



Entrepreneurship,
Empowerment, and
Personal Branding:

Fighting Burnout in the First 5 Years

aaha.org/culture

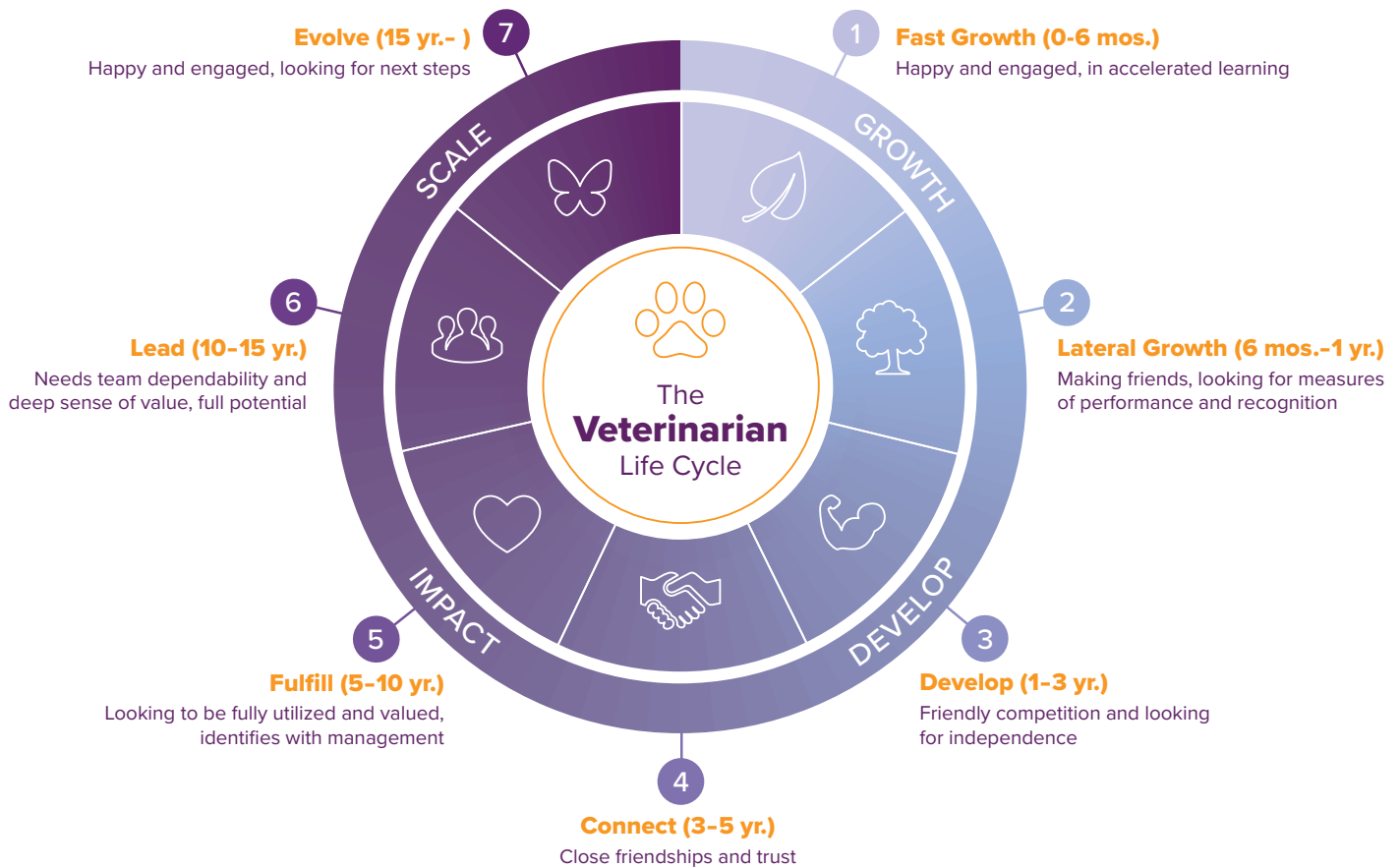


Culture



MERCK
Animal Health

The 2020 AAHA-Coffman State of Veterinary Culture Report assessed a wide range of indicators of a healthy workplace culture. The report revealed key findings about what veterinarians and veterinary staff need at different points in their careers; most significantly, it illuminated key patterns related to the tenure of the veterinarian. Based on these patterns, we created the Veterinary Life Stages, a new way to address the profession's needs.



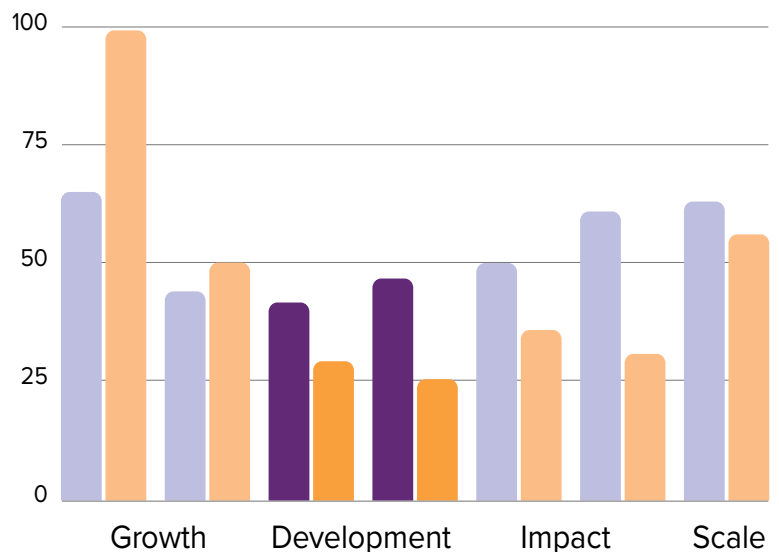
Of the many insights, two stood out:

Veterinarians' engagement and satisfaction decreases at a steady rate for the first five years of their careers.

And, one of the key factors in workplace satisfaction is having a healthy relationship with the people around them. In many cases, it is the most important factor.

At our August 10 event, participants watched a panel discussion with four women from across the profession. Afterwards, they divided into three breakout rooms for a live Q & A with the panelists.

The panel is viewable at the Matchbox platform: matchboxvirtual.com/aaha



Panelists

Julie Buzby, DVM, CAVCA, CVA

Claim to Fame: Founder of Dr. Buzby's Toe Grips

Fun fact: Threw a 'Mom Prom' for DVM moms at VMX 2020—complete with sashes and tiaras!

On parenthood: If you wait for the 'right' time, you'll never do it! If having a family is important to you, go for it.

Where to find her: www.toegrips.com

DR. BUZBY'S TIPS:

- ✓ **Be open to new opportunities—LinkedIn is great for this.**
- ✓ **Be engaged in the community and lift each other up.**
- ✓ **Don't be afraid to take risks! Being an entrepreneur is hard and time-consuming, but so is veterinary medicine! You can do this.**



Danielle Lambert

Claim to Fame: Founder of Snout School, one of the first veterinary social media training programs in the world

Fun Fact: Her Brussels Griffon Archer goes everywhere she goes (including Spain)!

On personal brands: Clinics should embrace associates who have strong personal brands, as it brings in engaged clients ready to trust you

Where to find her: www.snoutschool.com

DANIELLE'S TIPS:

- ✓ **Brand is about many things—not just connecting with companies.**
- ✓ **Personal branding allows you to find a job match that aligns with your unique skill sets.**
- ✓ **Clinics—don't be afraid to hire an associate with an online presence, as long as they align with your core values!**



Kristi Crow, DVM

Claim to Fame: Instagram sensation while still in veterinary school

Fun fact: Recently rang opening bell at NYSE

On brand building: Paid down more than 25% of her student loan debt in one year thanks to partnerships on social media

Where to find her: On Instagram at @dogtorkristi



DR. CROW'S TIPS:

- ✓ **Social media is a wonderful place to educate pet owners.**
- ✓ **Don't be afraid to seek out or create a community of peers; it makes a difference.**
- ✓ **Partnering with brands that align with your professional standards is becoming the new normal.**
- ✓ **Be authentic and tell your story.**

Pam Nichols, DVM

Claim to fame: AAHA President

Fun fact: Dr. Nichols is an instrument rated commercial pilot and flight instructor

On culture: Hospital Culture is simple. It is the combination of behaviors demonstrated by each individual within the practice (positive or negative).

To have an exceptional culture, you must all agree on which behaviors you will accept and which behaviors you will not accept. It really is that simple.

DR. NICHOLS' TIPS:

- ✓ **The big mistake that people make is believing that positive motivational posters or sayings on the wall is enough to create culture.**
- ✓ **Strong, healthy culture is absolutely essential to a high performing team but healthy culture will not come without focus and attention DAILY.**
- ✓ **Every single employee must be held accountable for their behavior. Only then can you create a work environment that is enjoyable and fulfilling.**



Attendee Chat Gems

We asked, you answered. Has your experience in the profession lived up to your expectations from vet school? Why or why not? Here are some of your replies:

Absolutely. Meeting new people and helping them with their beloved pets is what I expected!

Yes, veterinary medicine has been a wonderful profession and I learn something new every day. The stress is real, though. People's expectations of their veterinary team is a little beyond realistic.

For sure there are various aspects I did not expect or even want to experience. However, I am very much enjoying my job and my hospital I work with. My life is much more balanced than my coworkers. I get to only work part time. If I had to work as much as my coworkers, I might not enjoy this job as much.

No, it has not. But I think it's really difficult to have realistic expectations of the profession until you are actively practicing as a veterinarian. I think even if I told myself what to expect, I still wouldn't necessarily believe them or remember what was said until I got into practice. I'm not unhappy about it though because this career has soooo much flexibility and freedom to really make it what I want for myself.

It has exceeded my expectations. I've been practicing 27 years and truly enjoy and value my profession. The best thing I've ever done in my career was to found a non-profit for financially disadvantaged clients in Newark, New Jersey.

1000% better than I ever expected... 25 years in practice and happier than ever!

My experience did not live up to my expectations and thus I stopped practicing after 10 years. The stresses of clinical practice and practice owners with financial motivations combined with the extreme cost of my education and being unable to afford basics like good housing, food, and transportation led me to "retire".

My experiences have been great in the profession, but I feel like I am especially lucky. I want to help others feel as engaged and excited about their jobs as I do.

Many of my fellow classmates and myself are battling depression, burn out and bankruptcy. The trifecta. Just seems like there is little hope nowadays. Either you go work for big business or your neighbours pound down the door at night for animals they "found" and walk away from. I am needing hope.

I think it has lived up to what vet school made me expect...but there is so much more out there that they didn't teach us about!!! And that's what I want to learn about.

Yes I believe my 16 year career has met my expectations. However, the road was not always easy and I learned to adapt and change while finding balance. I hope to help my colleagues find their balance and still find fulfilment in their veterinary career.

It's not what I expected at all. I thought when I was ready to exit clinical practice my usefulness as a veterinarian was over, but I was so wrong. I am so glad this degree is as versatile as it is.

I'm 4 years out. I've been pretty burnt out lately. Feeling some imposter syndrome, and it seems hard to tell how I'm helping some days.



Tips from the Talks:

- ✓ Use telehealth tools to increase team efficiency
- ✓ Have the doctor triage problems between appointments to increase staff efficiency and help schedule in a productive way
- ✓ Use more text and email to minimize doctor time on the phone
- ✓ Have technicians write all the records, then the doctor reviews



Book and website recommendations from the chat:

The 4 agreements

www.miguelruiz.com/the-four-agreements

DiSC assessments

www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc

5 Voices

www.5voices.com



AAHA's Culture and Wellbeing Resources:

www.aaha.org/practice-resources/healthy-workplace-culture/





Culture

Discover all the resources
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