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for technicians, managers
and receptionists





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Mission

To inspire receptionists, credentialed technicians, practice managers and veterinary assistants to build strong relationships with coworkers, improve their communication skills and educate clients with confidence in order to enhance their contributions to a veterinary practice and maximize every patient's well-being.

Chip in to promote microchipping

By Wesley Taylor



Does the idea of lost pets get under your skin? Our veterinary practice barked up the right tree by offering free microchips at the Barking at the Moon Dog Festival—and created a lasting connection with our community that improved

the business and boosted team morale. The challenges:

- 1. Get staff buy-in**
- 2. Make it affordable**

When all was said and done, we'd chipped more than 75 animals, and it cost us only \$125. And all 75 pet owners returned to Mercy within the next six months for pet care. Read how we overcame the barriers to create a successful event at dvm360.com/promochips.



Wesley Taylor is the practice manager at Mercy Animal Hospital in Gardendale, Alabama, and the 2015 Veterinary Economics Practice Manager of the Year, sponsored by Nationwide.

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These snooty specialists are just so judgy



Bash Halow,
LVT, CVPM

Q *I've worked at an emergency/specialty referral hospital for almost 14 years. I work at a general practice during the day as well. What can I do to change the culture of the emergency and specialty doctors' negative attitude toward referring DVMs? Because none of them have worked at a general practice, they assume it's just puppies and vaccines all day.*

—I Want to Be the Change

Dear Changeling:

How lucky that your emergency hospital has such an empathetic and emotionally mature individual on their team.

You know what you've got at your specialty practice? It's called Snooty Syndrome. Before I provide you a remedy for this serious workplace culture illness, I want you to know you're not alone. In many practices, veterinarians or more experienced technicians lord themselves over the less-experienced members of the team. I'm convinced it's at the heart of the "Front vs. Back War" (I can't resist telling you, I'm sharing solutions to this at CVC conferences this year ...) and I know it's at the root of practice morale issues.

Aside from being odious and obnoxious, acting superior to others is a big honkin' sign of self-loathing and insecurity. Most people who point

fingers at others and call names are hearing the same jeers inside their own heads. I've interviewed enough industry psychologists and seen enough cases of Snooty Syndrome to believe that the issue is both deeply rooted and terribly self-destructive. In my experience, the Snooties are much more likely to have issues with drinking, relationship issues and depression.

But if you go to your Snooty and recommend a shrink, he or she is really going to hit the roof. I recommend plan B. Try organizing some terrific CE classes taught by your specialists and their teams. General practitioners can always use the free CE, and if you ask your Snooties to provide the education, they'll have a chance to meet and get to know the targets of their derision. Putting a face on the people they universally dismiss as inferior may curb their snooty instincts. Or, if you're older and "over it," like me, you can just pull your Snooty aside and ask, "What gives? I'm concerned about the comments I hear you making about our DVMs. Can you talk to me about that?"

I don't blame. I don't shame. I just open the floor to a discussion. Your seniority gives you a lot of pull in these kinds of conversations. Good luck, my dear changeling!

Bash Halow is a Firstline Editorial Advisory Board member and co-owner of Halow Tassava Consulting.



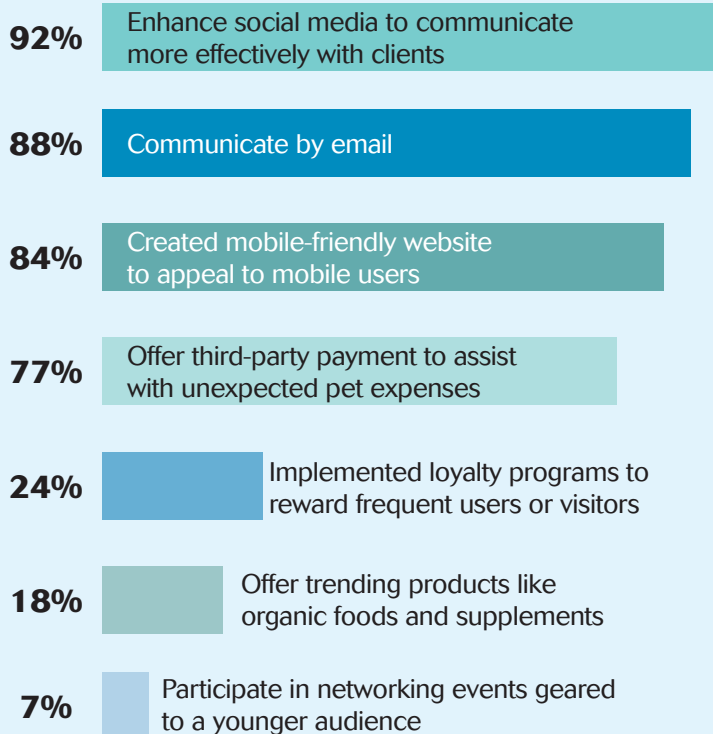
Don't miss Bash Halow's "Front vs. back: A truce and healing" session at CVC Kansas City on Aug. 29. Visit thecvc.com for more details.

Invasion of the millennial pet owners

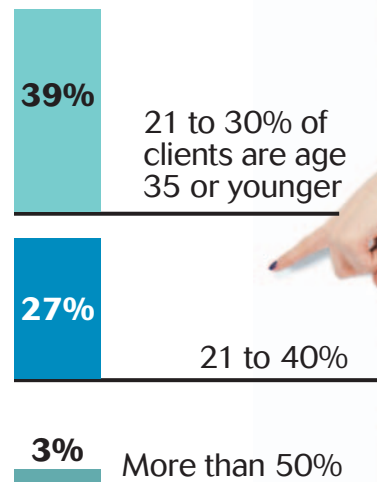


Pew Research data puts the percentage of pet owners between the ages of 18 and 29 at 58 percent. That means more than half of today's pet owners belong to the generation of people who don't check voicemail, prefer texting to talking and are eager to share opinions and reviews online. A recent VHMA survey asked practice managers if they were seeing growth in the number of millennial clients using their services. Respondents said that, overall, the number of clients in the 35 and under age group was increasing.

What strategies have you adopted to address the needs of the 35 and under demographic and to attract other millennial clients?



What percent of your clients are age 35 or younger?



Turn the page to find out how well you know millennials.

Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are considered the industry standard for connecting with millennials.

Whether a practice has already seen a shift in demographics, data suggests that the industry is trending toward younger clients. It's wise to monitor your social media strategies to engage this growing group of pet owners with an effective, honest and authentic approach. **FL**



Christine Shupe, CAE, is the executive director of the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association. The association is dedicated to serving professionals in veterinary management through education, certification and networking.



Quiz: Do you know millennials? *Really?*

Find out whether you have the potential to make a strong connection with this growing client base or whether you need to cultivate your hipster Snapchat pop culture.

1. Which of the following describe actual categories of millennials (select all that apply):

- a.** Hip-ennial: cautious, charitable and heavy social media user
- b.** Millennial mom: wealthy, family-orientated and digital savvy
- c.** Anti-millennial: locally minded and conservative
- d.** Gadget guru: successful, free-spirited and wired
- e.** Clean-and-green millennial: cause-driven, healthy and enjoys content
- f.** Old-school millennial: cautious, charitable and not as wired

2. Research shows that, on average, millennials check their smartphones how many times a day?

- a.** 15
- b.** 43
- c.** 187
- d.** 261

3. Select a phrase that best describes millennials.

- a.** They prefer face-to-face contact
- b.** They expect instant gratification
- c.** They are inattentive slackers
- d.** They are no different than previous generations

4. Which marketing strategies might successfully attract the attention of millennials:

- a.** Using a humorous approach

- b.** Including a video

- c.** Going social ... Facebook, Twitter and so on

- d.** Including a number of social channels to provide feedback on your services

5. Want to annoy millennials as you try to connect with them? Do this:

- a.** Connect with them on social channels rather than engage them
- b.** Come across as inauthentic
- c.** Use hashtags
- d.** All of the above

Turn to page 6 to see how many you got right (or not) ... >>>

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on dogs*

*Aids in the treatment and control of sarcoptic mange on dogs.



1. Which of the following describe actual categories of millennials (select all that apply):

Answer: A-F. According to the Boston Consulting Group, even though millennials have a number of shared beliefs, habits and values, they aren't homogenous.



2. Research shows that, on average, millennials check their smartphones how many times a day?

Answer: B. According to *Entrepreneur*, millennials check their phones 43 times a day.



3. Select a phrase that best describes millennials.

Answer: B. According to *Inc.*, millennials were raised with a mobile device in each hand so they want information now, and they want to get it interactively. This generation needs to feel connected and involved.



4. Which marketing strategies might successfully attract the attention of millennials:

Answer: A-D. According to *Inbound Marketing*, millennials are the most connected generation, and they respond favorably to opportunities to engage and interact online.



5. Want to annoy millennials as you try to connect with them? Do this:

Answer D. According to *Wired*, millennials are shrewd and value smart, honest communication from those trying to engage with them.

HOW'D YOU DO?

5 Correct ... You must be a millennial!

3-4 Correct ... You're off to a good start

0-2 Correct ... Whoops! Spend the next three weeks on Snapchat and try again.

For more online quizzes go to
dvm360.com/quizzes or scan the code.



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Fleas falling from your hospital's ceiling? Maybe they should be ...

Are you tired of the same ol', same ol' with veterinary clients about why they should really use flea preventives on their pets? It gets tedious, especially if they aren't receptive to your message. So, try doing what the team at PetWorks Veterinary Hospital in Overland Park, Kansas, does and make it visual.

Their plan: Take an illustration of a flea, print out a lot of copies (40, to be exact; more on that later), cut them out and laminate them, and then hang the completed fleas from the ceiling in the reception area.

Why 40? Not only is it more visually striking than a few fleas stuck to a bulletin board, a single female flea can lay between 40 and 50 fleas per day. Giving clients a concrete example of the production capabilities of a single flea, let alone however many fleas really are on their pet, is a good motivator to get the conversation started. Because everyone knows fleas can get out of hand fast.

PetWorks receptionist Cindy Harris says the promotion has been so successful that the hospital needed to restock flea preventive way earlier than anticipated.

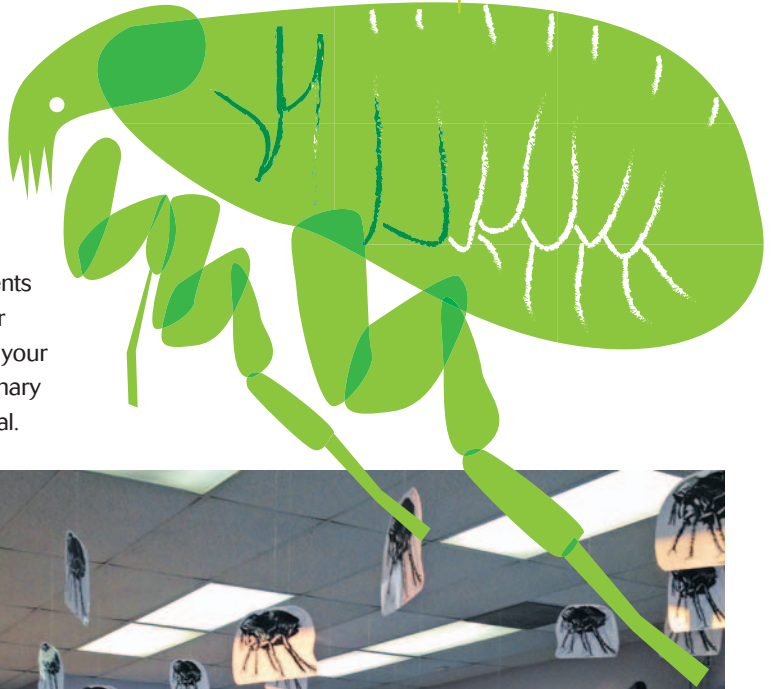


PHOTO COURTESY OF PETWORKS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

SMART TOOLS

Preventives flying off the shelves sounds awesome! What are you waiting for? Need a flea image? Go to **dvm360.com/fallingfleas** or scan right to download a printable flea template.



Don't let client excuses make your patients' skin crawl. Use this handout to help answer their questions or to start the conversation on finding the best flea preventive for their pets. Go to **dvm360.com/worthit** or scan right to download.





PHOTO COURTESY OF CARY STREET VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Low stress on the joints—and on the psyche

Charmin is undergoing physical rehabilitation for neuromuscular side effects secondary to diabetes that are affecting his rear limb strength and coordination. He is a low-energy dog that lacks motivation for any movement requirement. To encourage Charmin to walk without interruption in the underwater treadmill, we offer constant high-value treat rewards. This low-stress reward system encourages continuous movement that will help him to regain rear limb strength and stability.

—Marian Paulachak, veterinary assistant
Cary Street Veterinary Hospital, Richmond, Virginia

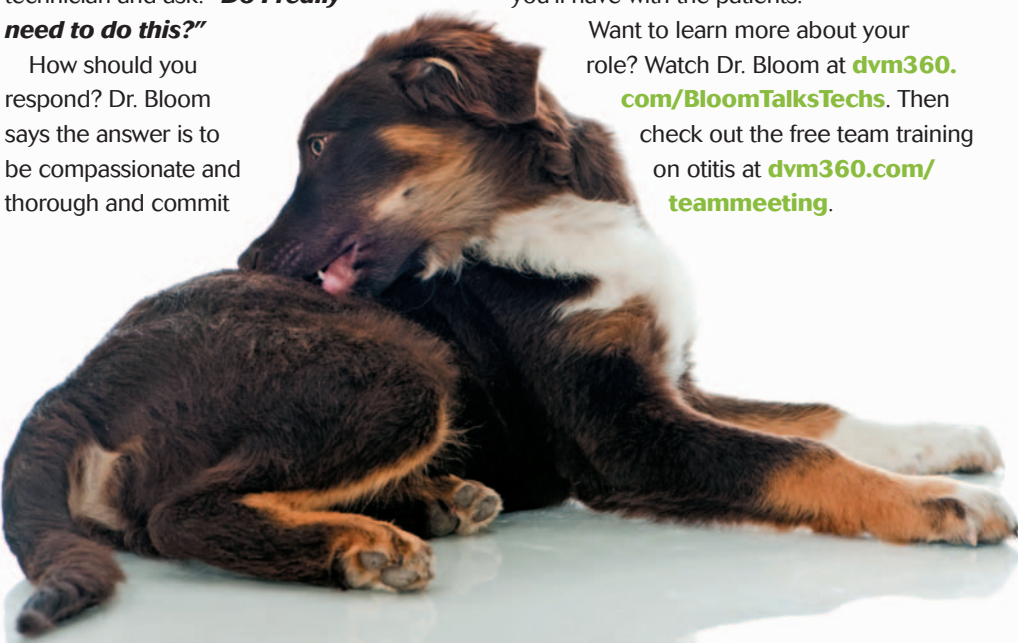
Got dermat issues? Win confidence and influence pet owners

Want to help pets with skin problems? Paul Bloom, DVM, DACVD, DABVP, says the key is to connect with owners. He says often the veterinarian gives the details of how the pet should be treated. Then once the doctor leaves the room, the client may turn to the technician and ask: **“Do I really need to do this?”**

How should you respond? Dr. Bloom says the answer is to be compassionate and thorough and commit

to communicating with the owners that the doctor's recommendation is critical to help the pet. Remember, dermatologic issues are often chronic, long-standing ongoing disease processes, and the more you can engage pet owners in this process, the more success you'll have with the patients.

Want to learn more about your role? Watch Dr. Bloom at dvm360.com/BloomTalksTechs. Then check out the free team training on otitis at dvm360.com/teammeeting.



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Why 34% of one hospital's clients have .pet insurance



When clients go to the “human doctor,” they don’t ask if there’s any way to get a better price on a blood test. Because they’ve got insurance. So why don’t more veterinary clients have pet insurance?

By Julie Scheidegger and Brendan Howard, Business Channel Director

Well, there are plenty of reasons clients don’t purchase pet insurance. But we know among those who do have pet insurance, there can be better client compliance and better veterinary care for their animals.

Practice manager and DVM spouse George

Bailey reports that 34 percent of pet owners at Stratham-Newfield’s Veterinary Hospital in Newfield, New Hampshire, have pet insurance. Before you think “I’m not a salesperson” or “Who has time for that?!” here are two reasons his hospital is considered a pet insurance “super practice” ...



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¹Flooringer AM, et al. Effects of feeding a weight loss food beyond a caloric restriction period on body composition and resistance to weight gain in cats. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2015;247(4):365-374.
²Kruger JM, et al. Comparison of foods with differing nutritional profiles for long-term management of acute nonobstructive idiopathic cystitis in cats. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2015;247(5):508-517.
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The team's insured, too.

Client: "What would you do?" Team member: "The same. I have pet insurance too."

Every pet-owning member of Bailey's veterinary team has pet insurance. Why? Because he buys it for them. "What veterinary team member making \$15 an hour can afford to pay out of pocket for the best veterinary care when it's needed?" he asks. So he made it an employee benefit that pays back to the practice in every team mem-

ber's ability to speak "experientially" to clients about the benefits of pet insurance.

Bailey once gathered his core team and asked them what the greatest obstacle to healthcare was for their patients. Team members responded with endocrinology, obesity and cancer—but no one said affordability.

"This opens the door to doctors being able to practice like you were taught at veterinary school," he told the team.

Everyone gets the system.

Client: "Do I pay and get reimbursed later? Team member: "No, it's nothing but a copay right now, just like your health insurance."

Before 2013, Bailey's practice had 7.5 percent pet insurance penetration in his client base. Even though his team members promoted the concept, he says they kept bumping up against the same barrier.

"The problem was the reimbursement model," Bailey says.

Even though clients knew they would be reimbursed by pet insurance, they still had to pay bills up-front and do the clerical legwork to file claims. "That really is just such a barrier for people to see value."

At Stratham-Newfield's Veterinary Hospital, after an exam, the doctor writes up a treatment plan and a team member gets preapproval in about three minutes. The technician returns to the exam room with a treatment plan, knowing the client is covered. **FL**

Let's play 20 questions ...

Choosing the right pet insurance company can be an overwhelming task. Help pet owners understand different plans, policies and providers using "20 questions clients should ask about pet insurance companies," a hand-out available at dvm360.com/20questions.

PROFESSIONAL growth

Transform your career



Sniff out new career opportunities for technicians.

By Katherine Primm, DVM

Remember Pinky and the Brain, the cartoon lab mice bent on world domination? Every night Pinky would say to the Brain, “What are we going to do tonight?” Brain always replied, “What we do every night, Pinky. Try and take over the world.” Then the Brain would devise an ill-advised plot to do just that.

Technicians can devise much better plans to take over the world—or at their veterinary practice—to build lasting careers and great relationships with their team members and bosses. And with these simple strategies, they’ll have more success than the Brain!

Everyone in the practice would be happiest with a healthy bottom line, happy and healthy team members, flourishing patients and thrilled pet owners. Here are some not-so-nefarious schemes to help you transform your team.



1

TRANSFORMATION TIP:

Improve your team with training

Ask if you can lead a team meeting. Does everyone know everything they should about processes and procedures? Probably not. With the rate that things change, you should be able to find something you could talk about. Take fecal testing for example:

- > Does everyone know the premise for testing?
- > Do they really know why and how to run a fecal check?
- > Do they know why the test works?

As you research information, consider ways to engage the rest of the team. Not only will you learn, you'll become a better employee and a better leader. It's an opportunity to improve yourself and your whole team by arming them with knowledge—and impressing them with your leadership skills. >>>

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Dr. Michael Sheffield comforting Amelia. Courtesy Lakeview Animal Hospital.

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2 **TRANSFORMATION TIP:** **Help the practice run better**

Find resources online that explain new ways to perform old tasks, like a different solution for floating a fecal test. Try implementing them—if only to see if it will improve your results. Even if it doesn't, you and your team have learned even more about the limitations of the test itself, and you'll be better able to explain it to clients. If your new information does improve results, or shortens the time you spend running the test, then that's even better and the practice will have you to thank. Keep an open mind. Just because something's always been done a certain way doesn't mean there isn't a better solution.

3 **TRANSFORMATION TIP:** **Boost client compliance**

You've researched fecal solutions. You've led a team meeting about your practice protocols. Now you're ready to reach out to clients armed with your newfound enthusiasm for (drumroll, please) poop! Go through client records, searching for clients who are

past due for a fecal exam, or for those whose pets have been diagnosed with parasites in the past. Reach out to them with a friendly call, explaining that you know Bella had an issue with intestinal parasites and you wanted to make sure she's feeling better. Explain what you know about parasites and fecal testing. You have a chance to share the importance of screening pets for parasites and you can even throw in a pitch about the importance of parasite prevention.

After implementing these ideas, you'll be an improved team with more efficient processes, and your clients will feel like you remember and care about them. Now that's a world worth taking over! **FL**



Kathryn Primm, DVM, owns and practices at Applebrook Animal Hospital in Ooltewah, Tennessee, and is the author of Tennessee Tails: Pets and Their People. Read her advice for receptionists and managers on the following pages.



Can technicians be money producers? YES!

Have you heard the one about veterinarians being the only "money producers" in the clinic? It's not so, says Karlen Felsted, CPA, MS, DVM, CVPM. She points out that if technicians, due to their skills in specific areas, permit the doctor to see more appointments during the day, or can personally take care of appointments like nail trims and dental rechecks, they *are* making money for the practice. Watch as she explains at dvm360.com/techproducer.





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¹J.W. McCall, E. Hodgkins, M. Varioud, A. Mansour, U. DiCosto. Inhibition of the transmission of *Dirofilaria immitis* to mosquitoes by weekly exposure of microfilaremic dogs treated topically with dinotefuran-permethrin-pyrproxyfen to uninfected *Aedes aegypti*.



PROFESSIONAL growth

Close encounters



Oh, inventory!

Find out why you
should narc on lazy
drug procedures
at **dvm360.**
narcinventory.

with practice management

Practice managers, follow this advice to capture a positive bottom line in your practice.

By Katherine Primm, DVM

Don't let success flutter by. When you take time to stop and look around, you'll find what looks ordinary can make an extraordinary difference to your practice—if you take the time to give it your full focus. Consider these three examples of areas where you, the practice manager, can focus on the balance of ins and outs in your practice to ensure a healthy bottom line.

1 Inventory your inventory
One of the first things that deserves your focus is inventory. (You may also choose to delegate this area to a trusted representative in your practice, such as a lead technician. Just remember to plan regular meetings to review this area with your team member.) These physical items are going out the door in the hands of your clients. Are the items priced to cover not only their cost but also the cost of ordering, shipping, unpacking and stocking? There are lots of formulas for making sure you are covering the cost of items, but you will need to tailor your own, taking into account your own overhead costs. Also consider the costs of similar products purchased online and educate your team on how

to counter price complaints.

And don't forget to monitor how your clients feel as they leave. Are good feelings going out the door too?

2 Study your client service
Double check that your customer service is exquisite and unparalleled. A good way to gauge this is through follow-up calls or emails. Make sure you are checking online for Google reviews. A large number of our new clients say that those Google reviews were why they gave us a try.

3 Protect your profit
Profits must come in the door to maintain a feasible business. We must generate revenue. If clients aren't charged for services we've rendered, it's like setting dollar bills on fire. Not only is the revenue lost when charges are missed, but the client doesn't even realize it. And if you're going to discount, be sure that the client knows the gift that they received and the value of it.

Make sure that your doctors and team members are recommending appropriate services as well. It's easy to think that we know what clients

want, but too many times we're wrong. Set up preset estimates in your veterinary software using the gold standard diagnostic plan for common issues. That way, no matter which associate sees the pet, he or she starts with the standard that the practice suggests.

Check out dvm360.com/estimates to find easy steps to approach money conversations. A good first step: Have a team meeting to get everyone's input on what the estimates should say.

When you explain treatment to the client, they may say that they want to skip many of the tests. That's OK because you can mark them "offered and declined" in the medical record, covering your own liability. Everyone on the team knows that they offered the best options for the pet and because all clients are exposed to the suggested diagnostics the first time, if they have to call back because the pet failed to respond, they will be mentally prepared to do more.

Keeping an eye on inventory costs, evaluating customer service, not missing charges and streamlining medical recommendations with preset estimates are good ways to keep the door swinging. To happy adventures ahead! **FL**



POUNCE on career growth

Learn to leap on opportunities to grow in your profession.

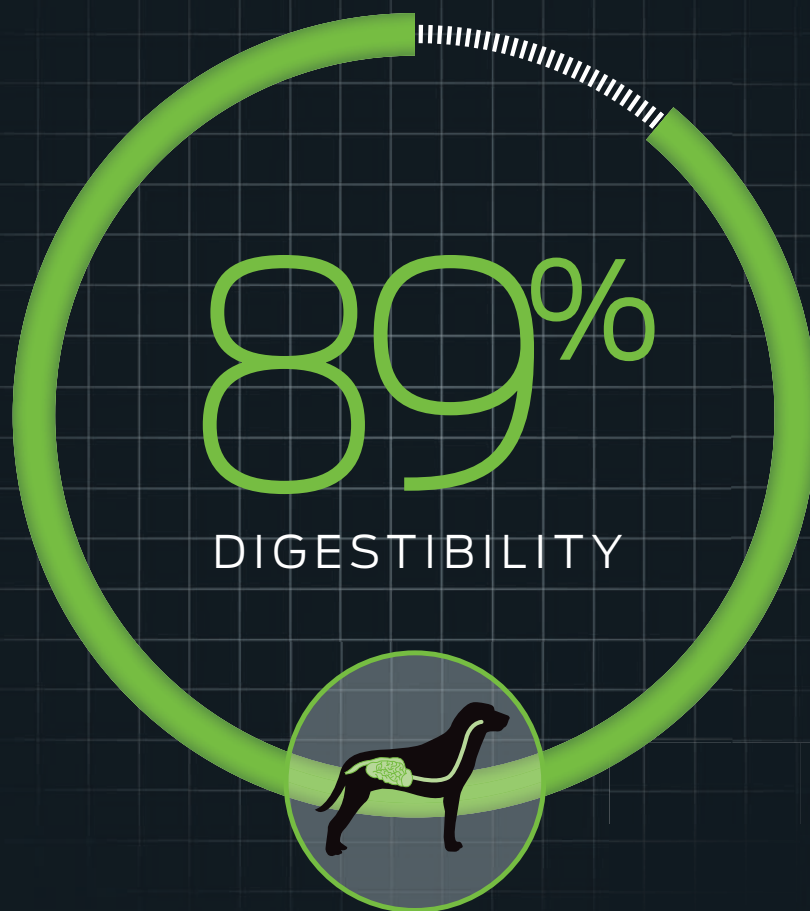
By Katherine Primm, DVM

As the practice gatekeeper, you can be St. Peter at the door to Heaven or Cerberus, the three-headed hound of Hades, at the River Styx. At the front desk lies an amazing amount of power over the success or failure of the business.

Receptionists, you set the tone. What tone do you want to set? Obviously everyone's happier when happy, receptive clients come through the door. And you're more than just the gatekeeper, you help determine who actually wants to come through the gate. Use these steps to rule the front desk with wisdom and grace: >>>



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1

Smile when no one's looking (yeah, really!)

No one's happy all the time every day.

But if you aren't glad to be at your job and answering the phone, it might be time to find a new job. Most receptionists love animals and people and find their job rewarding, so it's easy to smile. Put a sticky note with a silly face near the phone that says "SMILE" to remind you. The phone and front desk are your domain. Will clients be happy and open? It's up to you.

2

Be for giving and forgiving (to yourself and others)

Be happy to answer the phone and exude your warmth and care for animals. And know your limitations. You can't make diagnoses over the phone. You can't offer free services. You can't adopt every pet. That doesn't mean that you can't find a way to help everyone. Remember, how you handle these hard calls spreads into the community like contagion (and word spreads further if it's negative).

3

Don't forget to talk it out

Meet with your doctors and team members to discuss the most common and frustrating calls.

Is it phone shoppers? Discuss ways to explain prices in a descriptive and non-confrontational way to show the value. Talk about those services that shouldn't be priced over the phone. Create a process for handling these calls so the responsibility doesn't completely fall on you.

Maybe you're most stressed by people who find homeless or hurt animals. Talk with the team about the policy regarding homeless pets that are hurt and make a list of rescues and groups you can give to people with strays.

Make a script to guide your responses to those hard questions. If you know what to say and you feel that it's fair and reasonable, you'll feel better about your answers, even when they're not what the clients want to hear. At the end of the day, we all just want to feel that we made a difference. Involving the whole team in policy-making means you're supported by the whole team.

These simple changes can boost your team spirit, your efficiency and your level of client care. Now that's a world worth taking over! **FL**



Learn to make a diag"no"sis

Find friendly ways to tell pet owners you're *not* the doctor—and convince them to schedule an appointment—at dvm360.com/nodiagnosis.



NexGard® (afoxolaner) Chewables

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Description:

NexGard® (afoxolaner) is available in four sizes of beef-flavored, soft chewables for oral administration to dogs and puppies according to their weight. Each chewable is formulated to provide a minimum afoxolaner dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg). Afoxolaner has the chemical composition 1-Naphthalenecarboxamide, 4-[5-[3-chloro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-phenyl]-4, 5-dihydro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-3-isoxazolyl]-N-[2,2,2-trifluoroethyl]amino]ethyl.

Indications:

NexGard kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of Black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), American Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*), and Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) infestations in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age and older, weighing 4 pounds of body weight or greater, for one month.

Dosage and Administration:

NexGard is given orally once a month, at the minimum dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg).

Dosing Schedule:

Body Weight	Afoxolaner Per Chewable (mg)	Chewables Administered
4.0 to 10.0 lbs.	11.3	One
10.1 to 24.0 lbs.	28.3	One
24.1 to 60.0 lbs.	68	One
60.1 to 121.0 lbs.	136	One
Over 121.0 lbs.	Administer the appropriate combination of chewables	

NexGard can be administered with or without food. Care should be taken that the dog consumes the complete dose, and treated animals should be observed for a few minutes to ensure that part of the dose is not lost or refused. If it is suspected that any of the dose has been lost or if vomiting occurs within two hours of administration, redose with another full dose. If a dose is missed, administer NexGard and resume a monthly dosing schedule.

Flea Treatment and Prevention:

Treatment with NexGard may begin at any time of the year. In areas where fleas are common year-round, monthly treatment with NexGard should continue the entire year without interruption.

To minimize the likelihood of flea reinfestation, it is important to treat all animals within a household with an approved flea control product.

Tick Treatment and Control:

Treatment with NexGard may begin at any time of the year (see **Effectiveness**).

Contraindications:

There are no known contraindications for the use of NexGard.

Warnings:

Not for use in humans. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental ingestion, contact a physician immediately.

Precautions:

The safe use of NexGard in breeding, pregnant or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures (see **Adverse Reactions**).

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 333 households and 615 treated dogs (415 administered afoxolaner; 200 administered active control), no serious adverse reactions were observed with NexGard.

Over the 90-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. The most frequent reactions reported at an incidence of > 1% within any of the three months of observations are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction was vomiting. The occurrence of vomiting was generally self-limiting and of short duration and tended to decrease with subsequent doses in both groups. Five treated dogs experienced anorexia during the study, and two of those dogs experienced anorexia with the first dose but not subsequent doses.

Table 1: Dogs With Adverse Reactions.

	Treatment Group			
	Afoxolaner		Oral active control	
	N ¹	% (n=415)	N ²	% (n=200)
Vomiting (with and without blood)	17	4.1	25	12.5
Dry/Flaky Skin	13	3.1	2	1.0
Diarrhea (with and without blood)	13	3.1	7	3.5
Lethargy	7	1.7	4	2.0
Anorexia	5	1.2	9	4.5

¹Number of dogs in the afoxolaner treatment group with the identified abnormality.

²Number of dogs in the control group with the identified abnormality.

In the US field study, one dog with a history of seizures experienced a seizure on the same day after receiving the first dose and on the same day after receiving the second dose of NexGard. This dog experienced a third seizure one week after receiving the third dose. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. Another dog with a history of seizures had a seizure 19 days after the third dose of NexGard. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. A third dog with a history of seizures received NexGard and experienced no seizures throughout the study.

To report suspected adverse events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the MSDS, contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251 or www.merial.com/NexGard. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth>.

Mode of Action:

Afoxolaner is a member of the isoxazoline family, shown to bind at a binding site to inhibit insect and acarine ligand-gated chloride channels, in particular those gated by the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), thereby blocking pre- and post-synaptic transfer of chloride ions across cell membranes. Prolonged afoxolaner-induced hyperexcitation results in uncontrolled activity of the central nervous system and death of insects and acarines. The selective toxicity of afoxolaner between insects and acarines and mammals may be inferred by the differential sensitivity of the insects and acarines' GABA receptors versus mammalian GABA receptors.

Effectiveness:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard began to kill fleas four hours after initial administration and demonstrated >99% effectiveness at eight hours. In a separate well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard demonstrated 100% effectiveness against adult fleas 24 hours post-infestation for 35 days, and was > 93% effective at 12 hours post-infestation through Day 21, and on Day 35. On Day 28, NexGard was 81.1% effective 12 hours post-infestation. Dogs in both the treated and control groups that were infested with fleas on Day -1 generated flea eggs at 12- and 24-hours post-treatment (0-11 eggs and 1-17 eggs in the NexGard treated dogs, and 4-90 eggs and 0-118 eggs in the control dogs, at 12- and 24-hours, respectively). At subsequent evaluations post-infestation, fleas from dogs in the treated group were essentially unable to produce any eggs (0-1 eggs) while fleas from dogs in the control group continued to produce eggs (1-141 eggs).

In a 90-day US field study conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, the effectiveness of NexGard against fleas on the Day 30, 60 and 90 visits compared with baseline was 98.0%, 99.7%, and 99.9%, respectively.

Collectively, the data from the three studies (two laboratory and one field) demonstrate that NexGard kills fleas before they can lay eggs, thus preventing subsequent flea infestations after the start of treatment of existing flea infestations.

In well-controlled laboratory studies, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Dermacentor variabilis*, >94% effectiveness against *Ixodes scapularis*, and >83% effectiveness against *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*, 48 hours post-infestation for 30 days. At 72 hours post-infestation, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Amblyomma americanum* for 30 days.

Animal Safety:

In a margin of safety study, NexGard was administered orally to 8 to 9-week-old Beagle puppies at 1, 3, and 5 times the maximum exposure dose (6.3 mg/kg) for three treatments every 28 days, followed by three treatments every 14 days, for a total of six treatments. Dogs in the control group were sham-dosed. There were no clinically-relevant effects related to treatment on physical examination, body weight, food consumption, clinical pathology (hematology, clinical chemistries, or coagulation tests), gross pathology, histopathology or organ weights. Vomiting occurred throughout the study, with a similar incidence in the treated and control groups, including one dog in the 5x group that vomited four hours after treatment.

In a well-controlled field study, NexGard was used concomitantly with other medications, such as vaccines, anthelmintics, antibiotics (including topicals), steroids, NSAIDs, anesthetics, and antihistamines. No adverse reactions were observed from the concomitant use of NexGard with other medications.

Storage Information:

Store at or below 30°C (86°F) with excursions permitted up to 40°C (104°F).

How Supplied:

NexGard is available in four sizes of beef-flavored soft chewables: 11.3, 28.3, 68 or 136 mg afoxolaner. Each chewable size is available in color-coded packages of 1, 3 or 6 beef-flavored chewables.

NADA 141-406, Approved by FDA

Marketed by: Frontline Vet Labs™, a Division of Merial, Inc.
Duluth, GA 30096-4640 USA

Made in Brazil.

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MyFitnessPooch: Coach pets

While underlying disease or slow metabolism might be a factor, the reality is overweight pets are more prone to skin and respiratory disorders, renal dysfunction, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, some cancers and, in more severe cases, premature death. It's our job as veterinary professionals to educate our clients to understand the negative consequences of pet obesity and provide them with the tools to do what's best for their four-legged family members. It starts by having a weight loss program in place. Not one that you focus on just during obesity month but one that you practice all year round. Use these three steps to turn obesity talk into weight loss action. *By Kim Murray*

READY ...

1 CREATE AND NAME YOUR PROGRAM

- ✓ Make your staff a checklist to follow for each obesity candidate.
- ✓ Decide which therapeutic foods you include in your weight loss program.

*Kim Murray is
practice manager
at Seville Animal
Hospital, Seville,
Ohio.*

SET ...

2 TRAIN YOUR TEAM TO BE SUCCESSFUL WEIGHT LOSS COACHES

- ✓ Educate your team members on the negative effects of obesity, feeding guides and how to speak to clients about weight management (visit dvm360.com/nutritiontools for tools to educate team members and clients).
- ✓ Schedule a lunch and learn with your favorite food reps and ask them to provide you with in-house marketing tools and weight loss tools to share with your clients.

GO!

3 FOLLOW THROUGH AND MONITOR YOUR PROGRAM SUCCESS

- ✓ Check in with your weight loss coaches every Monday morning to make sure they're on target—and cheer them on. How many new patients are signed up on the program? What obstacles are they facing? Do they have any questions?
- ✓ How are your clients doing? Are they feeding the prescribed food and coming in for routine weight checks? Make sure your weight loss coaches are following through with your clients.

for weight loss



MICRO TEAM MEETING IN A BOX

Weigh in on Weight

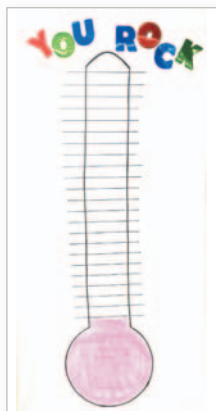
Spend five minutes at your next team meeting to practice the “weight” conversation—and encourage clients to take the next steps to make healthier feeding choices for their pets.

Scan the code or go to
dvm360.com/teammeeting



Now make it fun (and achievable!)

>>> **Individual goals and rewards:** Give each team member a “weight loss coach” punch card. For every new patient they start on your program they get a punch on their card. Fill the card up and receive an awesome reward like hospital apparel, Starbucks gift cards, gas cards and so on.



>>> **Team goals and rewards:** Roll out the butcher paper and make yourself a poster to track your team's success. Draw a thermometer on the poster. Each new patient gets written on a line and your team members can take the honor of coloring it in with a crayon. Reach a team goal and treat your staff to something special.

When setting goals and rewards, remember the small markup on food, and the profit a full punch card will bring to your practice, and set goals accordingly. Your weight loss program will not make you rich. Instead it will add value to your patients' lives, which will lead to longevity with your practice and revenue spent on other services and products. Ask your food reps if they have a budget to share with you to help offset the cost of your rewards. After all, you're working together to engage clients in their pets' care by offering high-quality diets that will help pets achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Speaking of free, find ready-to-use posts and tweets about nutrition and obesity at **dvm360.com/socialnutrition** or scan right.



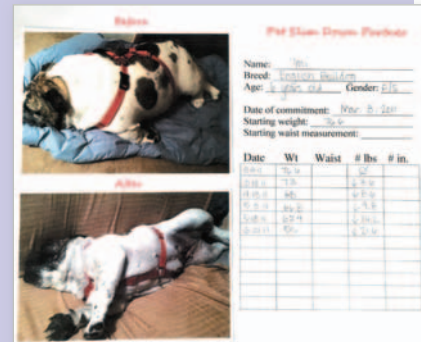
Plus, free handouts to print out for your clients at **dvm360.com/handouts** or scan right.



5 WAYS

TO PROMOTE YOUR PLAN:

> **Shout it from the social media rooftops!** Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are great places to spread the word about your program and your patients' weight loss successes. Share before and after photos (with your client's permission, of course). This is free advertising at its best!



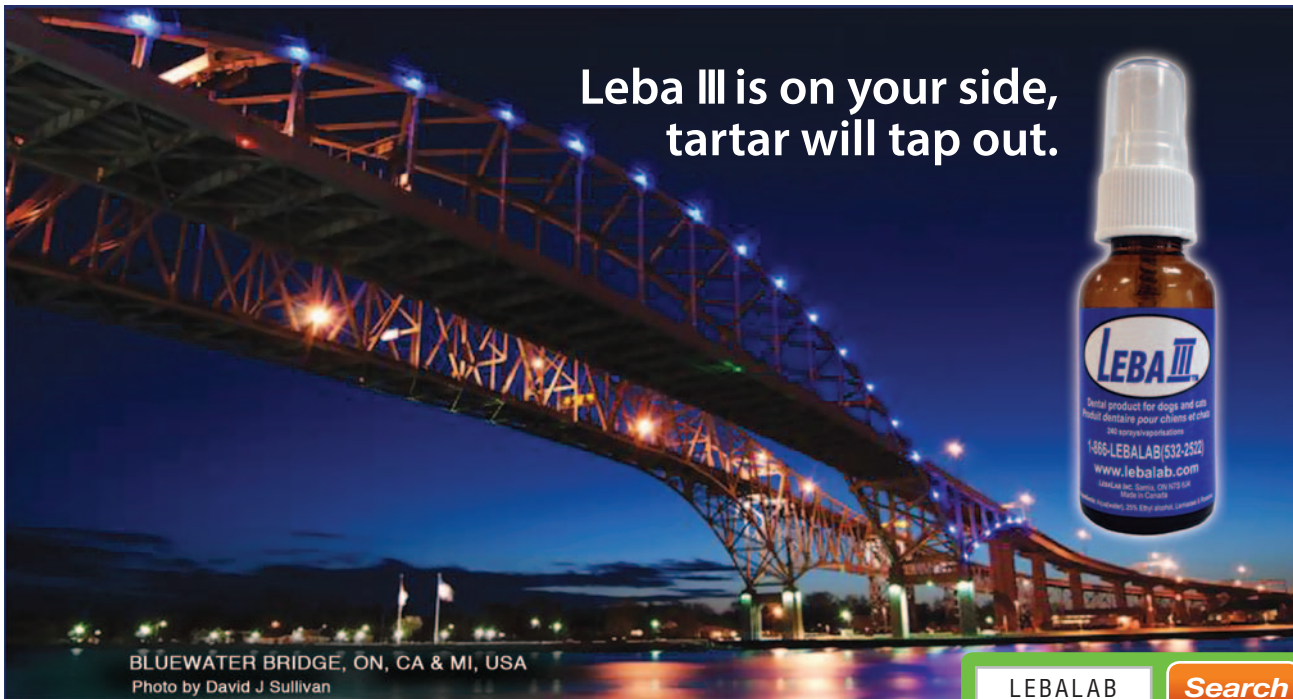
> **Display it on the lobby bulletin board.** Again, share before and after photos and give clients something to consider while they are waiting in your lobby.

> **Advertise on your own website.** Make a printable coupon for a free obesity examination with one of your well-educated weight loss coaches.


> **Send an email or reminder to owners of overweight pets—** or better yet all your clients—announcing your awesome program. You never know; that fit goldendoodle may share a home with a slightly tubby tabby.

> **Talk it up in your practice newsletter or blog.** Share stories and photos of success stories.

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Who's getting a raise?

We asked veterinary team members if they expect to get a raise in 2016. Here's who said "yes."

38%

of practice
owners



28%

of associate
veterinarians



49%

of practice
managers



50%

of credentialed
technicians



Source: 2016 Firstline Career Path Study





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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: NexGard is for use in dogs only. The most frequently reported adverse reactions included vomiting, dry/flaky skin, diarrhea, lethargy, and lack of appetite. The safe use of NexGard in pregnant, breeding, or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures. For more information, see full prescribing information or visit www.NexGardForDogs.com.

See brief summary on page 21.