INCREASING YOUR EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

Part 2: Gaining Practice Team Alignment on Preventive Healthcare Recommendations

As stated in Part 1 of this “Increasing Your Employment Prospects” series, there is a lot of competition for the best jobs, especially if you are limited in geographic locations.

Employers are looking for good clinical skills along with good communications and interpersonal skills. With the quality of education in veterinary colleges today, most of the 1,500 new entrants to the market have these skills. Given that, what else can you bring to a practice that will differentiate yourself from other applicants?

This article, from the Partners for Healthy Pets, is the second in a three part series aimed at introducing you to the tools and resources available at www.partnersforhealthypets.org that you can use to increase your marketable skills and increase your odds of landing that perfect job. All the tools are available at no cost. The tools we will review in this article relate to helping the entire practice team reach alignment on preventive healthcare recommendations.

AAHA and AVMA Canine and Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines

These general preventive healthcare guidelines, promulgated by AVMA and AAHA have been universally recognized and adopted by the vast majority veterinary organizations and practices including most, if not all, colleges of veterinary medicine. Presumably you have already been exposed to them, or will be, during your community services practice rotations.

While the guidelines are generally “adopted” by private companion animal practices, many practices have experienced difficulty having the guidelines uniformly implemented by all practice team members. This disconnect between “adoption” and “implementation” almost always stems from a lack of communication within the practice team.

This is where you come in: using the tools on the Partners for Healthy Pets website to initiate a program of guidelines implementation in your new employer’s practice.

Starting the Conversation
Previous studies have shown that the disconnect between adoption and implementation stems from practices’ assumption that “we do preventive healthcare,” and “we tell everyone” what’s needed. And yet the Partners for Healthy Pets Opportunity client survey tool consistently reveals that what practices believe they tell every client, and what every client hears, is strikingly different. That seems to be because preventive healthcare is often seen as “routine” or “not sexy” enough to warrant much attention.

So, the first step in achieving practice team alignment around implementation of the guidelines by the entire practice team effectively starts with the entire team watching the video on the website (under “Implementing the Guidelines” tool) entitled “Sharpen Your Axe.” This 14 minute inspirational video, shown at a staff meeting, starts the conversation regarding the importance of making prevention a critically important piece of every practice.

The simple step of having the team watch the video effectively jumps starts the process of getting attention. Most teams quickly realize that having all of their clients understanding the importance of prevention is every bit as important to delivering high quality care as being able to diagnose and successful manage hyperadrenocorticism.

**After Starting the Conversation**

Once the team recognizes that they have an opportunity to do a better job of providing quality care, the next steps are carefully and thoroughly laid out on the Partners for Healthy Pets website. There is an archived webinar that guides the practice leadership (the practice owner, the practice manager, the lead technician, key associates and you!) in implementing the next steps.

That is followed by very complete and detailed, step by step, team meeting agendas and scripts that follow a precise schedule of bringing the entire practice team along to perfecting implementation.

You can lead and drive this process. The practice owner and practice leadership will value your contribution!

**Summary**

One of the mostly commonly expressed frustrations of practice owners is the difficulty in getting everyone on the practice team aligned with the goals of the practice leadership. The tools related to implementing the guidelines can serve as a model for getting teams aligned on other aspects of the practice philosophy and goals as well. Helping practices succeed by you learning new skills now might be just the additional edge that gets you that coveted new position. The tools at [www.partnersforhealthypets.org](http://www.partnersforhealthypets.org) can be used to your advantage to land the job at the practice of your choosing.