - o Benefits (*Life, health, disability, professional liability, and pet insurance; continuing education, sick/personal leave, and vacation*)

- o Job description (*Formal or informal*)
- o Added value (*Personal growth potential*)

II BASIC LIFE SKILLS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL VETERINARIAN

Insuring that the fundamentals are in place for success

Goal setting and planning

- Development of written personal goals/objectives
- Significance of long vs. short term goals
- Implementing action plans to fulfill goals
- Behavior modification to attain goals
- Review and modification of goals
- Budgeting as a goal

Emotional Intelligence

- What is it and how does it differ from IQ?
- Why is it important?
- Can it be learned or is it innate, like one's IQ?
- The applications of personality profiles (*Briggs Meyer, etc.*) to EI
- Developing (and maintaining) self-esteem (*Individual definition of success*)
- Stress and time management

Professionalism

- What is it? Why is it important?
- Expected behavior of a professional with staff, colleagues, and clients

Team Work

- Responsibilities as members of teams
- Creating successful teams
- The art of delegating and accepting responsibility and authority

Managing A Career

- Matching goals and achievements to expectations
- Future planning, recognizing critical hurdles
- Identifying and tracking personal, professional, and financial success

Maintaining Competence

- Access routes to current information
- Adopting a philosophy of life-long learning
- Where and when to go for professional vs. career information
- Adopting the philosophy and practice of continuing education
- The role of information management software

Achieving a Balance between One's Career, Financial Success, and Personal Life

- Establishing life balance goals
- Family needs and values
- Handling conflicts between personal, family, and business goals
- Professional and community involvement
- Changing goals with age, altered personal circumstances and changing business circumstances
- Personal financial management and planning. (*Budget preparation, future income potential, debt management, investment and retirement planning, tax planning and liabilities*)
- Insurance (Crisis management and the roles of *medical, disability, life, and professional liability insurance*)

III THE ART OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is presenting what you have to say in a way that conveys the message you intended to send, and likewise to ensure that the message you receive is what the sender intended for you to hear.

Understanding why Effective Communication is Important

Knowing and Defining Your Audience

- Audience profiles (*Clients, peers/colleagues, business and technical staff, employer/faculty/business owner, employees, external business contacts/financial advisors, suppliers, associations, governmental/administrative, media, non-veterinary community groups, family, communication in an educational setting*)
- Recognizing audience attributes (*Education and position of recipient, DVM vs. non-DVM, boss vs. employee, cultural and educational background, gender, possible barriers including language and disability*)
- Methods of communication (*Phone, written, oral, electronic, body language and personal appearance*)
- Essential communication differences with individual, small group and large group audiences

Principles of Communication -- How to Build Trust and Rapport

- Structure of effective communication (*Having a goal before beginning, planning a beginning, middle and end*)
- Time efficient communication --Timing of communication

- Awareness of different communication and personality styles on successful communication (e.g., Blanchard, Myers-Briggs)
- Awareness of learning styles, e.g., visual, verbal, story telling
- Implications of vocabulary / terminology on effective communication
- Understanding and developing the environment for effective communication (*room, noise, distractions, lighting, moods, seating, temperature*)
- Active listening (*Ensuring recipient understands your message, soliciting feedback, understanding recipient verbal and nonverbal response and feedback, modifying style in response*)
- Communication aids (*visual, video, handouts, models, etc*)
- Effective writing (Understanding the reader, writing for multiple readers with different levels of communication needs, the essential structures of written documents)

Situational Use of Communication Principles

- The art of negotiation - techniques and skills
- Problem solving
- Conflict resolution and/or management
- Facilitating the decision-making process
- Facilitating the learning process
- Giving and receiving criticism
- Job search communication (*Resume writing, interviewing, preparation and follow-up*)
- Record-keeping (*Medical records for business, diagnostic, and legal defense reasons, research records, financial records*)
- Seeking funding for research and entrepreneurial activities – the art of grant writing
- Marketing materials (*Newsletters, client info sheets, publications*)
- Private practice applications (*Grief counseling, communicating in emotionally charged settings, discussing money matters with clients*)
- Education (*clients, staff, other groups*)
- Outcome-dependent styles of communication (*information flow, group problem solving, group learning*)

Responsibilities of communication

- Communication with clients (*Communication attitudes and commitment to service; estimates, risks, prognostics and authorization to treat; appropriate use of medical records; grief counsel/human-companion animal bond; practice newsletters, reminders, surveys*)
- Communication with employees (*Letter of application and resumes; interviews, employment reviews; performance appraisal; termination*)
- Communication with colleagues (*Positive idea exchange, confrontation over differences, editorial forums, local, state, national associations*)
- Communication with others (*Community relations, media, legislators, city offices, service clubs, kennel/cattery groups, producer groups, humane groups, sales representatives*)

IV ETHICAL VALUES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND THEIR APPLICATION IN VETERINARY CAREERS

Ethical Theory-

- Detecting ethical questions in the first place
- The basis of ethical decisions and making choices
- The nature of ethical theory (*Consequentialist theories stressing goodness and badness, i.e., the results of people's actions, including utilitarianism. Deontological theories stressing rightness and wrongness, i.e., the intrinsic properties of actions, including theologically based actions that are obligatory because they have been commanded by God*)
- Breaking ethics into its components (*Social consensus ethics – binding on all members of society; personal ethics – determined at the discretion of the individual; professional ethics – pertaining to one's role as a veterinarian*)
- Case examples of moral duties and ethical concerns: (*Clients requests for convenience euthanasia, less than optimal care, pro-bono care, treatment of the vicious animal,; non-sterile surgery*)
- Utilizing the AVMA's Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics as the principal document upon which individuals build

Professional responsibilities

Personal Integrity-

- Testing knowledge and factual base/seeking consultations
- Understanding “conflicts of interest” and being aware of situations in which conflicts may exist *or appear to exist (e.g., veterinarian representing buyers/sellers of animals, pharmaceutical or food company payments/reimbursements/gifts, understanding possible clients' views of whether recommendations are “tainted” by such, corporate shareholder interests vs. client/pet interests).*

Responsibility to Animals

- Understanding humane care
- Understanding the issues surrounding animal rights
- Animal welfare
 - o Companion animal welfare
 - o Farm/food animal welfare (*i.e., the uses of animals for human sustenance*)
 - o Use and welfare of animals in research and teaching (*e.g., teaching anatomy and surgery, balancing between terminal and non-terminal surgeries, non live animal alternatives*)
 - o The concept of pain
- The responsibilities to the animal of ownership

Provision of Service

- When is there a responsibility to provide care?

- Accurate descriptions of clinical situation
- Maintaining competence-seeking referrals
- Truth in advertising

Role of the DVM in human health

- The guardian of human health
- The human/animal bond

Professional Interactions

Responsibility to Clients

- Confidentiality
- Respecting client trust
- Understanding “full disclosure” and its ramifications (*e.g., client agreement to treat in light of education about potential side effects; reasons and need for waivers and release statements; disclosures of potential conflicts of interest, disclosure of care animal is to receive, e.g., whether on-site attendants are at the facility all night*)
- Awareness of pitfalls associated with “treatment guarantees”)

Balancing the Responsibility to Clients and Patients

Responsibilities in Professional Peer Interactions (Consultation, referrals, colleague relationships)

Responsibility to Employees and as an Employee

Responsibility to the Community

V THE ART AND KNOWLEDGE FOR A SUCCESSFUL VETERINARY PRACTICE

Understanding the structure of a successful practice is as important for choosing where to work as it is in creating one.

Business Fundamentals--The Structure and Management of a Successful Business

- Business structures (*Sole proprietorship etc., partnerships, corporations, LLCs, mergers and consolidations*)
- The management process (*Plan, implement, evaluate, monitor*)
- Strategic management (*Organizing, directing, delegating and control*)
- Efficiency and resource utilization -- including personnel and time
- The provision of service
- Growth phases of a practice (*Basic decisions on when growth should be added*)
- Building the external team (*Using consultants to advise on legal, business, and medical decisions*)

- Setting up the referral bases (*Incoming and outgoing*)
- Physical plant and capital equipment

Marketing and Promotion

- Who is the customer? What does the customer need? What is the role of marketing in private practice?
- How/where to meet those needs (*4 Ps – Place, Product, Promotion, Price*)
- Developing a marketing plan (*Determining price and fee structure, perception of value and benefits to clients, identifying profit centers, determining “market mix”, client education of services provided, service as tangible product*)
- Product differentiation (Branding, etc.)
- The role of the human/animal bond in the concept of service and marketing
- Promotion and image (*Impact of building appearance both inside and outside to clients, selling service benefits, projecting a caring attitude by staff, differentiating your practice from others, ensuring full communication with clients, perception of value by clients*)
- Marketing techniques

Practice Location

- Principles of demographics (psychographics of your targeted clients)
- Prominence of location within the community (*Relative location to other practitioners and services*)
- Need and demand for veterinary services

The Fiscal Enterprise

Economics

- Supply/demand functions
- Elasticity of demand
- Understanding interest rates
- Opportunity costs

Financial management and control

- The “Culture of Business” (*What is value, definition of “money”, time value of money/present value/future value calculations, how markets work*)
- Budget process/decision making as a management tool
- Budget management and oversight (*Planning, organizing, directing, control*)
- Income statement/ balance sheet (*Revenue records, expense records, fixed and variable costs*)
- Time-dependent income and expenditure flow
- Internal and external control – What? Why?
- Employee salaries (*Production-based compensation, value of knowledge*)
- Employer compensation – Where does the money come from?
- Federal and state laws, regulations, and requirements

Accounting

- Bookkeeping (*Revenue records and IRS requirements, accrual vs. cash gross income, credits and discounts, cash controls, expense and payroll records, banking, financial statements and economic analysis, income statement*)

- Financial analysis (*Sources of “standard” veterinary practice ratios, identifying “normal” ratios for an individual practice, evaluating trends in practice performance over time, accounting for inflation*)
- Credit and collections (*Credit as a tool of management, implementing and monitoring a credit policy, collection approaches*)

Managing Human Resources

Organizational IQ

- Working with others (*Behavioral style awareness, organizational culture and work ethic, communication style, personality styles, Intent versus impact, dress/appearance, responsible employer/employee relationships*)
- Establishing and maintaining trust (*political style and savvy, team work, delegation and leverage of staff, staff empowerment, avoiding confrontation management, listening and communication, earning respect, motivating others, defining the outcome, the hierarchy of needs (Maslow), staff recognition*)
- Leveraging the paraprofessional

Organizational Flexibility

- Planning ahead for family leave (maternity, child care, elder care, etc), short-term disability leave, absences for continuing education, sabbatical
- Planning ahead for work interruptions
- Continuity in care and client communications in situations with multiple veterinarians and support staff
- Part-time employment and emergency staff
- Creating a team (*The art of delegation*)

Organizational Systems

- Job descriptions (*What are they, and how are they optimally used?*)
- Process for hiring
- Personnel management and performance reviews
- Procedures for discipline/firing
- The policies and procedures manual (*What is it? How to use it – not just a legal document.*)
- Established procedures for crisis management (*Medical/surgical, client, staff*)
- State and federal employment law

Record Keeping

- Medical – for provision of care, generating revenue and legal defense
- Inventory and inventory control

Essential Legal Knowledge

Differentiating Moral, Ethical, and Legal Constraints on the Practice of Veterinary Medicine.

Understanding the Licensing Process (Laws and regulations governing the practice of veterinary medicine; National and State board examinations, regulations governing the activities of registered veterinary technicians and unregistered assistants)

Animals and the Law (Animals as property -- new statutes and case law precedents that are changing the status of pets, animal confinement and licensing laws, animals as a nuisance, rabies vaccination and quarantine laws, liability for animal bites and improper restraint, abandonment vs. animal lien laws, the application of anti-cruelty laws, dealing with dangerous dogs, legal protections for livestock owners, laws governing wild vs. domestic animals, the veterinarian's public health role)

The Law of Professional Liability

- Minimizing client complaints and settling disputes (*Assessing causes of complaints, factors aggravating the potential for complaints,; minimizing complaints by communication, courtesy, caring, compassion, and compromise*)
- Avenues for addressing grievances (*State and local VMA Ethics and Peer Review Committees, State Boards of Examiners, Courts of law, arbitration*)
- Understanding the elements of a legal action for negligence or malpractice (*Legal duty; standards of care for generalists vs. specialists, establishing proximate causation, and damages, changes in the law regarding emotional distress damages for pets*)
- The legal duty to refer or offer referrals
- The doctrine of informed consent (*The use of client consent forms to help achieve informed consent. Are they required?*)
- Liability insurance coverage
- Defenses to legal actions

Contract Law and its Applicability to Veterinary Medicine

- The legal elements of a valid contract (*The offer, a meeting of the minds, an implied or express acceptance, problems determining who has the capacity to form a contract, consideration*)
- Contract between veterinarian and client (*The veterinarian-client-patient relationship as a contract. Can it be broken – how?*)
- Defining and understanding the legal requirements of a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (*Client consent considerations*)
- Statutes of frauds
- Restrictive covenants

Employment Law (*Basic payroll deductions and employment record-keeping requirements, employer liability for acts of employees, civil rights considerations for job applicants and employees, employer responsibility for a safe and healthy work place, the legal risks of a wrongful termination*)

The Legal Use of Veterinary Drugs

- Defining categories of drugs (*FDA approved vs. unapproved drugs, FDA definitions for adulterated and misbranded drugs, extra-label use of drugs, guidelines for compounding of drugs, over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, prescription drugs prohibited for use in food-producing animals; controlled drugs and substances, role of the DEA*)
- Labeling and packaging requirements
- Veterinarians' rights to render non-standard forms of treatment
- The legal use of biologicals and pesticides
- Liability when dealing with dangerous drugs

The Legal Requirements Surrounding Medical Records (*Medical record confidentiality, the admissibility of medical records under the business exception rules of evidence in a court of law, criteria for admitting manually-produced and electronically-produced business and medical records, likelihood of cases settling because of inadequate records, ownership/ theft/ transfer/ loss and retention of medical records and radiographs*)

How to Evaluate a Practice for Sale

- Goals of the buyer and seller
- Value of real estate, professional equipment, office furnishings and equipment, inventory
- Value of goodwill and medical records
- Assessing income potential

Why Businesses Fail

VI UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP-- LEADERSHIP AS A PATHWAY FOR SUCCESS

*Why become a leader--is it essential for success?
Understanding and developing leadership skills to be effective.*

Leadership

- What is a leader? (*Characteristics, the difference between a leader and a manager, formal vs. informal leadership*)
- Stages of leadership (*From team to business owner to corporate CEO*)
- Styles of leadership (*Leading versus displaying authority, situational leadership, rising to a position of leadership*)
- The ethical responsibility of being a leader
- Responsibilities and opportunities that leadership can create

Becoming a Leader

- Know yourself first (*Behavior/temperament assessment, intent – impact – behavior, adaptability, seeing yourself as a leader*)
- Leadership and emotional intelligence (*Ability to work with others, effectiveness in leading others, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills, recognizing and knowing others needs/motivation/rewards*)
- Leadership – followership- (*Direction and vision at the top of the pyramid, Implementation from the bottom of the pyramid, Interchangeable roles*)
- Finding a mentor

Being a Leader

- Improving what is and creating what isn't – simultaneously
- Creating a vision (*Why, the grand view, the role of a leader in creating a vision for the team or organization, helping empower others to create the vision*)
- Establishing a mission (*What's the purpose?*)
- Understanding core values
- Moving in new and maybe unexpected direction—Moving out of the confines of old thinking.
- Goal setting (*How will we get it done, how to set goals for yourself and others, how to measure success?*)
- Implementation plans/strategies
- Interactive process: (*Reviewing plans, building upon them, acting to change or improve goals; assessment – praise – redirection*)
- Communicating as a leader (*Providing feedback, listening and responding*)
- Serving as a mentor

Outcome of Effective Leadership

- Producing excellence and change
- Implementing new directions and strategies
- Reinvigorating a business

How leaders are evaluated

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