



firstline[®]

The best read veterinary team journal. Bam.

WHEN CLIENTS GET
VIOLENT
p4

Shortcuts for
managers
p6

Cats
thinking outside
the (litter) box?
p9

#1
We are—and
you are too!
p20

ALL HAIL
MIGHTY
technicians
p2

You
can't
afford
me.

Is your respect
limited to clients
with unlimited
budgets? p12



You're using **THAT**
to anesthetize a
12-year-old Yorkie?!?

p16





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Is your respect limited to clients with unlimited budgets?



How to solve feline house soiling



9

Do you really need your best anesthesia equipment for dental patients? Yes.



16

02 All hail mighty techs! + Social media tips + Managers: the key to Fear Free

04 When clients get violent

06 Shortcuts for managers + Better pet insurance talks + an IV catheter placement hack

08 Trick or treat? Tasty products

20 We're No. 1 (and you are, too!)

firstline®

Healthy team members = healthy pets

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PEARLS

(Lustrously good advice and tips)

Social media: a conversation

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest—it doesn't matter. You can't just talk at people ... you gotta talk to people!

By Christine Scarborough, RVT, CVPM

My idea starts with a great video I saw recently. Tara Hunt—a big thinker in online and social marketing—produces the web series Truly Social. In “Your Definition of Social Is Wrong,” she gives examples of activities that businesses engage in that really aren't social and why they aren't connecting with their audiences. Scheduling posts, placing ads and generating automated responses are just a few of the activities she mentions. I think I know what she's talking about. Today's social media managers need to know when to talk ... and when to shut up.

1. TALK, DON'T TELL

If you're just posting an ad for a product or service, you're not engaging with clients. Clients want to know how you can be of value to them and their pet, not how they can be of value to you. Think about this the next time you post something on Facebook or YouTube about Dental Month specials. Don't just publicize a discount—explain why dentals are necessary and beneficial. Post questions, not just statements, and thoughtfully respond to comments.

2. DON'T ARGUE WITH CLIENTS

We all deal with nasty remarks on social media. Arguing with a client in public online is damaging to your reputation and a surefire way to ruin relationships. What the client posts may be hurtful or false, but as professionals it's important for us to rise above our feelings. One of the best ways to respond is to acknowledge the client's remarks and offer to call them to resolve the situation. This shows everyone reading online that not only do you monitor your social media channels, but you also want to try to resolve client complaints. If you instead attack the client, you're showing the audience you're not just unwilling to try to resolve a complaint, but you're teaching them to stay quiet when they aren't satisfied and just never come back your practice again.

Christine Scarborough, RVT, CVPM, owns Scarborough Veterinary Consulting in Villa Rica, Georgia.

All hail might tec

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To download, go to
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GETTY IMAGES

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Hs!

One key to Fear Free: Practice managers

In practices that want to start implementing lower-stress techniques it's the veterinarian's job to lead by example and help set the protocols and choose the products you need, says Jonathan Bloom, DVM. But the practice

manager is another

important role in this movement.

"The manager is the one who makes the products and protocols available to the team," he says.

The manager is also the one who gets the entire hospital on board with procedure changes to make sure that every pet is treated with the same amount of respect and care that their own pets would receive, he says.

ASK THE EXPERTS

On Saturdays our clinic is open from 8 a.m. to noon and run by appointment only, except for client emergencies. We recently had a man come in with a sick cat, and we referred him to an emergency clinic that could see him right away, as our doctor wasn't scheduled to be in for another 45 minutes. It was a holiday weekend and we had been given strict instructions by the practice owner not to see non-clients. The man became angry and said he'd wait for the doctor to come in. He eventually left and didn't come back. Do you have any advice for handling a situation like this? We're an all-female clinic and have been threatened by angry male clients before.

—**Frightened**

Dear Frightened,

Your situation is complicated, so let's focus on approaches to protect your other clients and veterinary team. Angry people can be scary. Unfortunately, it's possible that this person is truly a threat and must be handled accordingly. Follow these steps:

- > Identify a confident, composed leader on your team who can have a conversation with an angry pet owner without escalating the problem.
- > Since the angry man isn't a client, ask to step outside to discuss the matter. This takes him out of earshot of other clients and away from a more heavily populated area just in case things go badly.
- > Explain the problem from your other clients' perspective. They all have schedules too and can't just wait while his cat is seen instead of theirs. If he's not sensitive to that approach, take the position that waiting to be seen isn't in his cat's best interest. Arguing about it delays treatment, and you care about his cat's wellbeing.
- > Apologize and be sincere. Studies show that it's much harder to maintain anger when the other party is apologetic. Lie if you have to, but decelerating the situation is always better.
- > If he won't go away, consider calling the police. Before doing so, however, I'd allow him to think that we were going to try and work him in if he could just have a seat in his car while the veterinarian wrapped up the case he or she was working on. At that point, if the problem escalates and you feel that his threatening demeanor is truly dangerous, and he refuses to wait outside, I would consider placing him in an open exam room, have your technician get started taking temperature, pulse and respiratory rate (if that's your process), and call the police while you stall. The options that involve the police will put the practice in some future risk from him, and I'd consider a filing for a restraining order if it came to that.

If your most confident team member can't talk the man into leaving on his own, then it may be the least dangerous option to see the cat, despite your owner's directive. Fire the client later, but in all cases, the safety of your team and other clients must take priority over everything else, even if it means an extra hour on a holiday weekend.

—**Kyle Palmer, CVT**

Kyle Palmer, CVT, is a Firstline Editorial Advisory Board member and a practice manager at Silver Creek Animal Clinic in Silverton, Oregon.



Kyle Palmer, CVT



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7 steps to better pet insurance talks

We're not selling you on pet insurance here. But if you're sold on pet insurance and want your clients sold on it too, here are steps to make that happen. dvm360.com/insurancetalk

TEAM TRAINING TIPS *firstline:*

7 steps to better pet insurance talks

We're not selling you on pet insurance here. But if you're sold on pet insurance and want your clients sold on it too, here are steps to take to make that happen.

- 1. Think about how insurance fits into this pet's life**
A pet's first visit is a natural segue into a pet insurance conversation. Break-specific discussions and conversations about the pet's long-term health and potential future ailments may also lead to an insurance talk.
- 2. Ask permission to have the chat**
For example, "Are you familiar with pet insurance?" Get the brochure out and say, "Because of your reason here, our practice recommends pet insurance. Can I tell you about pet insurance?" A "yes" moves beyond you lecturing them. Instead, you've asked permission to educate them. And if they say no, you know where you stand. Offer the brochure and say they can find more information inside without hearing them over the head. Usually asking permission improves the chances the client buys in and maximizes your education time.
- 3. Keep it simple**
Detailed talk about premiums and the value of pet insurance can become too complicated for a first conversation. Most pet owners can take the next step to look up details about premiums and coverage by calling pet insurance companies or visiting company websites.
- 4. Use open-ended questions**
"Do you know about pet insurance?" can lead to a single-word response. Try open-ended questions: "What questions do you have about pet insurance?" or "What do you know about pet insurance?" Then listen to the response and gain their perspective while sharing your own.
- 5. Polish your message**
Try reviewing pet insurance brochures with your significant other or contacting pet insurance companies to ask specific coverage questions.
- 6. Offer "new pet" packets, instead of puppy and kitten packets**
Today, many adult pets are adopted out of shelters. These pet owners won't hear a pet insurance message if you don't take the time to recognize them as new pet owners.

Teaching technique
The old teaching maxim still works: Tell them what you're going to say, say it, then tell them what you said. Here's a tip that works for covering treatment plans, client education handouts and yes, pet insurance brochures: As you talk, use a pen or highlighter to mark important points in the handout, brochure or printout as you guide a pet owner through it. Sending a pet owner home with a marked-up paper or brochure offers a tangible reminder of what you discussed and may increase their perception of value for all that client education.

02/17/2016

Have you tried the warm compress trick for difficult IV placements?

Obtaining vascular access can be difficult in shocky patients with poor perfusion. Applying a warm compress to the vessel can help the vein stand up to improve visualization. Also, flushing the IVC before insertion helps you see the flash when BP is low.



Colleen Manthe, RVT, and Julia Morrow, RVT
BluePearl Veterinary Partners
Overland Park, Kansas

INSIDER'S INSIGHTS

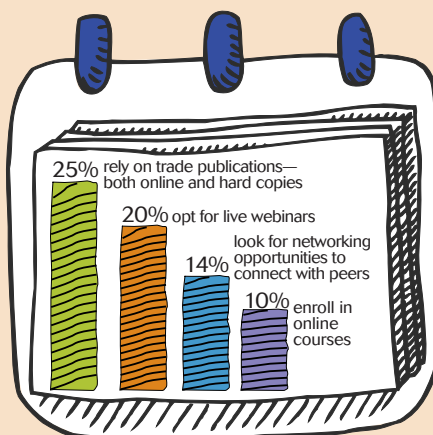
By Christine Shupe, CAE, Executive Director, VHMA



Shortcuts ... for overworked managers

Ask 10 veterinary managers to describe their jobs and responsibilities. You may end up with 50 different descriptions, but it's a sure bet that each response will include some reference to being overloaded.

So, what to do when you are trying to strike a balance between being up-to-date professionally and also addressing all the demands of your job? VHMA designed a recent Insider's Insights survey around the topic of shortcuts, and 217 owners, managers and administrators responded.



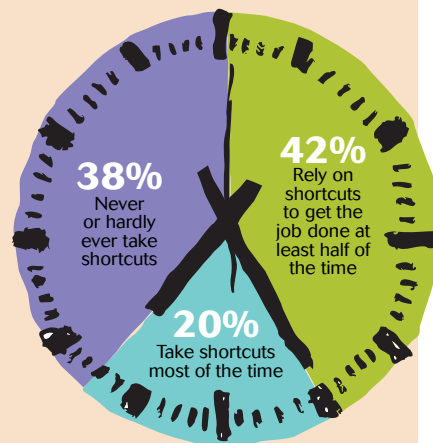
MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL FITNESS

Continuing education and access to information about emerging industry trends and developments keep veterinary professionals in tiptop shape. However, many managers are juggling so many responsibilities that extended time away from the office may not be practical.

THE TIME CRUNCH

There comes a time when managers must make a decision when there are too few hours in the day and too many tasks to be completed. What do they do? According to the survey respondents, they delegate! Thirty-seven percent reported they assigned the task to a responsible employee.

But as much as many managers would like to give 100 percent, 100 percent of the time, it may not be possible.



APPEALING ASSISTANTS

And in the age of technology and computers, just how many managers have an app for getting things accomplished in a timely manner? In truth, not many! Seventy-seven percent said they use no app. Those who use apps use Basecamp, Microsoft Project, Evernote, Trello and Asana.



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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Do not use REVOLUTION on sick, weak, or underweight cats. Use only on cats 8 weeks and older. Side effects may include digestive upset and temporary hair loss at application site with possible inflammation. In people, REVOLUTION may be irritating to skin and eyes. Wash hands after use. See Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on page 08.

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BRIEF SUMMARY:

See package insert for full Prescribing Information.

CAUTION:

US Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

INDICATIONS:

Revolution is recommended for use in dogs six weeks of age or older and cats eight weeks of age or older for the following parasites and indications:

Dogs:

Revolution kills adult fleas and prevents flea eggs from hatching for one month and is indicated for the prevention and control of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), prevention of heartworm disease caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*, and the treatment and control of ear mite (*Otodectes cynotis*) infestations. Revolution also is indicated for the treatment and control of sarcoptic mange (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) and for the control of tick infestations due to *Dermacentor variabilis*.

Cats:

Revolution kills adult fleas and prevents flea eggs from hatching for one month and is indicated for the prevention and control of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), prevention of heartworm disease caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*, and the treatment and control of ear mite (*Otodectes cynotis*) infestations. Revolution is also indicated for the treatment and control of roundworm (*Toxocara cati*) and intestinal hookworm (*Ancylostoma tubaeforme*) infections in cats.

WARNINGS:

Not for human use. Keep out of the reach of children.

In humans, Revolution may be irritating to skin and eyes. Reactions such as hives, itching and skin redness have been reported in humans in rare instances. Individuals with known hypersensitivity to Revolution should use the product with caution or consult a health care professional. Revolution contains isopropyl alcohol and the preservative butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT). Wash hands after use and wash off any product in contact with the skin immediately with soap and water. If contact with eyes occurs, then flush eyes copiously with water. In case of ingestion by a human, contact a physician immediately. The material safety data sheet (MSDS) provides more detailed occupational safety information. For a copy of the MSDS or to report adverse reactions attributable to exposure to this product, call 1-888-963-8471.

Flammable - Keep away from heat, sparks, open flames or other sources of ignition.

Do not use in sick, debilitated or underweight animals (see SAFETY).

PRECAUTIONS:

Prior to administration of Revolution, dogs should be tested for existing heartworm infections. At the discretion of the veterinarian, infected dogs should be treated to remove adult heartworms. Revolution is not effective against adult *D. immitis* and, while the number of circulating microfilariae may decrease following treatment, Revolution is not effective for microfilariae clearance.

Hypersensitivity reactions have not been observed in dogs with patent heartworm infections administered three times the recommended dose of Revolution. Higher doses were not tested.

ADVERSE REACTIONS:

Pre-approval clinical trials:

Following treatment with Revolution, transient localized alopecia with or without inflammation at or near the site of application was observed in approximately 1% of 691 treated cats. Other signs observed rarely ($\leq 0.5\%$ of 1743 treated cats and dogs) included vomiting, loose stool or diarrhea with or without blood, anorexia, lethargy, salivation, tachypnea, and muscle tremors.

Post-approval experience:

In addition to the aforementioned clinical signs that were reported in pre-approval clinical trials, there have been reports of pruritus, urticaria, erythema, ataxia, fever, and rare reports of death. There have also been rare reports of seizures in dogs (see **WARNINGS**).

SAFETY:

Revolution has been tested safe in over 100 different pure and mixed breeds of healthy dogs and over 15 different pure and mixed breeds of healthy cats, including pregnant and lactating females, breeding males and females, puppies six weeks of age or older, kittens eight weeks of age or older, and avermectin-sensitive collies. A kitten, estimated to be 5-6 weeks old (0.3 kg), died 8 1/2 hours after receiving a single treatment of Revolution at the recommended dosage. The kitten displayed clinical signs which included muscle spasms, salivation and neurological signs. The kitten was a stray with an unknown history and was malnourished and underweight (see **WARNINGS**).

DOGS: In safety studies, Revolution was administered at 1, 3, 5, and 10 times the recommended dose to six-week-old puppies, and no adverse reactions were observed. The safety of Revolution administered orally also was tested in case of accidental oral ingestion. Oral administration of Revolution at the recommended topical dose in 5- to 8-month-old beagles did not cause any adverse reactions. In a pre-clinical study selamectin was dosed orally to ivermectin-sensitive collies. Oral administration of 2.5, 10, and 15 mg/kg in this dose escalating study did not cause any adverse reactions; however, eight hours after receiving 5 mg/kg orally, one avermectin-sensitive collie became ataxic for several hours, but did not show any other adverse reactions after receiving subsequent doses of 10 and 15 mg/kg orally. In a topical safety study conducted with avermectin-sensitive collies at 1, 3 and 5 times the recommended dose of Revolution, salivation was observed in all treatment groups, including the vehicle control. Revolution also was administered at 3 times the recommended dose to heartworm infected dogs, and no adverse effects were observed.

CATS: In safety studies, Revolution was applied at 1, 3, 5, and 10 times the recommended dose to six-week-old kittens. No adverse reactions were observed. The safety of Revolution administered orally also was tested in case of accidental oral ingestion. Oral administration of the recommended topical dose of Revolution to cats caused salivation and intermittent vomiting. Revolution also was applied at 4 times the recommended dose to patent heartworm infected cats, and no adverse reactions were observed.

In well-controlled clinical studies, Revolution was used safely in animals receiving other frequently used veterinary products such as vaccines, anthelmintics, antiparasitics, antibiotics, steroids, collars, shampoos and dips.

STORAGE CONDITIONS: Store below 30°C (86°F).

HOW SUPPLIED: Available in eight separate dose strengths for dogs and cats of different weights (see **DOSAGE**). Revolution for puppies and kittens is available in cartons containing 3 single dose tubes. Revolution for cats and dogs is available in cartons containing 3 or 6 single dose tubes.

NADA 141-152, Approved by FDA

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Purina Pro Plan Gentle Snackers are truly unique treats, based on the successful hypoallergenic formula. Gentle Snackers can be safely given to dogs with food allergies or sensitive gastrointestinal tracts. The treats have been formulated to achieve low molecular weight, have a single hydrolyzed protein source and are exceptionally palatable. Each canine treat contains approximately 14 kcal of metabolized energy.

2. PILL POCKETS

Pets are smart about avoiding their meds, so why not help pet owners be smarter? Greenies Pill Pockets make it easy. Pet owners won't feel the need to hide pills in high-calorie foods like cheese or lunchmeat. These treats take the stress and mess out of administering tablets or liquid medication. The easy-to-use pouches mask the smell and taste of medicine and deliver a real peanut butter flavor dogs will love.



3. THERAPEUTIC TREATS

Royal Canin has unveiled a new line of veterinary-exclusive treats designed to support special dietary needs of cats and dogs on therapeutic diets. The new line works with therapeutic diets to enable clients to bond with their pets without compromising the efficacy of nutritional therapy. The treats are available in four different formulations—Urinary, Gastrointestinal, Hydrolyzed Protein and Satiety—and come in both dog and cat versions. The company's original treat has been redesigned to be thinner and contain fewer calories per treat, though the formulation has not been changed.

For a larger selection of treats featured on the dvm360.com marketplace, head over to dvm360.com/treats.



Back in the proper place:

How to solve *feline* house soiling

Cats want to do the right thing when it comes to the litter box, but sometimes disease or their environment overrides the instinct. Here's how to help.

By Ilona Rodan, DVM, DABVP (*feline practice*)

If a cat eliminates outside of its litter box, whether right next to the box or elsewhere, it's called house soiling. The most common causes are medical problems and stress, which is why cats that house soil need veterinary care.

Encourage a confession

Many cat owners don't let their veterinary teams know about house soiling behaviors. They may be embarrassed, think it's normal for their cats, or assume we won't be able to help.

Owners also may not tell us because they think their cats soiled outside the box to spite them. In one large survey,

66% of cat owners thought their cat house soiled out of spite.¹

Cats, of course, are not spiteful. They eliminate outside the box because of stress associated with a new cat moving in or because the box wasn't cleaned while the owner was gone all weekend or any number of

reasons that cause feline stress.

Since many owners don't mention the problem, it's important to ask at each appointment if the cat has ever eliminated outside the box. It's also important to let owners know to contact you if their cats eliminate outside the box even once.

1

Disengage marking triggers

2

House soiling may be caused by the cat trying to mark its territory. If the cat is not spayed or neutered, that is the first step to remove marking triggers. However, even neutered cats may spray because of the presence of other cats, whether it's outside cats looking in on an indoor cat's territory or a cat within the home that it does not like. Giving the cat a safe territory away from cats it is not bonded with is very helpful. Removing the scent of marking and adding pheromones to the environment are important as well.

3 Remember the four basic causes of house soiling

Identifying the cause of feline house soiling is like solving a mystery. It can be overwhelming if the plan isn't broken down into the four basic causes:

1. Medical causes
2. Feline idiopathic cystitis, which has been shown to be associated with stress
3. Marking such as spraying
4. Environmental or social factors.

Keep in mind that a cat may have two or more problems at the same time. For example, a cat that sprays may also have calculi or bladder stones. Perform medical history and diagnostics first, then rule out the other problems one by one.

Help pinpoint medical causes

4

The most common cause of house soiling is an underlying medical problem. The cat may still be using the litter box some or most of the time. A veterinary appointment to gather a thorough history and perform an examination and diagnostic testing are essential to identify the cause. Diagnostic tests may vary based on the cat's age and whether urine or stool or both are deposited outside the litter box.

As a veterinarian certified in feline practice and a behaviorist, I rou-

tinely see cats for behavior consultations. Often in these cases underlying medical problems are still undetected because the diagnostic testing was not complete.

For example, a cat that sprayed urine with blood was found on ultrasonography to have bladder stones that radiography did not detect, and an older cat was found to have hyperthyroidism that was causing fecal soiling. A thorough medical workup is always indicated.

5 Create the ultimate litter box experience!

House soiling issues are often related to the litter box itself. We need to consider how many boxes are needed, their locations, their size, the appropriate litter and the frequency of cleaning.

Number. The more cats in a household, the more litter boxes needed. The rule of thumb is one litter box per cat plus one. For example, if there are two cats in the household, three boxes are needed.

Location. Clients need to understand that multiple boxes next to each other are like one big box for cats. Cats want a private and quiet area to eliminate, without competing with other cats to get to it. Boxes should be out of view from other boxes and easily accessible so a timid cat doesn't need to pass by a bully cat to reach it.

Size. Boxes should be about 1.5

times the size of the cat—from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail—to allow the cat to enter, turn around, scratch and eliminate.

Litter type. Most cats prefer sand or soil litter as they would use in the wild. Unscented clumping sand litter is an excellent option to keep boxes easier to clean for owners and desirable for cats. Many cats do not like box liners or covers, but a shy cat may prefer a covered box.

Cleaning. Litter boxes should be scooped a minimum of once daily. A box with nonclumping litter should be changed every week. Boxes with clumping litter may need cleaning only every four weeks, but it depends on the number of cats, if boxes are cleaned daily and whether there's more than normal urine or stool in the box due to a medical problem.

More resources

AAFP and ISFM guidelines: www.catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/house-soiling

Feline house soiling brochures:

www.catvets.com/guidelines/client-brochures

Reference

1. Kass PH, New JC Jr, Scarlett JM, et al. Understanding animal companion surplus in the United States: relinquishment of non-adoptables to animal shelters for euthanasia. *J Appl Anim Welfare Sci* 2001;4:237-248.

Ilona Rodan, DVM, DABVP (feline), is an expert in feline medicine, behavior consultant and an associate at Cat Care Clinic in Madison, Wisconsin. She is co-chair of the American Association of Feline Practitioners' Cat Friendly Practice Committee. The American Association of Feline Practitioners created the Cat Friendly Practice program, which provides clinics with the tools to integrate a feline perspective in both the physical environment of the practice and the way medical care is delivered. It equips practices with the tools, resources and information to elevate the treatment, handling and overall healthcare of cats, as well as emphasizes ways to reduce the stress associated with the visit. To learn more, visit www.catvets.com/cfp.



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¹Pereira GG, Fragoso S, Pires E. Effect of dietary intake of L-tryptophan supplementation on multi-housed cats presenting stress related behaviours, in *Proceedings BSAVA* 2010.

²Beata C, Beaumont-Graff E, Coll V, et al. Effect of alpha-caseozepine (Zylkene) on anxiety in cats. *J Vet Behav*. 2007;2(2):40-46.

³Kruger JM, Lulich JP, MacLeay J, et al. Comparisons 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.

⁴Lulich JP, Kruger JM, MacLeay JM, et al. Efficacy of two commercially available, low-magnesium, urine-acidifying dry foods for the dissolution of struvite uroliths in cats. *J Am Vet Med Assoc*. 2015;243(8):1147-1153. Average 27 days *in vivo* study in urolith forming cats.

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'You

Is your respect limited to clients with unlimited budgets? If you find yourself grumbling about pet owners in poverty, try getting personal instead of judgmental and replace worries over the feasibility of veterinary care with options for flexibility.

By Julie Carlson, CVT

can't afford me.'

“If they can't afford their pets they shouldn't have them!”

I hear this judgment almost every single day, but is it fair?

LET'S GET PERSONAL (INSTEAD OF JUDGMENTAL)

Have you ever been just one or two paychecks away from financial ruin? I know I have, and I bet I'm in good company in this notoriously low-paying profession.

Rent, mortgage payments, bills and student loan payments can pile up quickly. Our financial status can become so precarious and unstable that just one more hit could prove disastrous. Maybe a family member gets

sick and needs help paying their rent. Maybe your pet needs emergency surgery. Maybe your car breaks down and you need to pay for repairs. Almost everyone faces similar unexpected expenses at some point. How would these expenses affect you?

Some experts recommend having enough money saved to cover at least six months' worth of bills. If you're like most Americans, you probably don't. What would happen if you lost your job? Your bills would keep coming regardless of whether you could pay them. What would you do?

POVERTY AND PET OWNERS

Many people in this position end up losing everything. Can you imagine what it would be

like to walk away from your home and all your belongings and have nowhere to go? Can you imagine the level of stress and desperation you'd be feeling?

According to the National Law Center on Homelessness, this scenario plays out in real life for an estimated 3.5 million Americans every year, or one out of every 100 people. If you have at least 100 friends, odds are at least one is going through this right now.

Apply this estimate to your practice. If you have 5,000 clients, about 50 of them are experiencing financial collapse or homelessness. But simply asking these clients to give up their pets until they're more financially stable is anything but simple.

LET'S GET PERSONAL (AGAIN)

After a hard day at work, doesn't it feel good to go home to kitty purrs and

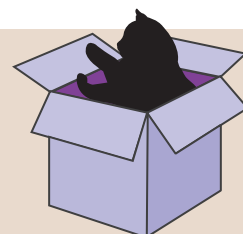
warm little doggy bodies snuggled up against you? Studies have shown that pets make us feel better, lower our blood pressure and decrease our stress levels.

For many in the throes of financial distress, their pets are the only thing they have left and are a source of comfort. If I were in their shoes, my pets would be the last thing I'd want to give up. I'd do anything necessary to keep them with me.

I see this same resolve in many of my clients, coming to my clinic for vaccines to prevent suffering and further financial stress down the line and paying for their dog's ear medication with crumpled ones and fives. When they receive devastating news that their dog has parvo or their cat is in renal failure, I see them desperately call every friend and family member they can think of to ask for help.

Master your pet insurance talks with clients

If you're set on becoming the pet insurance advocate of your veterinary hospital, sign up to receive this free Team Meeting in a Box, which covers how to get a whole team on board with letting clients know you think pet insurance could be good for them. dvm360.com/teammeeting





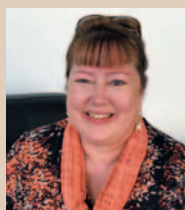
SOPHIE LOUISE DAVIS/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

“Help! We’ve missed the window on pet insurance coverage”

Diabetes can be a costly diagnosis, particularly if the pet responds well to treatment and lives longer. Paying for this care can be a challenge for owners who don’t have pet insurance, says Karen Felsted, CPA, MS, DVM, CVPM.

Offering other payment options, like a third-party payment plan or in-house payment plans, can help.

Some practices go a step further by creating diabetes packages. They group the diabetes components and they look at home monitoring options for pets to help manage the cost. The result: less strain on clients, Dr. Felsted says.



Live learning:

Check out Dr. Felsted’s Learn then Earn sessions that give you the clinical and management information for real change.

thecvc.com/sd



“The dumbfounded doctor was at a loss for words. She hadn’t been taught how to deal with the reality of client finances.”

CLIENT FINANCES 101

A new veterinary school graduate at my hospital diagnosed a dog with parvo recently. She confidently put together a treatment plan that covered hospitalization, IV fluids, pain medication, antibiotics and lab work.

When the tech who presented the treatment plan to the owner reported that the owner couldn’t afford it and wanted to know other options, the dumbfounded doctor was at a loss for words. She had been taught how to do a physical exam, what tests to run, how to diagnose an illness and how to treat that illness. What she hadn’t been taught is how to deal with the reality of client finances.

When such situations arise (and they will) we need to first silence our near-sighted judgments and offer these pet owners our unmitigated respect. If, when you get off work, you drive in your car to a comfortable home and watch some televi-

sion while dinner is prepared, it’s been said that you are richer than 75 percent of the world’s population. Instead of looking down on those who can’t enjoy these advantages, let’s look up to them for managing to get through life without them.

SO, WHAT’S A TEAM TO DO?

Giving respect is free. The services you offer are not. It’s simply not feasible to treat pets for free, but here’s what you can do:

When it comes figuring out payment, approach clients with humility and empathy as you explain each part of the treatment plan and why each item has been included. Let them tell you what they can afford.

Be ready to think outside the box. Maybe this client can pay for treatment a little bit each day or week. Perhaps there are other treatments you can suggest that cost a little less. Maybe you could offer the client the same half-

HELP CLIENTS AFFORD THE CARE THEIR PETS NEED

Find products to help take some of the stress out of paying for pets’ care with the products at dvm360/financialproducts.

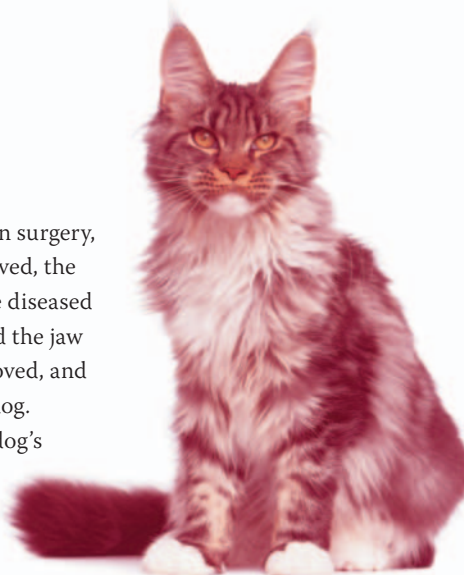
priced exam you offer new clients. The client's gratitude in response to your flexibility and care can pay dividends when it comes to word-of-mouth advertising.

Keep in mind that your client may be willing to get creative, too.

When I'm not working at my hospital, I work with the pets of homeless veterans who are some of the most creative people on the planet. I know one man whose dog had mammary cancer and a broken jaw requiring surgery. I reached out to three veterinarians who offered their surgical services at cost.

During one marathon surgery, the cancer was removed, the jaw was repaired, the diseased teeth that had caused the jaw to weaken were removed, and we even spayed the dog.

Throughout that dog's hospitalization, the owner would work odd jobs during the day and turn the money in to the clinic each night. He had a small balance to pay after the dog was discharged, but he was so grateful to the clinic for what they had done that he faithfully paid that balance down to zero. The gentleman is now back on his feet and is the



Julie Carlson, CVT, is a freelance author. She is the winner of the

clinic's No. 1 fan.

Financial hardships can affect any one of us (if they haven't already). If I were in financial trouble, I would want someone to reach out and help me without judging me. Be that person for someone else.

2015 Hero Veterinary Technician Award from the American Humane Association and the Founder of Vets for Vets' Pets, a nonprofit organization providing medical care to the pets of homeless and at-risk veterans. Julie has five cats, two Chihuahuas and one fish and lives in Phoenix, Arizona.



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Do you really need your best anesthesia equipment for dental patients?

Dentistry maintains a “lesser than” status when compared with surgery, which is why surgical suites tend to be so much nicer and more tech-forward than where dental procedures occur. But Tasha McNerney, BS, CVT, CVPP, VTS (anesthesia and analgesia) says this underdog status is undeserved.

At a recent CVC session, McNerney presented her reasons for moving dentistry up the ladder. For starters, dentistry patients are usually older and present with concurrent health issues (picture a 12-year old Yorkie mix with blood pressure issues) that have to be monitored while the pet is under anesthesia for three or four hours.

Surgery patients, on the other hand, are typically young and otherwise healthy and don't need to be under anesthesia for nearly as long.

Furthermore, McNerney says tooth extractions should be treated as orthopedic surgery. Teeth are bones, and they don't transmit pain any differently than hip bones or knee bones.

BLOCK PAIN BEFORE IT STARTS

If you see that your dentistry patient is inflamed, give a local block before you get started. Periodontal disease and gingivitis are inherently painful, and it's not uncommon for patients to start waking up under anesthesia. Using a local block up front is far more cost effective than turning up the inhaled anesthetic (especially if you use sevoflurane!)

TRAIN TECHS IN DENTISTRY!

Paying a veterinary technician to clean, chart and radiograph teeth and provide pain control is more cost effective than leaving these duties to a veterinarian. Do your budget a favor and train your techs!



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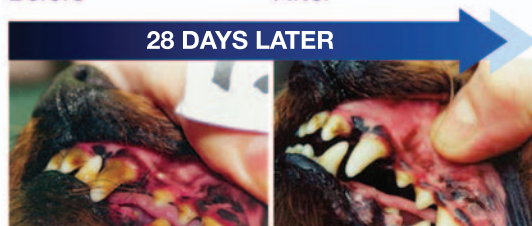
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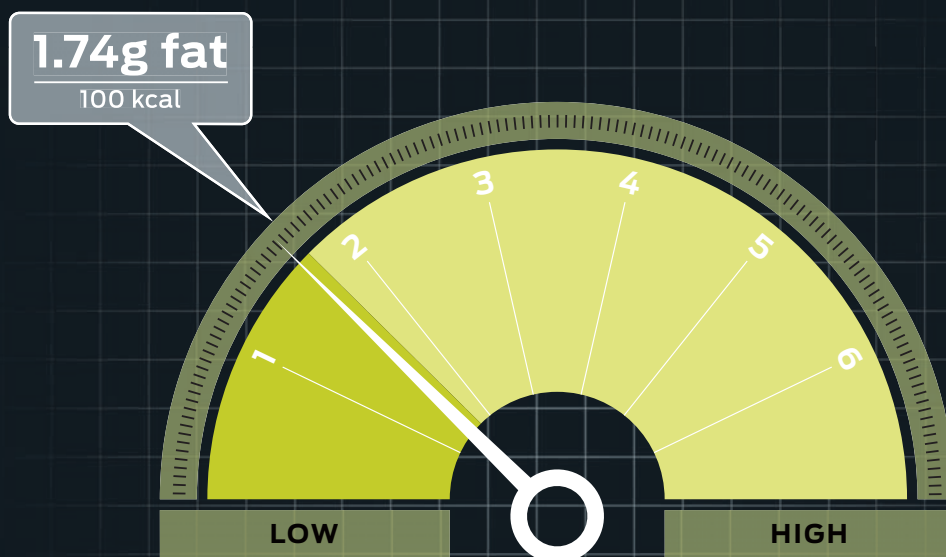
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