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Inside

AAEP Preview Issue

Cover Photo: Past AAEP President Kathleen Anderson, DVM, enjoys networking at an AAEP Convention.
Courtesy AAEP

PUBLISHER'S POINTS

By Kimberly S. Brown

AAEP Convention Tips

This magazine gets to you just before the 2017 AAEP Convention. For many of you, this is an annual trip for not only continuing education credits, but for networking and camaraderie. For those who have been AAEP members for years, you know there will be great CE offered. But you also know that networking is a primary reason for attending the annual convention.

For those of you attending your first AAEP Convention, make sure to take advantage of all of the events designed to help you become connected with your peers as well as possible mentors or employers.

One of the drawbacks of the AAEP Convention is that there is so much to see and do that it makes it hard to choose. That means you need to spend a little time creating a plan of action *before* the convention. While some of you might scoff at that, every year I hear veterinarians say, "Gee, I wish I'd known about that (discussion, presentation, table topic, Sunrise Session), because I would like to have been there!"

Start by downloading the AAEP Convention app. This allows you to preview not only the presentations, but the social events and trade show vendors. Then you can create your own calendar that will pop up reminders. You can add or delete events from your calendar at any time. You also can see the schedule of events on the AAEP.org website.

If you are a first-time convention attendee, make sure you attend Convention 101: Helpful Hints for the First-Time Attendee. This event can be helpful. It is from 4:30-5:15 p.m. on Friday, November 17, in Room 006AB.

Right after that is the Welcome Reception from 5:30-7:00 p.m. There are usually stations where you can grab a bite to eat and something to drink, but think of this as your golden opportunity to "meet and greet." Since it's the first day for most people, everyone still has plenty of energy and they are moving around quite a bit to say "hello" to as many people as possible.

And they usually have NAME TAGS on!

Don't be afraid to walk up and introduce yourself to anyone. This is a group of outgoing, friendly and passionate professionals. Be brave!

A last word of advice is to take extra business cards with you. They are inexpensive and might seem old-fashioned, but they have "sticking power," because when someone takes one, he or she usually puts it in a pocket and finds it later. If you aren't into that but want to stay in touch, make sure to get out your smartphone and input that person's name and contact info as soon as you meet him or her.

Above all, have fun! This is a great place to learn and network. EM

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By Zach Loppnow, DVM

'Can I Have Your Number?'

"Can I have your phone number so I can call you if I have any other questions?" It seems like such a benign question. A simple request so your client can feel comfortable with the treatment plan for his or her horse, and is able to reach out with questions likely forgotten while you were there.

What happens, though, when that same client begins to lose respect for your personal time? What if his or her horse starts to colic? Obviously, you want to be there for your client and the horse. But what if the client need a Coggins for a show tomorrow that he or she only remembered when packing up tack at 1 a.m.? Do you still want the client to call you directly?

This is one of the questions that has started to dominate equine veterinary practice discussions. Often the answers follow a similar dichotomy that many other questions inspire. Older, more established practitioners give their phone numbers to clients freely, wanting their clients to be able to get in touch with them whenever they feel the need. After all, it is how they built many of their high-quality practices across the country.

On the other hand, the newer generation of veterinarians have grown leery of giving clients such a hold over their personal lives. They place a significant value on their work-life balance, with some more reluctant to relinquish control of that balance to their clients.

So where does the line get drawn?

With the ever-increasing presence of technology in the veterinary practice and the numerous ways for clients to contact practitioners, the question of whether to give your direct phone number to clients is one many new graduates need to answer. For some, the answer might be simple. A new graduate doctor starting a solo practice by necessity needs to be as available as possible to clients. Others who work in multi-doctor practices where on-call duties are shared might want to keep their direct lines private.

Having recently begun my own personal journey into this career, it is still a decision that I am working through. Personally, I believe that giving out my number to clients can really generate a sense of trust. A small gesture like giving a client your direct number can make that person feel valued and let him or her know that you have a personal investment in the animal's health and well-being. Additionally, it can help you to respond faster to problems as they develop. A client who has your number might be more likely to call you earlier in a developing medical situation with a horse. This can give you a jump on treatment plans and ultimately could help to save that animal.

One of the biggest caveats when giving out your direct number is to establish proper boundaries with your clients. They need to understand that there might be times when you don't answer right away. If you don't set those boundaries early on, you set yourself up for problems down the line. The last thing you want is for your client to think you aren't invested in his or her animals, or worse, are simply ignoring him or her. Establishing boundaries and communication guidelines are keys to having a successful practice career.

No matter which side of the argument you ultimately land on, you have to make a decision and stick to it. There will be clients whose intrusions make you get a new phone number so they will stop calling you. There will also be clients who only call in absolute emergency cases that you really want to be there for.

Unfortunately for us as veterinarians, we cannot afford to ride the fence. The minute we pick and choose which clients get direct access is the minute we begin the process of breaking down trust with our clients. The decision is far from easy, and no one answer fits everyone. I encourage you to set the limit that you believe works for you, then stand by it. EM

Zach Loppnow is a 2017 graduate of the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine. He is currently working as an intern at Anoka Equine Veterinary Services in Elk River, Minnesota. A graduate of the Veterinary Business Management Association's Business Certificate Program, he continues to pursue his interest in practice management and equine medicine.

Battling Burnout

Learn how to prioritize 'self-care' to improve your satisfaction with life.

By Colleen Best, DVM, PhD

Our work involves dealing with clients and their horses on a daily basis, often under stressful conditions. In thinking about what we do, much of it is selfless work. We work tirelessly for the betterment of other people's horses, for a reward significantly less than our human counterparts receive, and with increased risk of harm to ourselves. This selflessness is to be applauded to a certain extent. However, it can contribute to burnout, because we believe that we must continue to meet the needs of others before ourselves. If *we* are not meeting our own needs, the only ones we are harming are ourselves.

Burnout is a syndrome that is defined by three facets: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment.

Emotional exhaustion results from the use of oneself as a tool in solving the problems of the client.

Depersonalization is best described as the dehumanization of clients—when our attitudes and perceptions toward them are cynical and unfeeling.

Lastly, reduced personal accomplishment is the belief that one's work is without meaning.

Research in other health care professions, such as nurses and physicians, has demonstrated the serious consequences of burnout on patient-related outcomes. It is likely that the same types of decreased client- and patient-related outcomes are occurring in veterinary medicine.

One of the most significant outcomes that is compromised when practitioners experience burnout is the quality of patient care. Burnout also has been associated with increased job turnover, absenteeism and low morale. Consequences for our lives outside of work can include exhaustion, poor sleep, inappropriate use of drugs and alcohol, as well as marriage and family problems.

Burnout affects our personal and professional lives.

Here are some skills, ideas and actions that can support wellness and decrease the risk of burnout.

Empathy

Research has shown that individuals experiencing burnout often have low empathy scores. Empathy is the ability to recognize another's experience and reflect that person's experience back to him or her. It is theorized that empathy is protective because it helps us continue to see the humanity and have the desire to care about our clients.

Mindfulness

The premise of all mindfulness practices is increased awareness and attention to one's current experience and thoughts while remaining non-judgmental of them. When we are more grounded in our surroundings and what is happening in the moment, we can decrease anxiety that stems from worrying about things that might happen.

Boundaries

Boundaries are rules that we create about how we are willing to be treated by others. When we don't set boundaries, we allow others to set them for us. Boundaries relate to burnout because they relate to how we engage with the world. They are also a critical component of how much we work and the time we reserve for our lives outside of work.

Gratitude

Gratitude has been shown to improve our mood and increase our satisfaction with our life. How does it do this? Through helping us to see the positives in everyday life.

Meaning and Purpose

Having a strong idea of our meaning and purpose in life is protective against burnout.

It can be hard to remember what we love about practice or why we became veterinarians in the first place when clients are angry or cases are going south. But connecting with these things can help increase feelings of satisfaction and decrease feelings of burnout.

Take-Home Message

It can be hard to prioritize self-care or to create the mental space to change your perspective—but doing so is likely to have ripple-out rewards and be protective against burnout. EM

Editor's note: More information on this topic brought to you by Boehringer Ingelheim can be found in an expanded article with this title on EquiManagement.com in Resources>Downloads.

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By Nancy S. Loving, DVM

The Hindgut Microbiome

A well-received presentation at the Equine Science Society symposium in June 2017 focused on the impact of diet on the equine hindgut microbiome.

Veronique Juilliand, PhD, DVM, of the Université Bourgogne-Franche-Comté/AgroSup in Dijon, France, described the importance of diet on the microbial constituents of the large colon of the horse. She stressed the importance of fibrous plant cell wall components that pass undigested in the upper intestinal tract. Colonic microorganisms break down these fibrous materials, then provide energy through the end products of their metabolism—in particular, short-chain fatty acids. Dysfunction of the hindgut can lead to obstructive or distention colic or to laminitis, to name a few common disease manifestations in the horse.

A common situation arises when there is an abrupt change in two different forage sources. Studies have found that if the two different hay sources are of close botanical and chemical composition, the hindgut microbiome of fibrolytic bacterial populations do not significantly change over either the short or long term. However, bacteria that are not involved in fiber digestion do experience changes within four hours of dietary modification.

The largest microbiota changes occur within 24 hours after there is an abrupt change in diet from forage-based to include grain concentrates.

The largest microbiota changes occur within 24 hours after there is an abrupt dietary change from a predominantly forage-based diet to one that includes grain concentrates (corn, oats or barley). Anaerobic bacterial concentrations in the hindgut increase and colonic pH decreases when high-starch diets are fed. Changes that last about seven days are particularly marked in the equine right ventral colon.

A recent study evaluated the effect of meal size and frequency of meal offerings on the microbiota in the horse's cecum. Bacterial diversity did not differ between horses fed the full ration in one feeding compared to those receiving the same volume split over three feedings per day. However, the abundance of microorganisms did.

In conclusion, Juilliand noted: "In horses fed a hay-based diet, the bacterial community shows a high richness and diversity, suggesting a strong resilience in the hindgut microbial ecosystems." Microbial populations in the hindgut are affected when horses are fed large meals of high-starch content, as often occurs in an equine athlete's dietary management.

Author's note: More details can be found in the Journal of Equine Veterinary Science, *52 (2017), pp. 23-28, in an article entitled "The Impact of Diet on the Hindgut Microbiome" by V. Juilliand and P. Grimm.*

PPID and the Immune System

The prevalence of pars pituitary intermedia dysfunction (PPID or Cushing's) is reported in at least 20% of horses older than 15 years. At the 2017 North American Veterinary Conference, Macrena Sanz, DVM, MS, DACVIM, PhD, of Washington State University's Col-


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About 35% of horses with PPID have opportunistic or secondary infections, much higher than the 11% in normal horses of similar ages.

lege of Veterinary Medicine, discussed the prevalence of PPID in older horses. She observed that 35% of horses with PPID have opportunistic or secondary infections, an incidence markedly increased over the 11% incidence of infections in aged-matched populations.

Infections commonly seen in PPID horses include sinus infection, dermatophilosis, pneumonia and parasitic infection, and recurrent hoof abscesses.

Due to the decreased inflammatory response experienced by PPID horses, clinical signs often are not evident. It is thought that increased cortisol levels might contribute to immunosuppression.

In addition, alpha-MSH decreases cytokine production that is important to prevent development of bacterial infection through inflammatory responses. Beta-endorphins increase in PPID horses, and these might also inhibit neutrophilic and macrophage functions that normally combat microbes.

With immunosenescent changes in mind, the PPID horse should be managed with a strategic preventive care program, including immunization and parasitic control regimens that are more robust than those used for younger age groups.

Skin Allergy Testing

At the 2017 North American Veterinary Conference, Susan White, DVM, MS, DACVIM, of the College of Veterinary Medicine in Athens, Georgia, discussed the value of intradermal skin testing (IDT). She emphasized that such testing isn't necessarily able to provide a definitive diagnosis, but it can be helpful to identify potential allergens or to apply the information to allergen specific immunotherapy. She remarked that at least 50% of clinically normal horses show positive responses to IDT.

It is noteworthy that horses receiving glucocorticoid, antihistamine or progestogen medications, or aceproma-

zine might have false negative reactions to the testing process. Currently there aren't specific withdrawal timetables to follow prior to testing, but those well-versed in IDT suggest the following: three weeks for oral or topical corticosteroids; eight weeks for injectable corticosteroids; and 10 days for antihistamines and for products or diets containing omega-3 or omega-6 fatty acids.

White added that horses with irritable skin might yield false positive reactions, including at the saline control site. She emphasized that a positive at an allergen site indicates that the horse has a "skin-sensitizing antibody," but this does not mean the horse is affected with clinical disease. Size of the reaction is not indicative of clinical importance of a specific allergen. Also, with age, horses become more sensitized to molds and insects, leading to positive reactions to those allergens. An antigen vial contaminated with bacteria or fungi also leads to false positives.

Retained Fetal Membranes

Maria Soledad Ferrer, Vet, MS, DACT, of the University of Georgia's Department of Large Animal Medicine, spoke at the 2017 North American Veterinary Conference about tricks for managing retained fetal membranes (RFM) in the mare.

A placenta that has not been expelled within three hours post-partum is considered a RFM. This occurs at an incidence of 2-10% of foalings, according to Ferrer. Because there are times when only a portion of the placenta is expelled (but not all), it is important to physically examine the fetal membranes and determine if any portions are absent or missing. Leaving any piece within the mare's uterus can lead to metritis, septicemia, endotoxemia and the potential for severe laminitis. A cascade of events occurs within six to eight hours postpartum if necrotic tissues remain in the uterus.

One method of helping to expel fetal membranes is by using small doses (10-20 IU) of oxytocin IM or IV every two to four hours. Or, alternatively, oxytocin can be infused intravenously and slowly over an hour (60-90 IU in 1 liter of normal saline).

Another useful technique relies on distending the chorioallantoic space by infusing saline through a nasogatric tube into the allantoic cavity through the cervical star—this is known as the Burns technique. The mare's perineum is cleaned well before beginning this process. Ferrer suggested that it takes 9-15 liters of infusion to achieve distention once a good seal is achieved around the tube to enable fluid retention. She noted that if the chorioallantoic membrane is not fresh (if it is decomposing), it might be impossible to retain fluid within the allantoic space, and the therapy will fail.

Another distention method relies on umbilical cord vessel infusion via a stallion catheter connected to an adapter onto a garden hose. Low-pressure water infusion into the catheter assists gentle traction to release the membranes.

For partially retained membranes, repeated uterine lavage is necessary once or twice daily.

Ferrer advised that for any mare with fetal membranes retained for more than six hours, broad-spectrum, systemic antibiotic treatment and anti-inflammatory medications are important, in addition to repeated uterine lavage. Rapid intervention to enable the mare to expel fetal membranes has the greatest chance of successfully returning her to reproductive soundness. EM


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Making the Most of Industry Events

Professional conferences enhance knowledge, build relationships and offer opportunities for sharing expertise.

By Katie Navarra

Plan your schedule ahead of the convention in order to give yourself time for education and networking.

Registration, check. Flights, booked. Hotel, reservations confirmed. You know there is a plethora of information that will be presented at the conference you are about to attend, but are you really getting everything out of that time away from work?

Conferences and workshops reveal findings from cutting-edge research, provide updates regarding traditional veterinary medicine and offer business advice. Ultimately, educational events deliver tips and strategies to apply in your practice. In addition to training, industry events are the perfect place to network, build relationships and establish your credibility within the field.

Industry events can be expensive, so it's important to maximize your experience. Once you've committed to attending an event, it's time to strategize how to make the most of a one-day or multi-day event. Our experts offer advice for first-time and experienced participants alike.

Maximize Education Sessions

Knowledge is the prime goal for most event attendees. Learning about the latest advances in veterinary practices is important to treating your patients back home. Larger educational events offer multiple workshops at the same time throughout the day. Deciding which sessions are the best fit for your practice and personal development objectives is crucial to leaving satisfied.

"Create a daily schedule prior to your first day of arrival," said Diane Lallman, senior account executive at Fern Expo in North Carolina.

Accomplish this by obtaining the daily session schedule, as well as the expo/trade show schedule and exhibitor list, as early as they're available. Visit the event website for a preview of session topics and presenters. Larger events offer dozens, if not hundreds, of different sessions over several days. It can be daunting to decide which sessions to attend. Read and consider the options before arriving on site to make the event less overwhelming.

"If your main focus is to attend sessions and the expo is secondary, add to your daily schedule the sessions you want to attend and their times. This will allow you to see how much time you have available to visit the exhibit floor," recommended Lallman.

Find out ahead of time whether the event organizers offer an app for phones or tablets. When an event hosts an app, these include the most updated schedule information. These platforms typically include functions for planning a daily schedule, downloading presentation materials and space for taking notes.

Heidi Longton is a Meeting Professionals International (MPI)-accredited trainer and board facilitator who offers advice for maximizing learning objectives once on site.

"Listen to the questions, challenges and issues that arise from other

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WHERE: 2017 AAEP Annual Convention in San Antonio

WHEN: **Saturday, November 18 at 6:45 a.m.**

WHO: **Dr. Bonnie R. Rush**, DVM, MS, DACVIM, Acting Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State University

Dr. Susan Moore, MS, PhD, Professor, Director of Kansas State University Diagnostic Laboratory

Denise E. Farris, Founder, Farris Law Firm LLC

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attendees. Listen to the solutions, especially those presented by other attendees," Longton said. "You will likely walk away with 'best practices' from those who have encountered the very same hurdles."

At the end of each workshop, note the speaker's name and contact information. There might be a time in the future when you will need that person's expertise, Longton advised.

If possible, get contact information from speakers and others in attendance in case you want to get in touch with them in the future.

Network Like a Pro

Networking is typically tied with learning as the prime objective for attending industry events. For some people, the thought of interacting with a room full of strangers is distressing. Even for individuals who appear at ease, striking up conversations can feel uncomfortable. But it's a necessity for discovering alternative approaches to patient treatment and career advancement.

If you feel anxious about networking, you're not alone. Research shows that networking elicits negative feelings, a sense of exploitation and selfishness.

"People feel like they are extracting something from someone else," said Tiziana Casciaro, an associate professor of organizational behavior at the University of Toronto Rotman School of Business and Management and the Jim Fisher professor of leadership development at the University of Toronto.

That feeling is in direct conflict with moral standards that teach people that they should be giving rather than receiving, she said. Morality is a self-concept that is related to authenticity. During the networking process, people tend to perceive themselves differently—as not truly themselves. It's an internal psychological process. In reality, the other person is not judging you that way.

"Study after study reveals that people feel selfish and develop a sense of dirtiness or moral impurity," she said.

Interestingly, that feeling is limited to professional networking. Social networking that is done to make friends doesn't have the same connotation, because there is a perceived mutual benefit.

In a Harvard Business Review article co-written by Casciaro, Francesca Gino (a professor at Harvard Business School) and Maryam Kouchaki (assistant professor of management and organizations at Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University) shared the results of an experiment.

The team asked 306 adults to write about times when they engaged either in networking for professional advancement or in social networking to make friends.

Casciaro explained that participants were asked to complete word fragments, such as W _ _ H, S H _ _ E R, and S _ _ P.

"Participants who had recalled professional networking wrote "WASH," "SHOWER," and "SOAP"—words associated with cleanliness—twice as frequently as those who had recalled social networking, who more often wrote neutral words such as "WISH," "SHAKER," and "STEP," she said.

Most participants viewed networking to socialize and make friends as positive. They saw networking to enhance their careers as distinctly negative. Their negativity was not simply dislike or discomfort. It was a deeper feeling of moral contamination and inauthenticity.

The good news is that this a mindset and is totally under your control. Casciaro offers suggestions for shifting your outlook to make the most of the any networking situation.

Be spontaneous. Rather than targeting the individuals with whom you want to talk and seeking them out or uncomfortably waiting for a turn to speak with them, look for unstructured opportunities to interact. Casciaro recalls a particularly dreadful event as a doctorate student. The goal for her and all the students attending was to be visible to the "big shark" in the room. She recalled waiting in a line and feeling awkward the entire time.

"It was terrible and I told myself I'd never do that again," she said.

Now, when at industry events, she sits in the hotel lobby or other common gathering areas and is more accessible. People can easily approach her and say

"hello," and perhaps introduce her to someone new.

Be a giver. All professionals—from newcomers to seniors—have perspectives and expertise to share with one another. "If you think of networking as an opportunity to give as much as you get, it can be a more positive experience," she said.

Be curious. Approach the interaction with curiosity about a shared interest or field of expertise. This creates a more positive connotation than when simply seeking an advancement opportunity.

Focus on the big picture or a higher purpose. Think about your staff, your clients and the horses you treat—the ones for whom you are networking.

"People who consider networking for themselves as a way to move forward feel worse about the experience than those who have a higher purpose," Casciaro said. "It's helpful to think about how your participation in the event allows you to provide the best care possible for the horses."

You can tell yourself "I hate these kinds of events. I'm going to have to put on a show and schmooze and pretend to like it." Or you can tell yourself "Who knows—it could be interesting. Sometimes when you least expect it, you have a conversation that brings up new ideas and leads to new experiences and opportunities."

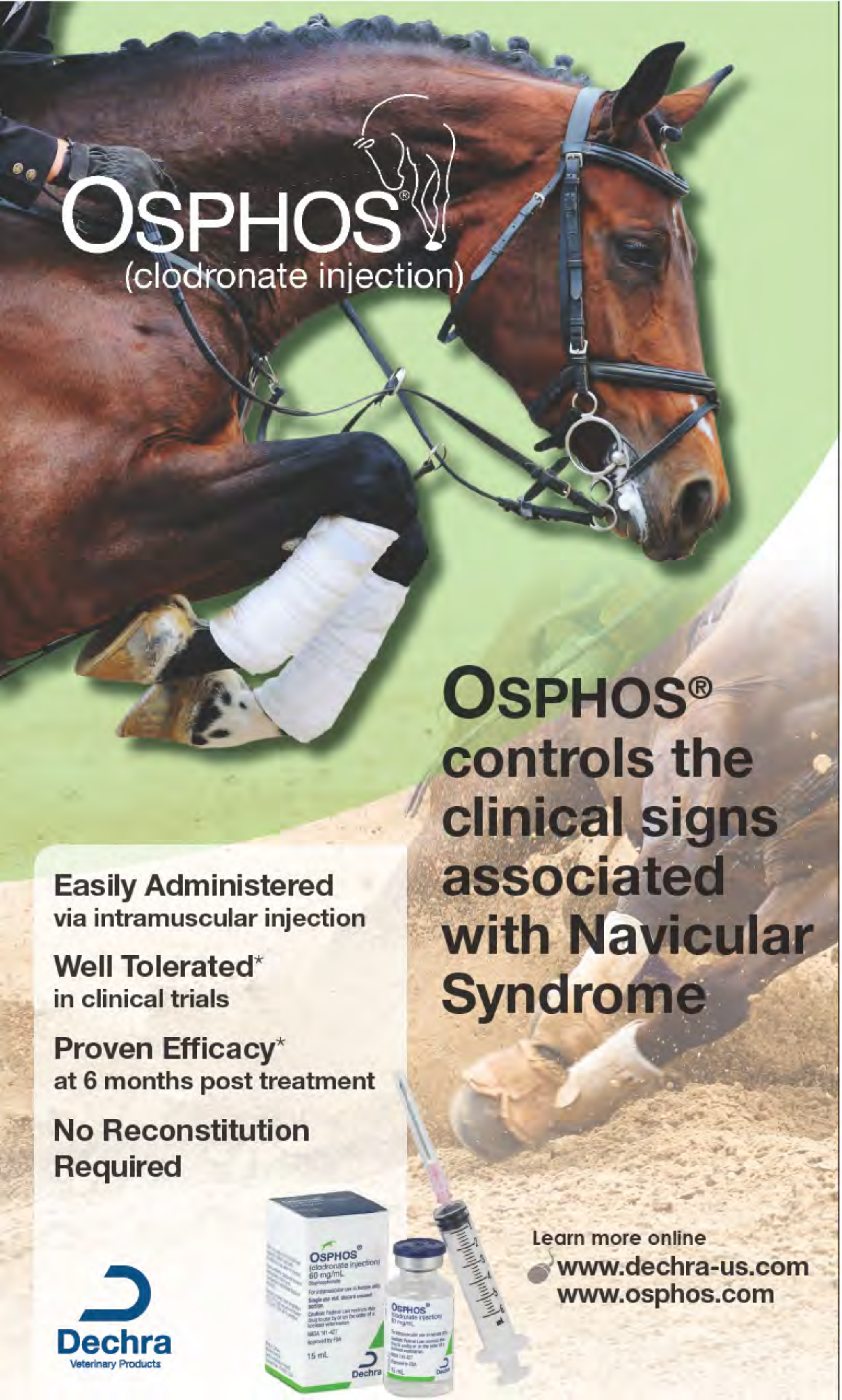
"Shifting your mindset, identifying and exploring shared interests, expanding your view of what you have to offer, and motivating yourself with a higher purpose can help you become more excited about and be more effective at building relationships that bear fruit for everyone," she said.

Make the Most of the Trade Show

Larger events typically include an expo or trade show. Smaller workshops also might invite vendors to attend. Exhibitors make much of the entire event possible through sponsorships and booth fees. When traffic on the expo floor is light, these businesses don't receive the value for which they were hoping, and might reconsider participation in following years.

"Take time to walk the entire exhibit hall," Longton said. "Doing so shows support for those individuals and organizations who support the event."

Besides expressing important appreciation for their support, visiting the trade show can provide an introduction to innovative products and services. You might not have an immediate need for a featured product, but you never know what might be relevant to you six, nine or 12 months down the road.



As with all drugs, side effects may occur. In field studies, the most common side effects reported were signs of discomfort or nervousness, colic, and/or pawing. OSPHOS should not be used in pregnant or lactating mares, or mares intended for breeding. Use of OSPHOS in patients with conditions affecting renal function or mineral or electrolyte homeostasis is not recommended. Refer to the prescribing information for complete details or visit www.dechra-us.com or call 866.933.2472.

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

* Freedom of Information Summary, Original New Animal Drug Application, NADA 141-427, for OSPHOS. April 28, 2014.

OSPHOS® (clodronate injection)

Bisphosphonate
For use in horses only.

Brief Summary (For Full Prescribing Information, see package insert)

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

DESCRIPTION: Clodronate disodium is a non-amino, chloro-containing bisphosphonate. Chemically, clodronate disodium is (dichloromethylene) diphosphonic acid disodium salt and is manufactured from the tetrahydrate form.

INDICATION: For the control of clinical signs associated with navicular syndrome in horses.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Horses with hypersensitivity to clodronate disodium should not receive OSPHOS.

WARNINGS: Do not use in horses intended for human consumption.

HUMAN WARNINGS: Not for human use. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. Consult a physician in case of accidental human exposure.

PRECAUTIONS: As a class, bisphosphonates may be associated with gastrointestinal and renal toxicity. Sensitivity to drug associated adverse reactions varies with the individual patient. Renal and gastrointestinal adverse reactions may be associated with plasma concentrations of the drug. Bisphosphonates are excreted by the kidney; therefore, conditions causing renal impairment may increase plasma bisphosphonate concentrations resulting in an increased risk for adverse reactions. Concurrent administration of other potentially nephrotoxic drugs should be approached with caution and renal function should be monitored. Use of bisphosphonates in patients with conditions or diseases affecting renal function is not recommended. Administration of bisphosphonates has been associated with abdominal pain (colic), discomfort, and agitation in horses. Clinical signs usually occur shortly after drug administration and may be associated with alterations in intestinal motility. In horses treated with OSPHOS these clinical signs usually began within 2 hours of treatment. Horses should be monitored for at least 2 hours following administration of OSPHOS.

Bisphosphonates affect plasma concentrations of some minerals and electrolytes such as calcium, magnesium and potassium, immediately post-treatment, with effects lasting up to several hours. Caution should be used when administering bisphosphonates to horses with conditions affecting mineral or electrolyte homeostasis (e.g. hyperkalemic periodic paralysis, hypocalcemia, etc.).

The safe use of OSPHOS has not been evaluated in horses less than 4 years of age. The effect of bisphosphonates on the skeleton of growing horses has not been studied; however, bisphosphonates inhibit osteoclast activity which impacts bone turnover and may affect bone growth.

Bisphosphonates should not be used in pregnant or lactating mares, or mares intended for breeding. The safe use of OSPHOS has not been evaluated in breeding horses or pregnant or lactating mares. Bisphosphonates are incorporated into the bone matrix, from where they are gradually released over periods of months to years. The extent of bisphosphonate incorporation into adult bone, and hence, the amount available for release back into the systemic circulation, is directly related to the total dose and duration of bisphosphonate use. Bisphosphonates have been shown to cause fetal developmental abnormalities in laboratory animals. The uptake of bisphosphonates into fetal bone may be greater than into maternal bone creating a possible risk for skeletal or other abnormalities in the fetus. Many drugs, including bisphosphonates, may be excreted in milk and may be absorbed by nursing animals.

Increased bone fragility has been observed in animals treated with bisphosphonates at high doses or for long periods of time. Bisphosphonates inhibit bone resorption and decrease bone turnover which may lead to an inability to repair micro damage within the bone. In humans, atypical femur fractures have been reported in patients on long term bisphosphonate therapy; however, a causal relationship has not been established.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: The most common adverse reactions reported in the field study were clinical signs of discomfort or nervousness, colic and/or pawing. Other signs reported were lip licking, yawning, head shaking, injection site swelling, and hives/pruritus.

OSPHOS
(clodronate injection)

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NADA 141-427, Approved by FDA

"Take particular note of the products and/or services available," she said. "In the short term, vendors serve to expand your network. In the long term, vendors may be just the resource you need."

Like the educational session agenda, an exhibitor listing is typically available ahead of time. Lallman recommended reviewing the exhibitor list prior to arrival. This can help you determine which booths to visit. Some events attract more than 100 exhibitors. Narrowing your list to the top five or 10 companies you want to see can help with scheduling.

"Then send an email to those companies asking to set an appointment time to meet during the show," she said. "Exhibiting companies welcome this process. It allows you to keep your daily schedule on track and guarantees you will connect with those desired companies."

Scheduling appointments also allows the exhibiting company the opportunity to have a dedicated representative available at that time. After you've had your appointments, you can walk the trade show floor knowing that your specific goals have been met.

Your trade show experience will be rewarding and stress-free when you have a daily agenda/schedule planned in advance, she said.

First-Time Attendees

Attending an educational event for the first time is exciting. But there is a lot to fit into a few days, and it can be overwhelming. There are many educational sessions of interest, hundreds of new people to meet and countless products and services to explore.

Prior to leaving, identify your goals. Determine whether your main goal is to improve your knowledge of a treatment protocol or whether you're hoping to meet a clinic owner looking to hire. Knowing what you hope to gain from the experience can guide you in determining which functions to attend.

If the event organizer publishes a list of attendees in advance, find your counterpart at another organization. Reach out to that individual before the event kicks off.

"Sometimes this leads to a traveling companion," Longton said. "At the very least, these are individuals that you can look up once you get on site."

The registration list might indicate all first-time attendees. Those first-time participants share the same feelings of excitement and hesitation. Reach out to some or all of those individuals before the event starts and make plans to connect on site.

Once you arrive, you'll receive a name badge. Many times a ribbon or symbol on the name tag will indicate individuals who are attending for the first time. "Make particular note of this badge symbol. It is a natural way to begin a conversation with someone you don't know at all," Longton said.

Event organizers know that meeting new people is an important part of industry events. Multiple activities are typically built into the schedule just for this purpose. "Attend the networking functions, as these will give you the most opportunity to meet people," Longton advised.

Relationships make industries go 'round. After the event, you should have numerous individuals with whom to connect on LinkedIn and other social platforms.

Repeat Attendees

Industry events are recognized as critical to professional development. Veterinarians who embrace the benefits of attending an event often participate regularly. Comfort and familiarity

UNIPRIM®

TMP/SDZ Powder for Horses

DESCRIPTION: UNIPRIM Powder contains 67 mg trimethoprim and 333 mg sulfadiazine per gram.

UNIPRIM Powder is a combination of trimethoprim and sulfadiazine in the ratio of 1 part to 5 parts by weight, which provides effective antibacterial activity against a wide range of bacterial infections in animals.

Trimethoprim is 2,4 diamino-5-(3, 4, 5-trimethoxybenzyl) pyrimidine.

ACTIONS: Microbiology: Trimethoprim blocks bacterial production of tetrahydrofolic acid from dihydrofolic acid by binding to and reversibly inhibiting the enzyme dihydrofolate reductase.

Sulfadiazine, in common with other sulfonamides, inhibits bacterial synthesis of dihydrofolic acid by competing with para-aminobenzoic acid.

Trimethoprim/sulfadiazine thus imposes a sequential double blockade on bacterial metabolism. This deprives bacteria of nucleic acids and proteins essential for survival and multiplication, and produces a high level of antibacterial activity which is usually bactericidal.

Although both sulfadiazine and trimethoprim are antifolate, neither affects the folate metabolism of animals. The reasons are: animals do not synthesize folic acid and cannot, therefore, be directly affected by sulfadiazine; and although animals must reduce their dietary folic acid to tetrahydrofolic acid, trimethoprim does not affect this reduction because its affinity for dihydrofolate reductase of mammals is significantly less than for the corresponding bacterial enzyme.

Trimethoprim/sulfadiazine is active against a wide spectrum of bacterial pathogens, both gram-negative and gram-positive. The following in vitro data are available, but their clinical significance is unknown. In general, species of the following genera are sensitive to trimethoprim/sulfadiazine:

Very Sensitive	Sensitive	Moderately Sensitive	Not Sensitive
Escherichia	*Staphylococcus*	*Moraxella*	*Mycobacterium*
Streptococcus	*Neisseria*	*Nocardia*	*Leptospira*
Proteus	*Klebsiella*	*Brucella*	*Pseudomonas*
Salmonella	*Fusiformis*		*Erysipelothrix*
Pasteurella	*Corynebacterium*		
Shigella	*Clostridium*		
Haemophilus	*Bordetella*		

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: Trimethoprim/sulfadiazine is indicated in horses where potent systemic antibacterial action against sensitive organisms is required. Trimethoprim/sulfadiazine is indicated where control of bacterial infections is required during treatment of:

Acute Strangles	Acute Urogenital Infections
Respiratory Tract Infections	Wound Infections and Abscesses

Trimethoprim/sulfadiazine is well tolerated by foals.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Trimethoprim/sulfadiazine should not be used in horses showing marked liver parenchymal damage, blood dyscrasias, or in those with history of sulfonamide sensitivity.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: During clinical trials, one case of anorexia and one case of loose feces following treatment with the drug were reported.

Individual animal hypersensitivity may result in local or generalized reactions, sometimes fatal. Anaphylactoid reactions, although rare, may also occur. **Antidote:** Epinephrine.

Post Approval Experience: Horses have developed diarrhea during trimethoprim/sulfadiazine treatment, which could be fatal. If fecal consistency changes during trimethoprim/sulfadiazine therapy, discontinue treatment immediately and contact your veterinarian.

PRECAUTION: Water should be readily available to horses receiving sulfonamide therapy.

ANIMAL SAFETY: Toxicity is low. The acute toxicity (LD50) of trimethoprim/sulfadiazine is more than 5 g/kg orally in rats and mice. No significant changes were recorded in rats given doses of 600 mg/kg per day for 90 days.

Horses treated intravenously with trimethoprim/sulfadiazine 48% injection have tolerated up to five times the recommended daily dose for 7 days or on the recommended daily dose for 21 consecutive days without clinical effects or histopathological changes.

Lengthening of clotting time was seen in some of the horses on high or prolonged dosing in one of two trials. The effect, which may have been related to a resolving infection, was not seen in a second similar trial.

Slight to moderate reductions in hematopoietic activity following high, prolonged dosage in several species have been recorded. This is usually reversible by folinic acid (leucovorin) administration or by stopping the drug. During long-term treatment of horses, periodic platelet counts and white and red blood cell counts are advisable.

TERATOLOGY: The effect of trimethoprim/sulfadiazine on pregnancy has not been determined. Studies to date show there is no detrimental effect on stallion spermatogenesis with or following the recommended dose of trimethoprim/sulfadiazine.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: The recommended dose is 3.75 g UNIPRIM Powder per 110 lbs (50 kg) body weight per day. Administer UNIPRIM Powder orally once a day in a small amount of palatable feed.
Dose Instructions: One 37.5 g packet is sufficient to treat 1100 lbs (500 kg) of body weight. For the 1125 g packets and 12 kg boxes, a level, loose-filled, 67 cc scoop contains 37.5 g, sufficient to treat 1100 lbs (500 kg) of body weight. For the 200 g, 400 g, and 1200g jars, and 2000 g pail, two level, loose-filled, 32 cc scoops contain 37.5 g, sufficient to treat 1100 lbs (500 kg) of body weight. Since product may settle, gentle agitation during scooping is recommended.

The usual course of treatment is a single, daily dose for 5 to 7 days.

Continue acute infection therapy for 2 or 3 days after clinical signs have subsided.

STORAGE: Store at or below 25°C (77°F)

HOW SUPPLIED: UNIPRIM Powder is available in **37.5 g** packets, **1125 g** packets, **200 g** jars, **400 g** jars, **1200 g** jars, **2000 g** pails and **12 kg** boxes. Apple Flavored UNIPRIM Powder is available in **37.5 g** packets, **1125 g** packets, **200 g** jars, **400 g** jars, **1200 g** jars and **2000 g** pails.

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

ANADA # 200-033, Approved by FDA

come along with regular attendance.

"Veterans can easily get caught up in talking with those people they have known for many years, even decades, and time flies by," Longton said. "There is always something to learn."

Longton suggested introducing yourself, at every opportunity, to the newcomers in your industry. It will continue to expand your network, as well as provide them with a resource in the industry. It's equally important for repeat attendees to attend the trade show to visit the vendors.

"And, as veterans, we have an inherent responsibility to complete the event evaluation, so planning staff has our feedback for future events," she said.

Navigating a Host City

Event organizers often choose a destination that offers attendees a variety of activities for before and after conference activities. Sometimes the location can be as much of a draw as the educational component.

Before arriving, contact the concierge of the hotel in which you're staying. "They are the connectors to all things within that city," Lallman said.

For example, the concierge can tell you whether the hotel offers complimentary shuttles to and from the airport. If not, he or she can estimate an average taxi and/or recommend reliable shuttle services. Ask if other major events are happening in the city at the same time. This will allow you to plan for meals and activities not included in the registration fees. The concierge can provide a map of the facility and the city, as well as provide information about traveling to and from meeting spaces not at the hotel.

"Utilize the concierge. He or she is an endless resource for that city," Lallman said.

Longton agreed, adding, "Their recommendations are tried and true to ensure your experience is a great one."

The location's convention and visitor's bureau (CVB) website can also provide highlights and suggestions.

"Visit the CVB website ahead of the event to see what will be going on at the time you will be in the city that may be of interest to you," Longton said.

Always be aware of your surroundings. Choose recommended modes of transportation to and from the venue. When traveling alone, have a plan to check in with family and friends. Many cities offer nighttime activities. A hotel concierge can provide reputable options.

"In any location, safety should always come first," Longton said.

Set Up for Success

Preparation is the key to making the most of any conference. Bring the right gear to remove as much stress as possible. Look into the dress code and pack shoes that are comfortable for walking to and from meeting rooms and around the trade show floor.

Remember to bring chargers for phones, tablets and laptops. You're going to spend a huge part of your day on your devices taking notes and checking in at home, so don't get caught with dead batteries. Charging stations are often scattered throughout events for easy access and on-the-go recharges.

Don't forget your business cards. Bring enough so that you don't run out midway through the event. Have some on hand and more stashed in your luggage. You never know how many people you're going to meet.

Bring the materials you need for impromptu meetings and discussions. A clean copy of your résumé might come in handy for job seekers. A copy

Make sure you take advantage of the educational and social aspects of any convention, but don't overdo.

of your recent research study might be helpful for discussing findings. Clinical or case notes should be copied and brought for a difficult-to-treat malady about which you want to seek input, or to help pose questions you have for treatment protocols.

Take-Home Message

These events can be as exhausting as they are exciting. Pre-conference activities and evening cocktail hours mean the day begins early and ends late. The long hours can add up, especially over events that last multiple days. It will be impossible to fit everything in, so don't wear yourself out trying.

Review the schedule and decide which activities are a "must" to attend and which are optional to meet your goals. It might be helpful to leave evening functions or dinners a little early to rest up for the next day's activities.

Hubspot offers this prudent advice on its blog: "Get your rest, eat well and don't party beyond what you're used to—otherwise, you'll find you're too zonked out to take advantage of all the opportunities there are at that great event you've invested time and money into attending." EM

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Darla Garon & Hannah Schlanger

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Nominated by their veterinarians, these two women exemplify passion for equine health and commitment to furthering their knowledge of equine well-being, while helping unbridle the potential in patients and team members. They will receive an all-expense-paid trip to the 2017 AAEVT Annual Conference during the AAEP convention in San Antonio, Texas.

DARLA GARON

ASSOCIATE CLINICAL SPECIALIST – LARGE ANIMAL

CLINIC: LSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital
LOCATION: Baton Rouge, LA
NOMINATED BY: Rebecca McConnico, DVM, Ph.D.

"Darla's commitment to patient care should be credited for a large part of the exceptional success of our equine neonatal case outcomes over the past several years due to her compassionate and diligent patient care as well as her mentorship of other technician team members."

HANNAH SCHLANGER

LEAD TECHNICIAN / ASSISTANT

CLINIC: Colorado Equine Clinic
LOCATION: Littleton, CO
NOMINATED BY: Emma Kate Baer, DVM, cVMA

"Hannah is dedicated to improving the equine health industry in all that she does. Since she began to coordinate the veterinary technician internships and veterinary student externships at our practice, the program has grown from just a few students per year to a fully booked summer, with technician and veterinary students as a constant presence."

Your team will consist of different personality types, which can be positive for business if you understand how to communicate with each type.

Personality Plus

Understanding how different personalities process information and make decisions can improve the harmony in your workplace.

By Katie Navarra

Imagine how much less conflict would arise if you could anticipate reactions before they occur and manage them with ease. Personality influences every aspect of life. It guides an individual's job choices, personal relationships, shopping decisions and more. Personality influences how a person communicates, reacts to change and interacts with others. Different preferences for receiving and processing information can create misunderstanding and conflict.

There are multiple traits and natural tendencies that contribute to a person's personality. One characteristic isn't better than another. Having an understanding of these inborn preferences, including your own, enhances relationships and reduces conflict. Since people spend more time at work than at home with family or friends, it's important to nurture an amicable workplace environment.

A harmonious workplace makes the long hours enjoyable for the practice owner and employees. It also enhances employee retention. Skilled, conscientious employees are in high demand and can find work elsewhere. Employee turnover interrupts the workflow and it's expensive to onboard new staff.

"Creating a culture that recognizes the value of differing personalities and strives to minimize conflict helps a business hold onto valuable employees," said

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Bigeloil® Liniment and Liquid Gel Liniment are well-known by professionals as invigorating rubs that quickly stimulate circulation to help relieve sore muscles, tendons, and joints that can arise from exertion or strain. And the liniment also works great as a refreshing brace or body wash after strenuous muscular activity. All yours from Bigeloil®.

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Christine Allard, associate director of the Archer Center for leadership development at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

A hostile work environment impacts more than the employees. "An unhappy workplace transfers to clients and horses," Allard said. "People get good customer service from happy people."

Social media makes it easy for dissatisfied customers to share their experiences. Poor customer service elicits the most reaction.

There are several tools for discovering and understanding how people process information and interactions. A Google search for "personality in the workplace" yields thousands of articles and books on the topic. This article will focus on a self-report questionnaire called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI; more information can be found at Myers-Briggs.org).

Understanding Personality Type

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator provides insights into people's natural tendencies for using their minds. In the sixth edition of *Introduction to Type*, Isabel Briggs Myers explained that MBTI is based on Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung's observations: "Jung concluded that differences in behavior result from people's inborn tendencies to use their minds in different ways. As people act on these tendencies, they develop patterns of behaviors."

Jung's theory defines patterns of behavior or "types." His research defined the way people take in information, organize information to form conclusions and how they focus their energy. Isabel Myers Briggs and her mother, Katharine Briggs, developed the MBTI inventory from Jung's theory. The result is a set of preferences that can help people better understand their own and others' behaviors, decisions and reactions.

"The Myers-Briggs is one tool to help understand yourself, coworkers and employees," Allard said. "The voluntary self-assessment helps create a common language."


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A harmonious workplace makes the long hours enjoyable for the practice owner, employees and clients.

The MBTI questionnaire reveals a person's inborn tendencies for four main categories:

- where people prefer to focus their attention and get energy
- the way they prefer to take in information
- the way they prefer to make decisions
- how they orient themselves to the external world—with a judging process or a perceiving process.

Each category has a corresponding pair of classifications:

- Extraversion vs. Introversion (E or I)
- Sensing vs. Intuition (S or I)
- Thinking vs. Feeling (T or F)
- Judging vs. Perceiving (J or P)

The results provide a four-letter combination that describes fundamental mental patterns. The MBTI inventory is available online. Trained facilitators can also administer and assist in understanding the results. Leadership development programs at colleges and universities or perhaps your local chamber of commerce office are good places to start.

The important thing to remember is that one trait is not right or wrong; it's simply a different approach to life.

Personality Type in Action

"These kinds of things cause the biggest issues in the workplace, more so than a lack of technical or scientific knowledge," Allard said, referring to personality conflicts.

The first pair of letters in the MBTI analysis describes how a person feels energized, which is known as Extraversion or Introversion and is represented by E or I. This descriptor does not mean


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a person is outgoing or shy. Instead, it explains if a person is invigorated by interacting with others or having time alone. Allard is an I, while her boss is an E. Allard finds it exhausting to be "on" all the time, whereas her boss thrives in that setting.

"I need my space to recharge. Sometimes it's exhausting to be out there all the time," Allard said. "It's a give and take where we both recognize and understand our differences."

The second pair of letters in the MBTI analysis is Sensing vs. Intuition—S or N. This dichotomy illustrates the different ways people take in information. The S preference approaches things from a big picture perspective. The N preference focuses on step-by-step details.

When Allard leads MBTI workshops, she groups S and N participants together. She places an apple in front of each group and asks them to describe it. Then each group shares its analysis. The S group provides factual observations. They will say it is red, two inches in diameter, that it has green specks, a stem and bruises, she said. The N group will have discussions about how the apple reminds them of picking apples with a grandparent, baking pies and other tangential topics.

"If you listen in, you will think the Ns are off task," she said. "They aren't. They simply process the information in front of them differently."

The third pair of letters in the MBTI is Thinking vs. Feeling, T or F. This describes how people make decisions. Those who have a preference for T tend to be analytical and use cause-and-effect reasoning. Individuals with an inclination for F assess the impacts of decisions on the people involved and strive for harmony.

In training events, Allard uses the story of a medal-winning gymnast to highlight this contrast. A 16-year-old gymnast wins gold at the Olympics but fails the drug test. The gymnast tests positive for a banned substance. Allard groups Ts and Fs. She asks the groups to decide if they should take away the medal or award it to the girl.

The T group decides to take away the medal based on the rationale that the rules are the rules. The young gymnast knew and violated the rules and therefore should not be rewarded. The F group treats each person as an individual in the situation. The rationale might be that the gymnast is young and trusted her coach and that the coach should have known better. The same group will also consider how the fourth-place finisher would feel knowing that the gold medalist won because of an unfair advantage. In the end, this group will still come to the same decision as the T group and take away the medal.

"They come to the same conclusion, but the rationale is different," she said.

In an office environment, Allard uses tardiness as an example. A boss with a T preference might decide to dock an employee's pay who arrives late to work three times in a week. That decision is based on process. An F-oriented boss likely considers extenuating circumstances and might not see the situation as cut and dried, she said.

The final pair in the MBTI letters is Judging vs. Perceiving, J or P. This set defines how an individual deals with the outer world. Js seek order and are systematic, methodical and organized. These folks like to have things decided ahead of time and strive to avoid last-minute stressors. Ps are spontaneous, flexible, casual and open-ended. These people are energized by the pressure of the last-minute decisions.

"I like to have things set up, organized and structured so that I know what I am walking into," Allard said. "My boss sees that approach as constricting, and she feels hemmed in."

This does not mean that Ps are irresponsible. Allard said that her boss is always on time and prepared; she simply goes about it in a different fashion.

"It's not about skill or ability," Allard stressed. "It's about different approaches."

Why is it important to consider MBTI findings and results from other tools?

Having an awareness of how other people react and process information can help avoid conflict and allow you to seek out a co-worker's point of view for important decisions.

"When you recognize that people are coming from different perspectives, you can see the real value in those differences," she said.

She offers a personal example. Allard approaches decision-making from Intuition. She tends to process projects from the big picture, with broad stokes rather than specific details. She has a colleague who is a Sensing preference and is detail-oriented and takes a step-by-step approach to projects.

"I seek him out because I know he can tell me the step-by-step details needed to make my idea happen," she said. "On the flip side, he asks me to walk through the big picture of the project."

By recognizing each other's strengths, they are able to have a well-rounded approach and potentially a better outcome than if focused on personal preference. In the veterinary world, this collaboration could be helpful in diagnosis and treatment plans.

Take-Home Message

It takes time for people to recognize their own personality traits and those of others. It's a lifelong process to develop the skills needed to fully embrace personality traits. These are skills that are learned and need to be practiced. They will push you outside of your comfort zone. Your business and your practice will be healthier when you and your employees are respectful and mindful of the difference between personality traits, she concluded. EM


4

Who Are Today's Equine Vets?

There are some interesting facts and figures behind this profession.

By Katie Navarra

Recreational horse owners, trainers and competitors rely on veterinarians to keep their horses healthy and sound. To the horse owner, veterinarians are the miracle workers who heal a sick horse and rehab an injured mount. Veterinarians are the doctors who administer vaccines, offer nutritional consultations, prevent sickness and so much more.

Clients likely have countless adjectives to describe the veterinarian(s) they trust. However, with the focus on customer service and a commitment to animal welfare, "who" equine veterinarians are is not often highlighted. By "who," we mean their demographics.

Statistics from the United States Department of Labor (DOL), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Association of American Equine Practitioners (AAEP) shed light on who today's veterinarians are based on age, gender, specialty and other demographics.

Recently, the AAEP and the AVMA

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conducted a joint economic survey. The full report will include detailed demographics and predictions for the future of the industry. If you're headed to the AAEP Annual Convention this December in San Antonio, Texas, you can attend a session devoted to the topic.

"The plan is to have the AVMA present the results at our convention," said Sally Baker, director of marketing and public relations for the AAEP.

Until then, the information available in the AAEP's Annual Report and the AVMA's website provides an inside look into who today's veterinarians are. The demographic information from AAEP is based on 7,787 members and 1,462 veterinary students located in the U.S., Canada and 62 other countries. The statistics from the AVMA include veterinarians that treat all species of animals.

In this article, we'll give you a sneak peek at the picture painted by statistics from these three sources.

From a University Perspective

Veterinary colleges prepare the next generation of equine veterinarians. Claudia Sonder, DVM, director of outreach at the University of California, Davis, College of Veterinary Medicine, shared her perspective on the current demographics of veterinary students.

Male vs. female students: "I don't believe this has changed much in the past 20 years," she said. "We still see the majority being women in the vet school classes … running approximately 80% women, 20% men."

Specializations: "It does seem that more students are seeking additional training past veterinary school in the form of internships and residencies, but I don't have that data."

Greatest future opportunity: "Assisting non-profits with care associated with service animals, working with local county authorities to assist with disaster planning and response for the animal component, serving on local boards and planning commissions to address open space and access for equestrian activities."

Equine-only vs. other animals: "I do see more and more students broadening their focus to include small ruminants and other animals they may encounter on a ranch call." She added that horses need to stay relevant in society for vets to continue to have that caseload. "General practices appear to be busy and in need of good equine DVMs," Sonder said. "Training in complimentary medicine is desired more and more for the care of the equine athlete."

Gender

At one time, men far outnumbered women in the field. Today, the number is nearly equal. In its 2016 Annual Report, the AAEP noted that 51% of its membership was male and 49% female.

"Membership is more balanced between male and female in 2017, reflecting the increase in female veterinarians in the profession," said Baker.

Similarly, reports on the AVMA's website indicate that the gender gap in terms of the percentage of male and female equine veterinarians is nearly zero. In data from 2016, based on its membership base of equine veterinarians, 50.6% were male and 49.4% female—percentages that nearly mirror those of the AAEP. As a subset of all veterinarians that belong to the AVMA (68,213), only 5.7% (3,920) specialize in serving equine clients.

Age

Based on the age distribution of AAEP members, there appears to be a steady stream of young professionals coming up through the ranks to keep pace with mid-career and retiring veterinarians.

29 or less	9.4%
30–39	26.1%
40–49	18.4%
50–59	19.0%
60–69	18.7%
70 and over	4.0%

The AVMA website reports that approximately 30,000 students graduate from all types of colleges of veterinary medicine each year. Class size at veterinary schools across the country has risen by an average of 1.8% a year for the last 30 years. That statistic is based on all types of veterinary medicine and is not limited to the equine medicine.

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) predicts faster-than-average job growth in the coming decade. For the general category of veterinarians, not specific to horses, DOL also projects a 9% increase in job growth from 2014-2024, translating to an additional 6,900 veterinarians by 2024. That is considered faster than average when compared with other industries.

In May 2016, the DOL reported that the median annual wage for veterinarians was $88,770.

Geographic Location

Not surprisingly, equine veterinarians are concentrated in areas with high horse populations.

"The states with the largest horse populations also have the largest number of AAEP members," Baker said.

According to AAEP membership records, the highest percentage of member veterinarians outside of North America

References: 1. Trotter GW. Intra-articular corticosteroids. In: McIlwraith CW, Trotter GW, eds. *Joint Disease in the Horse.* Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders; 1996; 237–256.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF PRESCRIBING INFORMATION

(Betamethasone Sodium Phosphate and Betamethasone Acetate Injectable Suspension) 6 mg betamethasone per mL
For Intra-Articular (I.A.) Use in Horses

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

INDICATION: BetaVet® is indicated for the control of pain and inflammation associated with osteoarthritis in horses.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Shake well immediately before use.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: BetaVet® is contraindicated in horses with hypersensitivity to betamethasone. Intra-articular injection of corticosteroids for local effect is contraindicated in the presence of septic arthritis.

WARNINGS: Do not use in horses intended for human consumption. Clinical and experimental data have demonstrated that corticosteroids administered orally or parenterally to animals may induce the first stage of parturition when administered during the last trimester of pregnancy and may precipitate premature parturition followed by dystocia, fetal death, retained placenta, and metritis. Additionally, corticosteroids administered to dogs, rabbits and rodents during pregnancy have resulted in cleft palate in offspring. Corticosteroids administered to dogs during pregnancy have also resulted in other congenital anomalies including deformed forelegs, phocomelia and anasarca. Therefore, before use of corticosteroids in pregnant animals, the possible benefits to the pregnant animal should be weighed against potential hazards to its developing embryo or fetus. **Human Warnings:** Not for use in humans. For use in animals only. Keep this and all medications out of the reach of children. Consult a physician in the case of accidental human exposure.

PRECAUTIONS: Corticosteroids, including BetaVet®, administered intra-articularly are systemically absorbed. Do not use in horses with acute infections. Acute moderate to severe exacerbation of pain, further loss of joint motion, fever, or malaise within several days following intra-articular injection may indicate a septic process. Because of the anti-inflammatory action of corticosteroids, signs of infection in the treated joint may be masked. Appropriate examination of joint fluid is necessary to exclude a septic process. If a bacterial infection is present, appropriate antibacterial therapy should be instituted immediately. Additional doses of corticosteroids should not be administered until joint sepsis has been definitively ruled out. Due to the potential for exacerbation of clinical signs of laminitis, glucocorticoids should be used with caution in horses with a history of laminitis, or horses otherwise at a higher risk for laminitis. Use with caution in horses with chronic nephritis, equine pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction (PPID), and congestive heart failure. Concurrent use of other anti-inflammatory drugs, such as NSAIDs or other corticosteroids, should be approached with caution. Due to the potential for systemic exposure, concomitant use of NSAIDs and corticosteroids may increase the risk of gastrointestinal, renal, and other toxicity. Consider appropriate wash out times prior to administering additional NSAIDs or corticosteroids.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: Adverse reactions reported during a field study of 239 horses of various breeds which had been administered either BetaVet® (n=119) or a saline control (n=120) were: acute joint effusion and/or local injection site swelling (within 2 days of injection), 15% BetaVet® and 13% saline control; increased lameness (within the first 5 days), 6.7% BetaVet® and 8.3% saline control; loose stool, 5.9% BetaVet® and 8.3% saline control; increased heat in joint, 2.5% BetaVet® and 5% saline control; depression, 5.9% BetaVet® and 1.6% saline control; agitation/anxiety, 4.2% BetaVet® and 2.5% saline control; delayed swelling of treated joint (5 or more days after injection), 2.5% BetaVet® and 3.3% saline control; inappetance, 3.4% BetaVet® and 2.5% saline control; dry stool, 1.7% BetaVet® and 0% saline control; excessive sweating, 0.8% BetaVet® and 0% saline control; acute non-weight bearing lameness, 0.8% BetaVet® and 0% saline control; and laminitis, 0.8% BetaVet® and 0% saline control.

CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Betamethasone is a potent glucocorticoid steroid with anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive properties. Depending upon their physico-chemical properties, drugs administered intra-articularly may enter the general circulation because the synovial joint cavity is in direct equilibrium with the surrounding blood supply. After the intra-articular administration of 9 mg BetaVet® in horses, there were quantifiable concentrations of betamethasone (above 1.0 ng/mL) in the plasma.

EFFECTIVENESS: A negative control, randomized, masked field study provided data to evaluate the effectiveness of BetaVet® administered at 1.5 mL (9 mg betamethasone) once intra-articularly for the control of pain and inflammation associated with osteoarthritis in horses. Clinical success was defined as improvement in one lameness grade according to the AAEP lameness scoring system on Day 5 following treatment. The success rate for horses in the BetaVet® group was statistically significantly different ($p=0.0061$) than that in the saline group, with success rates of 75.73% and 52.52%, respectively (back-transformed from the logistic regression).

ANIMAL SAFETY: A 3-week target animal safety (TAS) study was conducted to evaluate the safety of BetaVet® in mature, healthy horses. Treatment groups included a control (isotonic saline at a volume equivalent to the 4x group); 1X (0.0225 mg betamethasone per pound bodyweight; BetaVet®); 2X (0.045 mg betamethasone per pound bodyweight; BetaVet®) and 4X (0.09 mg betamethasone per pound bodyweight; BetaVet®). Treatments were administered by intra-articular injection into the left middle carpal joint once every 5-days for 3 treatments. Injection site reactions were the most common observations in all treatment groups. Injection site reactions were observed within 1 hour of dosing and included swelling at the injection site, lameness/stiffness of the left front limb, and flexing the left front knee at rest. The injection site reactions ranged from slight swelling (in many horses on multiple days in all treatment groups) to excessive fluid with swelling, pain, and lameness (4x group only). Injection site reactions were observed most commonly on treatment days, and generally decreased in number and severity over subsequent days. The incidence of injection site reactions increased after the second and third injection (number of abnormalities noted on day 10 > day 5 > day 0). In the BetaVet® treated groups the number and severity of the injection site reactions were dose dependent. The 4X BetaVet® group had the highest overall incidence of and severity of injection site reactions, which included heat, swelling, pain, bleeding, and holding the limb up at rest. The control group and 4X group (which received similar injection volumes) had a similar incidence of injection site reactions; however, the severity of reactions was greater in the 4X group. Absolute neutrophils were statistically significantly higher in the BetaVet® treated groups as compared to the control group. Trends toward a decrease in lymphocytes and eosinophils, and an increase in monocytes were identified in the BetaVet® treated groups after the initial dose of BetaVet®. Individual animal values for white blood cells generally remained within the reference range. BetaVet® treated horses also had a trend toward increased blood glucose after the initial dose. Some individual animals showed mild increases in blood glucose above the reference range.

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is in Australia, Germany and Japan. Within the United States, California, Texas and Florida have the highest number of equine veterinarians. In other states, horse ownership is strong, providing a multitude of opportunities for veterinarians seeking employment or starting a practice. The American Horse Council estimates that 45 of 50 states have at least 20,000 horses.

According to the AVMA, there is a geographical shortage of veterinarians in some mostly rural areas that varies by state. In May 2012, the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies released a report that concluded that there are sectors of unmet need for veterinarians, but the researchers found little evidence of current, widespread workforce shortages.

Percentage of Practice Devoted to Horses

In the days of veterinarian-turned-author James Herriot (James Wight), veterinarians treated any animal at a client's farm, from horses and cattle to sheep, pigs and more. Even into the 1990s, large animal practices, particularly in rural areas, served a variety of species. As time has passed, specialization has become more common.

Today, nearly half of of AAEP's members (45.5%) solely provide care to horses. About 21% of the association's members operate practices in which three-quarters of the case load is dedicated to equines. A combined total of 16.8% of members say their practices are between 25% and 50% equine focused.

"Within our membership, most diplomates are either ACVIM (internal medicine), ACVS (surgery) or ACT (reproduction)," Baker said.

Although discipline-specific statistics were not readily available, AAEP records indicate percentages of its members who serve different aspects of the industry. About 30% focus on performance horses and nearly 30% largely serve pleasure/farm clients. Reproduction is the focus for 11.7% of members, with racing the focus of 10.8%. "Other" and "ranch" totaled a combined 9.6%.

Owners vs. Employees

Considering the makeup of equine veterinary practices, those classified as Practice Owner-Sole Proprietor clinics constitute 37.5% of AAEP's membership base. Another 14.9% of the association's members are Associate Practice Owner-Partnership. Those working as educators and/or in other academic roles represent 5.3%, with interns 3.4%.

Future Opportunities

Findings from the recently released U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Health Monitoring System's (NAHMS) Equine 2015 study showed that the overwhelming

Dentistry and senior horse care are growing service areas for equine practices, according to research from the AAEP.

majority of horse owners (79.8%) rely on veterinarians as a source of information when making health care decisions. Nearly the same percentage of survey respondents indicated having veterinarians visit their facilities at least once in the previous 12-month period.

"Veterinarians were relied on not only for health care information, but also for the services they provide," noted the NAHMS Equine 2015 Study.

When compared with veterinarians who serve other types of animals, equine veterinarians are a modest group statistically. However, demand for their services is strong, and there are numerous opportunities for expanding one's practice.

"Study results revealed the potential for growth in the services provided by veterinarians, such as herd consultations in nutrition, biosecurity assessments for large operations and nearly all services for small operations," noted the NAHMS Equine 2015 Study.

Baker added that for AAEP members, "Dentistry and senior horse care have been growing service areas within equine practices."

While the economic downturn significantly dampened the horse industry, the American Horse Council estimates that there are 9.2 million horses in the United States. That population contributes $39 billion in direct economic impact to the U.S. economy, and when indirect and induced spending are included, the industry's economic impact reaches $102 billion.

Veterinarians are an important part of that equation, providing care and contributing to the strong economic impact. EM

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Strategic Analysis and Planning Series: Internal Analysis

Learn who you are, what you do well and what you don't do well.

By Amy L. Grice, VMD, MBA

In this series of articles, we have examined the concept of strategic planning, the analysis of the external environment, and the conditions of the competitive and competitor environments. In Part Five, we will analyze what is happening inside your individual practice by conducting an internal audit.

This internal analysis considers your practice's leadership, culture, business structure, value chain and financial performance in order to explore your core competencies and the presence of a competitive advantage. The purpose of this investigation is to identify the strengths and weakness of your business, and to assess how salient they are in light of the external, competitive and competitor environments.

By identifying your veterinary firm's core competencies, you can begin to determine the best strategic positioning and sustainable competitive advantage for your practice.

Leadership

Leaders set the tone of the firm, as well as influencing its culture. Leadership of the practice can be a source of competitive advantage (think Steve Jobs) or disadvantage.

Leadership can also be a weakness when owners make poor decisions about how to employ resources or find it hard to remain disciplined in their business management practices.

An important issue related to leadership is governance. Is the partner group managing the practice team effectively? Do they communicate well with each other and practice collaborative decision making? It is important to determine whether leadership and governance are a source of strength or weakness for your practice.

For example, at ABC Equine, leadership and governance are not highly developed. Three partners own the practice equally, and while one partner performs some management duties, there is no CEO or president heading the practice. A fairly *laissez-faire* form of leadership exists, with sporadic reactionary actions to events or crises. Despite efforts to write policies and create procedures to set expectations for team members, little accountability exists. Significant frustration and low morale occur in staff members due to inconsistencies in practice owners' words and actions.

When partners individually attempt to exhibit leadership, it is not uncommon for other partners to initially support efforts but later withdraw support. It is not uncommon for a partner to make a hasty unilateral decision that must later be modified. The three partners struggle to make timely decisions, accomplish management tasks, discuss strategy or provide a vision for the practice.

Revenue production is highly valued and takes precedence over all other activities. Communication with team members is sporadic and inconsistent in message and vision.

Culture

Business culture refers to the beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company's employees and management interact and handle business transactions. Culture develops organically over time from the cumulative traits of the people the company hires and the leadership within.

Culture is another potential source of advantage, as it influences the practice's ability to maintain a highly motivated, effective team and respond to shifts in the competitive environment. Being open to change could be the difference between earning above-average returns and struggling to stay afloat.

Companies such as Southwest Airlines can claim their culture as a core competence and a source of advantage. Their strong culture attracts employees who are dedicated, often willing to work for less compensation than a competitor pays, and who take pride in exemplifying the firm's values.

Culture is another potential source of advantage, as it influences the practice's ability to maintain a motivated team.

Case in point: A passenger on a Southwest flight was traveling to a medical specialist. Delays made her miss her connecting flight to a town four hours away. A Southwest employee, knowing that there would be no other way to get the passenger to her appointment, drove her. This abbreviated vignette demonstrates the power of a strong culture and a firm that creates its competitive advantage around superior customer service.

At our example practice, ABC Equine, the culture is one of caring: for its patients, its clients and also for one another. Practice members love horses and direct their actions in a caring way without overt leadership. All questions about how to respond to situations can generally be answered by referring to whether or not the action demonstrates a high level of care and caring.

This appears to occur without conscious thought, as a form of practice DNA. Employees frequently remain with the practice long term, some for decades, and demonstrate true caring about the practice's success.

Organizational Structure

Most small, private practices have never thought about their organizational structure. The definition of organizational structure is the hierarchical arrangement of lines of authority, communications, rights and duties of an organization.

Small firms usually have a simple structure where decision-making is centralized in the owners' group. However, as the number of employees grows, considering to whom they report and who has authority to answer questions and make decisions becomes much more important. When practice owners make all the decisions, they have less time to earn revenue. Leadership and competitive advantage suffer as a result.

At ABC Equine, there are currently three equal partners who loosely govern the practice, aided by an office manager. The office manager also serves as the human resources, financial and administrative manager, supervising the approximately 18 employees. Associate veterinarians utilize the office manager for administrative functions but answer to the partners in professional matters. Partners sometimes do not support decisions made by the office manager, leading to the loss of her authority with employees.

Value Chain Analysis

A value chain is defined as all the activities within an organization that add value to the service or products that the company produces. When all of these activities occur at their optimum level, a business can gain a competitive advantage. The value obtained exceeds the costs of providing it, and as a result, clients feel they receive excellent value for the price they pay and should return enthusiastically to the practice for more services.

Depending on where in the firm's

Culture refers to the beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company handles relationships and business.

value chain a core competency originates, it might be possible to leverage it across other activities and provide a platform for a truly sustainable competitive advantage.

In Figure 1 on page 50, ABC Equine's value chain demonstrates more areas of strength than weakness. Strengths lie in operational excellence, with a very high level of attention to detail and personal care for the needs of both the client and the patient.

Within the hospital, the entire experience of the client and patient is planned to minimize discomfort, fear and inconvenience while maximizing patient outcomes. In the ambulatory setting, personal relationships develop between veterinarians, clients and patients after decades of care. A high level of attention to compliance ensures that safety, liability protection and adherence to regulations are maximized.

Weaknesses revolve around communication failures and lapses between clients, receptionists and doctors. Lack of leadership, vision and accountability allow this failure in service to continue without correction.

Significant frustration and dissonance is experienced by staff members when the caring response they expect from doctors does not occur, whether through reluctance to attend an emergency or failure to respond to a client inquiry promptly. Client frustration occurs regularly when seamless and accurate appointment scheduling is not delivered.

Scheduling mistakes, omissions and tardy arrival of doctors are common. Lack of effective communication in inquiring about, making and attending appointments is significant.

Financial Analysis

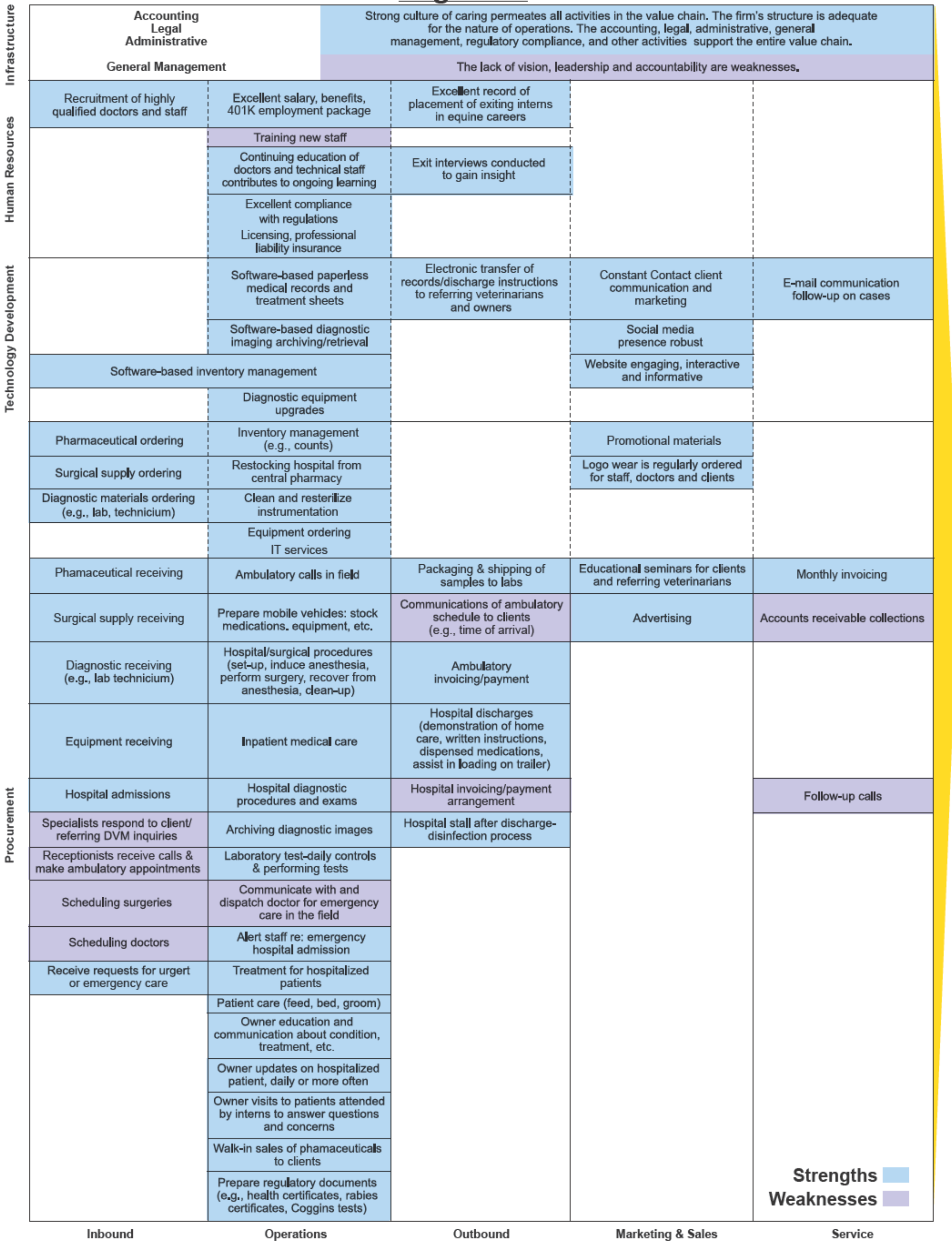
The financial analysis should examine the firm's health and competitiveness over a three- to-five year period. An assessment of revenue and profit trends is appropriate. Key performance indicators can be used to assess good management of accounts receivable (AR) and inventory. Average Days to Collection, average percent of revenue in AR, Inventory Turnover ratio, Days of Inventory on Hand and the Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) percentages are frequently used as benchmarks. Seeking assistance from your accountant might be prudent if you have only a rudimentary grasp of financial statements.

Our example practice, ABC Equine, has steadily increased profit as a percent of gross revenue for the last five years (*see Figure 2 on page 52*). This is a strong improvement of financial performance.

Resources, Capabilities and Core Competence

All businesses are composed of a series of tangible (e.g., equipment) and

Figure 1


Infrastructure
Accounting
Legal
Administrative
Strong culture of caring permeates all activities in the value chain. The firm's structure is adequate for the nature of operations. The accounting, legal, administrative, general management, regulatory compliance, and other activities support the entire value chain.
General Management
The lack of vision, leadership and accountability are weaknesses.
Human Resources
Recruitment of highly qualified doctors and staff
Excellent salary, benefits, 401K employment package
Excellent record of placement of exiting interns in equine careers
Training new staff
Continuing education of doctors and technical staff contributes to ongoing learning
Exit interviews conducted to gain insight
Excellent compliance with regulations
Licensing, professional liability insurance
Technology Development
Software-based paperless medical records and treatment sheets
Electronic transfer of records/discharge instructions to referring veterinarians and owners
Constant Contact client communication and marketing
E-mail communication follow-up on cases
Software-based diagnostic imaging archiving/retrieval
Social media presence robust
Software-based inventory management
Website engaging, interactive and informative
Diagnostic equipment upgrades
Pharmaceutical ordering
Inventory management (e.g., counts)
Promotional materials
Surgical supply ordering
Restocking hospital from central pharmacy
Logo wear is regularly ordered for staff, doctors and clients
Diagnostic materials ordering (e.g., lab, technicium)
Clean and resterilize instrumentation
Equipment ordering
IT services
Procurement
Phamaceutical receiving
Ambulatory calls in field
Packaging & shipping of samples to labs
Educational seminars for clients and referring veterinarians
Monthly invoicing
Surgical supply receiving
Prepare mobile vehicles: stock medications. equipment, etc.
Communications of ambulatory schedule to clients (e.g., time of arrival)
Advertising
Accounts receivable collections
Diagnostic receiving (e.g., lab technicium)
Hospital/surgical procedures (set-up, induce anesthesia, perform surgery, recover from anesthesia, clean-up)
Ambulatory invoicing/payment
Equipment receiving
Inpatient medical care
Hospital discharges (demonstration of home care, written instructions, dispensed medications, assist in loading on trailer)
Hospital admissions
Hospital diagnostic procedures and exams
Hospital invoicing/payment arrangement
Follow-up calls
Specialists respond to client/ referring DVM inquiries
Archiving diagnostic images
Hospital stall after discharge- disinfection process
Receptionists receive calls & make ambulatory appointments
Laboratory test-daily controls & performing tests
Scheduling surgeries
Communicate with and dispatch doctor for emergency care in the field
Scheduling doctors
Alert staff re: emergency hospital admission
Receive requests for urgert or emergency care
Treatment for hospitalized patients
Patient care (feed, bed, groom)
Owner education and communication about condition, treatment, etc.
Owner updates on hospitalized patient, daily or more often
Owner visits to patients attended by interns to answer questions and concerns
Walk-in sales of phamaceuticals to clients
Prepare regulatory documents (e.g., health certificates, rabies certificates, Coggins tests)
Strengths
Weaknesses
Inbound
Operations
Outbound
Marketing & Sales
Service

intangible (e.g., intellectual capital) resources. When a company combines these resources with technical skills and processes, various capabilities are created. Capabilities can then be reflected in the sets of activities that combine to form the services that are provided by the business.

Capabilities and activities both have the potential to foster core competencies. They can even fuel a competitive advantage if they have perceived value to the client, are relatively rare, are hard to duplicate and if substitutes are hard to find.

Activities have value when clients select a particular practice's service above a competitor's because they perceive that the benefit they receive outweighs the cost of purchasing it. Value must also exist for the firm in that it can command a price for its service that is greater than the cost of its creation. Both value perspectives need to exist if competitive advantage is to be achieved.

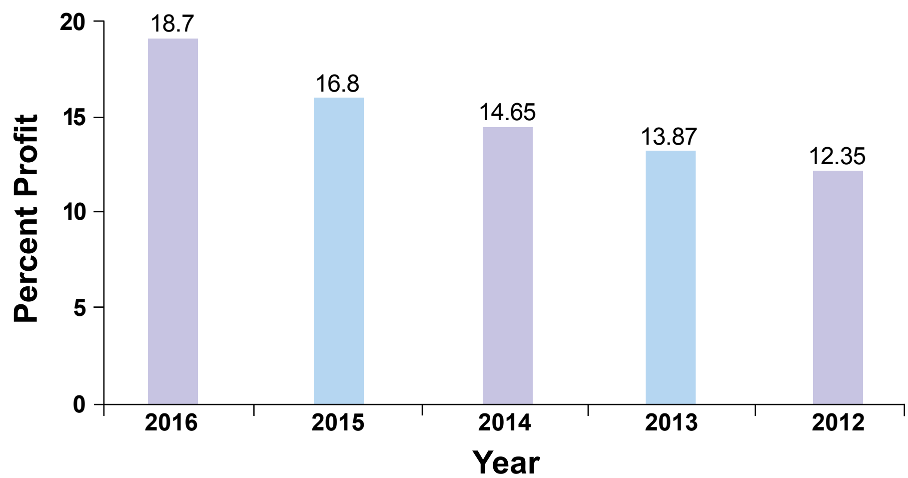
When there are few competitors who provide similar services in an area, then these activities gain value because of their rarity. Further, if the activities are difficult to copy or cannot be readily replaced with other services, then they can become a practice's core competency.

For example, if a board-certified ophthalmologist begins to practice in a region that has no other animal eye specialist, the services offered by that doctor would be highly valued, rare for the region, hard to duplicate in most instances, and substitutes would be hard to find. As a result, that veterinarian would have a strong competitive advantage in this core competency activity.

ABC Equine's Resources

The most important resource at ABC Equine is its intangible intellectual capital. The combined education and experience of two boarded specialists and two experienced generalists provide a deep pool of knowledge.

Figure 2: ABC Equine Yearly Profit %



The hospital facility is a tremendous resource, providing attractive, spacious and biosecure surroundings for the care of patients. A robust complement of diagnostic, medical and surgical equipment, as well as instrumentation, allows the veterinarians to perform at a high level and achieve excellent outcomes.

Highly integrated veterinary management software allows paperless recordkeeping, easily accessed treatment orders and automatic invoice production. An open-office structure promotes consultation, debate and the sharing of case details and imaging. While these resources contribute strongly to ABC Equine's success, they are imitable despite significant financial barriers for competitors, and as such, are not a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

ABC Equine's Capabilities

ABC Equine has broad professional capabilities in the areas of medicine, surgery, sports medicine, reproduction, dentistry and wellness. These skills are readily found in the marketplace of highly-trained veterinarians that are currently under-employed.

While the practice has recruited, selected and retained an excellent team, it would be foolish to assume that a group of similar individuals could not be assembled by a competitor.

ABC Equine's Core Competence

The core competence that could drive ABC Equine's success and sustainable competitive advantage is the level of care that the team brings to each part of the value chain, in particular the careful management of the client/patient experience.

This pervasive thread of caring acts as the practice DNA and is expressed throughout the value chain, despite weak leadership and the lack of an articulated vision.

Take-Home Message

After performing the internal analysis, it is wise to formulate a written statement or brief notes about your findings. The internal environment is a composite of activities and capabilities that provide the foundation for strategic positioning and competitive advantage. You should note the strengths and weaknesses of your practice and indicate the core competencies.

Understanding what the practice can do and the direction in which the market is moving can help you to create strategic positioning and sustainable advantage better—and perhaps faster—than your competitors.

The internal audit of ABC Equine revealed a number of strengths. These include a strong financial position and a well-diversified team of professionals that provide care to several broad segments of the equine industry, with a high level of skill and detail. Other strengths are a strong infrastructure that supports the activities of the firm and a core competence of caring that is very difficult to imitate.

Weaknesses lie in leadership, vision and communication. Additionally, accounts receivable collection is an area of underperformance. These weaknesses are significant in that they originate in the partners' group, have been present historically for the life of the practice, and might be difficult to eradicate.

The practice strengths are a foundation for sustained value creation for clients who desire high levels of technical expertise delivered with compassion and attention to detail. If weaknesses can be improved, the core competence of caring might prove to provide sustained competitive advantage.

As the great hockey player Wayne Gretzky described it, you need to skate to where the puck is going to be. It is not enough to know what the practice does really well and for whom. It is imperative to understand what your team can still do better and where your practice needs to evolve and why, as well as how competitors are addressing the same issues.

Once a business truly understands the source(s) of its competence and advantages, it must ensure that its structure is aligned in such a way as to strategically maximize capabilities. Human capital is best employed thinking and acting in those areas that are sources of sustainable advantage. EM

When your feet have a burning, numb, “pins-and-needles” sensation and the skin appears white, you have frostnip.

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Toasty Toes

Here are some ideas and products to keep your toes toasty and dry this winter.

By Lisa Munniksma

With all of the attention dedicated to keeping your patients healthy and comfortable year-around, a little care should be given to yourself. And what better place to start than with your own two feet? Hands and feet are usually the first body parts to get cold, so we are bringing you ideas to help keep your toes toasty in the coming winter weather.

“Because the feet are the farthest point from the heart and have small blood vessels, you can feel cold in your toes very quickly,” explained Cary Zinkin, DPM, a spokesperson for the American Podiatric Medical Association and a podiatry practice owner. This is why your feet require more care than you probably give them.

Your profession doesn’t allow you to stay indoors during cold weather, so you have some options, including finding the right footwear. Just as important as caring properly for your feet is recognizing when your feet have been exposed to the cold and wet for too long, and knowing what to do about it.

Ready-to-Go Gear

“Wet winter weather requires not only protection from the cold temperature, but also protection from the snow, slush and rain,” pointed out Zinkin.

As you sort out your bad weather footwear, there is no shortage of boots and socks to keep you warm, dry and comfortable.


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BOOTS

Before full winter weather hits, try on last year's boots. Tight-fitting footwear can restrict blood flow, which makes it harder for your feet to stay warm. On the other hand, if your feet move around in loose-fitting boots, you might find yourself with blisters or chafing. In your search for the latest and greatest winter footwear, here's a small selection of boots from within and outside the horse world:

(Left) Mountain Horse Rimfrost Rider III Boots

(Below, left to right) Heat Holders' men's regular and women's Long Socks

Ovation Cyclone All Season Tall Rider Boots: Ready for barn work or riding, the new Cyclone features a grippy rubber sole to help keep you upright in slick conditions, a 3M Thinsulate-lined footbed for warmth and a soft PU/Neoprene upper. Available in women's sizes from ovationriding.com.

Ovation Glacier Paddock Boots: New this year, the Glacier Paddock offers a grippy TR rubber sole and PVC all-weather upper to keep out the winter weather. Its 3M Thinsulate-lined footbed brings the warmth, and its swivel D-ring top eyelet allows for a supportive fit amidst layers of socks. Available in women's sizes from ovationriding.com.

Mountain Horse Rimfrost Rider III Boots: These waterproof tall boots are classics that have been updated to feature Extensia, a material tested to withstand one million flexes in 14 degree Fahrenheit weather without cracking. The boot's Thermolite lining keeps feet and legs warm. Available in men's and women's sizes from mountainhorseusa.com.

L.L.Bean Ridge Runner Rubber Boots: Don't let the camo print fool you—these lightweight, durable rubber boots are not just for hunting. The insulated Ridge Runner Rubber Boots are meant for all-day walking in cold and wet conditions, and they feature an anti-odor footbed treatment. Available in men's sizes from llbean.com.

Ariat Extreme Zip Paddock H20 Insulated Boots: These insulated boots feature many of Ariat's signature technologies—ATS Pro shank for comfort, Duratread outsole for traction and Thinsulate insulation—packaged inside a waterproof, full-grain leather upper and a moisture-wicking lining. Available in men's and women's sizes from ariat.com.

Dublin River Boots: You've seen these all-weather tall boots around for years. The River Boots are made of waterproof redskin leather and have a Tough Tech sole. Inside, the HBR waterproof and breathable membrane keeps feet and legs dry to just over six inches high. The moisture-wicking RCS footbed system has heel and arch support, as well as a double-cushioning layer for all-day comfort. The elastic top gusset and adjustable lace accommodate various calf widths. Available in women's sizes from dublinclothing.com.

Noble Outfitters MUDS Cold Front Women's High Boots: If you are looking for a waterproof boot that is warm and comfortable, Noble Outfitters offers this boot with 5.5mm insulating neoprene. An anti-microbial insole eliminates the odor often found with waterproof footwear. Find them in women's sizes on nobleoutfitters.com.

SOCKS

"Wearing layers of clothing is not only a good idea for your upper body, but your feet, as well. Wearing a moisture-wicking sock against your foot and a cotton sock on top of that will give you the extra protection to stay warm and keep moisture away," Zinkin said.

You might already have a favorite pair of socks, but as fabric technologies develop, your feet have even more options for staying warm and dry, including:

Wigwam Tall Boot Pro Socks: These are mid-weight boot socks made with Ultimax, which wicks away moisture. The sock is cushioned throughout the foot bottom, with breathable mesh along the leg. Designed for men and available at wigwam.com.

Wigwam Outlast Rubber Boot Socks: This sock gets its name from Outlast, the temperature-regulating fiber that keeps feet at an optimal temperate before, during and after activity. Cushioning throughout the sock provides protection from your boots and helps to insulate during cold weather. Designed for men and available at wigwam.com.

Heat Holders Worxx Socks: The Thermal Overall Grade rating—measuring the heat-retaining capacity of the fabric—of Heat Holders socks is 2.34, which is seven times warmer than cotton socks. The new Worxx socks are durable, with a reinforced heel and toe. Available in men's and women's sizes from heatholders.com.

Heat Holders Wellington Boot Socks: These socks are made from a specially developed, heavy-bulk yarn that has extreme thermal qualities and wears well under tall boots. Available in women's sizes from heatholders.com.

Heat Holders Long Socks: The Long Socks provide elasticized foot and ankle support with Heat Holders' thermal qualities. The insides of these socks have been intensively brushed for softness and to trap warm air close to the skin, keeping your feet warmer longer. Available in men's and women's sizes from heatholders.com.

In From the Cold

What you put on your feet before heading outdoors is one area of winter foot care. The treatment your feet and your footwear receive when you come back inside is an often-overlooked area. As someone who works with bacteria and fungus for a living, you know that these organisms thrive in the type of environment set up by your feet inside of your boots.

"A good foot care regimen for outdoor veterinarians starts with leaving their boots inside in a separate area so as not to track farm-related bacteria and fungus in the house," said Zinkin. "In my house, where both of my girls are horse riders and trainers, we have a shoe rack in the garage where we store the boots before entering the home.

"Also, all socks need to go directly in the washer, since farm organisms can and will enter the sock," Zinkin said.

During the summer, your feet probably see the light of day now and then, but during the winter, you're more likely to keep them bundled up and not allow them much time to air out. "There is nothing more effective than a good foot washing with regular soap and water to remove sweat, dirt, bacteria and anything else that can accumulate," Zinkin continued.

He added, "I would recommend keeping a change of socks in the truck for especially wet and dirty days. Also, keep a pack of skin wipes for cleansing."

Winter Foot Danger

You probably know all about frostbite, the most serious cold weather injury that occurs when body tissue actually freezes. In all but the most extreme cases, equine veterinarians working outdoors probably don't have to worry about frostbite. However, there are several other foot maladies that can occur when spending too much time outside without properly caring for your feet.

The stage before frostbite is a more common occurrence and is called "frostnip." When your feet have a burning, numb or "pins-and-needles" sensation and the skin appears white, you have frostnip.

"These symptoms indicate that the temperature of the skin is very low and is in danger of freezing," said Ric Allen, MD, FACEP, of Cayuga Medical Center. "Treat frostnip by going inside, removing restrictive clothing that cuts off circulation, and allowing your skin to regain heat naturally. As you rewarm, you will experience a tingling sensation, and your skin may look redder than usual for a while."

Perhaps more of an issue—particularly when your feet get wet and you don't take the time to change your boots and socks—is "immersion foot."

"People with immersion foot find that even after they have dried their feet, they remain clammy and pale and are very sensitive to the touch," Allen said.

Your feet are not frozen, but tissue damage can result. "The feet should be gradually and carefully rewarmed; do not vigorously rub them, as this can increase tissue damage," Allen warned.

An additional bit of advice from Allen in dealing with winter-foot injuries: "Avoid consuming alcohol until all of your symptoms are gone."

Take-Home Message

As wet conditions and winter weather approach, be mindful of the treatment you offer to your feet. The latest boots and most technologically advanced socks are nice, but even more than that, a little TLC goes a long way. EM

Relationship-Centered Client Interaction

Reduce stress by creating effective relationships with your clients.

By Colleen Best, DVM, PhD

We spend the vast majority of our days interacting with our clients. For this reason alone, it behooves us to devote energy to ensuring these relationships are rewarding.

If given a choice, I'd say we all prefer working with individuals who leave us feeling respected and appreciated. Building strong relationships with clients is protective against burnout, compassion fatigue and many of the smaller daily stresses and strains of practice.

In veterinary medicine, three different types of approaches to client relationships are discussed: veterinarian-centered, client-centered (or consumerist) and relationship-centered. These mirror human physician-patient relationships and other provider-recipient relationships.

Veterinarian-centered care is akin to paternalistic relationships, where the provider has the power in the relationship and the receiver (or client, in our case) has very little power. This type of relationship was common 50 years ago in medicine. The doctor was seen as all-knowing, and the patient had blind trust in him or her to provide care.

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As our society has changed, in part due to ease of information access, both client-centered and relationship-centered care have become more common.

Client-centered relationships are those in which the client has the majority of the power. Those situations can occur when clients are price shopping, or when they request/demand a certain procedure be done without full consultation with or support from the veterinarian.

Lastly is the relationship-centered model. This is the one being taught to veterinary and medical students alike, because it promotes shared power and shared responsibility. The veterinarian's role is to be the expert and to work with the client to determine the best course of treatment for the animal. The veterinarian makes recommendations, but ultimately, the client makes the decisions that he or she believes are best for the situation and his or her animal's health.

In two-way communication, the client feels that the vet listens to and respects him or her and uses easy-to-understand language.

A 2015 focus group study explored equine clients' expectations of veterinarians and equine veterinarians' perceptions of clients' expectations.[1] The results of this study support the paradigm shift seen in human and companion animal medicine from paternalistic care to a partnership model. The study included caretakers from all different types of equine industries—including racing, backyard and performance—and it was found that the commonalities between them far outnumbered the differences.

Clients placed a heavy emphasis on the quality of their relationships with their veterinarians.[1] I think this is intuitive for many equine veterinarians, and several veterinarians in this study who described their clients as friends back it up.

What makes the relationship good? Clients discussing this described the knowledge that their veterinarians have of them, their horses and their unique situations as a key piece.[1] Further, clients described this knowledge as impacting the care their horses received, because it contributed to the veterinarians' recommendations.

Clients also said that communication can be used to build and strengthen the relationship.

Another key piece was respect, meaning a willingness to take into account the other person in the interaction. Caretakers also noted how their relationships with their horses contributed to the care they wanted their horses to receive, and that it was important the veterinarian recognize that.[1]

Earlier focus group research in companion animal medicine regarding clients' expectations and veterinarians' perceptions of clients' expectations supports the work done in equine practice.[2,3] Clients' expectations included being provided choices, two-way communication and education. Each of these expectations is comprised of a number of smaller components.[3]

In two-way communication, the client feels that the veterinarian listens to and respects him or her, employs easy-to-understand language and provides proper care. The provision of choices pertains to diagnostic or treatment plans; clients wanted to be informed about the risks and benefits, the costs and the prognoses for the options presented.

Education relates to how veterinarians provide information to the client. One clear desire of clients was that the information relate to their pets specifically. By contrast, veterinarians stated they more often provided information about what was involved with services or what justified the cost of the services.[2,3]

Awareness of clients' expectations can arm us with the information we need to meet them. In turn, when clients' expectations are met, it sets a foundation for a strong working relationship and decreased conflict.

Client Adherence

Building on the client expectation research, a study investigated how client adherence to recommendations was influenced by veterinarian-client communication.[4] It was found that when veterinarians made clear recommendations (e.g., "I recommend that …") compared to ambiguous recommendations (e.g., "You could do one of the following three things"), clients were seven times more likely to follow the recommendations.[4]

Also, clients who adhered to the recommendation were more likely to be satisfied with their appointments. Further, the degree to which the appointments were relationship-centered was associated with client satisfaction.[4] This is backed up by a separate study that found that clients were more satisfied with visits that were classified as relationship-centered compared to veterinarian-centered.[3]

Communication Is Key

Recognizing the value of using a relationship-centered approach is the first step toward using it in everyday practice. It's important to recognize the difference between how we view ourselves and the way in which we communicate, and the way our clients experience it.

A 2006 companion animal study found that only 7% of appointments contained an empathy statement.[5] This is a very low value, particularly given the importance of demonstrating empathy in building relationships and supporting the client.

In my experience, veterinarians are very empathetic individuals; I believe there is a disconnect between intention and execution. Veterinarians are fixers by nature, and they often feel that the best way to help clients through difficult or anxious times is by telling them how it can be solved. This is a key component of the interaction. We share that there are options and how they can support the health of their pets.

First, we must realize that there is value in saying or doing something that demonstrates to the clients that we have heard their concerns, and we have heard what they are telling us. This is empathy—when we learn about the clients' experiences and we say or do something that indicates that we have an understanding of what those are.

To be effectively empathetic, we must first hear from the clients. For instance, if we arrive at a client's farm to deal with a colic, and the first thing we say is "I know it's stressful and scary," that is not likely to be an effective empathy statement. Instead, if we ask the client "How are you doing?", wait to hear the response and then say "I hear you; it's scary knowing they are in pain and not knowing how to help," we are more likely to have contributed positively to the client's well-being and the relationship between us.

Asking the Right Questions

Both the equine and companion animal research speak about the veterinarian knowing the client or asking the right questions. In some ways, this can sound a bit like a trick. How does one know what the "right" question is?

One way to determine which questions to ask is to use open-ended questions. When we use open-ended questions, we are casting a wide net, allowing clients to provide us with the information that they see as relevant and important. This is in contrast to closed-ended questions, which is more

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Do your clients have a genuine relationship with you, or are you a faceless service provider who hides his/her emotions?

like fishing with a rod and lure—if you don't choose the correct bait, you might not catch the kind of fish you wanted (or any fish at all).

Open-ended questions or inquiries require a thoughtful response and cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no." This much is familiar to many people. It can be difficult to transition from asking closed-ended to open-ended questions, and it can require practice. In general, think of using the words "what," "how," "tell me," "describe" and "explain." They are all good stems for open-ended questions or inquiry.

Body Language Counts

Lastly, the ways in which our body language and non-verbal cues impact all of our interactions are of critical importance. You've likely heard that non-verbal communication is important, and heard a statistic that it accounts for about 80% of the communication we are relaying or perceiving. What might come as a surprise is the difference in the types of messages that are conveyed verbally and non-verbally.

We send our conscious messages through verbal communication, while we send our unconscious messages through non-verbal communication. Further, if our verbal and non-verbal messages are inconsistent, it is our non-verbal messages that are perceived by the other. This is of great importance.

Many of us think that we cover our irritation well, and we might be able to control some of our non-verbal cues. However, it is unlikely that we can mask them all of the time, or that we are able to mask all of the non-verbal signs of irritation. It is for this reason that using the "correct" words when engaging with clients is not enough. We must also believe and strive to form strong relationships, validate our clients and understand their perspectives. If we don't, then our efforts are wasted, because our faces, bodies and voices will give us away. EM

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cosequinequine.com • 888-886-6442
Products: Cosequin, Cosequin Optimized with MSM, Cosequin ASU, Cosequin ASU Plus, Welactin Equine, Proviable-EQ
Profile: Nutramax Laboratories Veterinary Sciences, Inc., is the maker of COSEQUIN®, the #1 veterinarian-recommended brand of joint health supplements. The equine line also includes Proviable®-EQ for digestive health and Welactin® Equine (Omega-3 fish oil) for overall health and wellness.

▶Platinum Performance, Inc.
www.platinumperformance.com
Products: Platinum Performance Equine, Platinum Performance CJ, and many more
Profile: Platinum Performance, Inc. was founded in 1996 by Dr. Doug Herthel to provide therapeutic nutrition to horses under his care at the Alamo Pintado Equine Medical Center. Today, Platinum Performance, Inc., is the veterinarian's source for preventative nutrition. Platinum Performance provides veterinary practitioners with a wide variety of nutritional products to address equine wellness, performance and conditions. Visit us during the AAEP Convention at Booth 3035.

▶Shank's Veterinary Equipment, Inc.
www.shanksvet.com • 815-225-7700
Products: Shank's® Dorsal/Lateral Equine Table; Shank's® Floor Model Surgery Table; Shank's® Large Animal MRI Table; Shank's® Looped Hobbles; Shank's® Recovery Hood
Profile: Shank's Veterinary Equipment, Inc. was founded in 1957 on the principles of producing quality, versatile and affordable surgery tables for the large animal veterinarian. Over the years, the company has developed other tables, equipment and ancillary products that can be utilized for transportation, examination, surgery and necropsy of large animals.

▶Sound®
www.soundvet.com • 800-268-5354
Products: Digital radiography, ultrasound, CT, regenerative laser therapy
Profile: Sound®, the pioneer of veterinary DR and creator of NEXT Equine DR, is the exclusive provider of GE Ultrasound and Samsung portable CT systems for the US veterinary market. Sound also innovated Regenerative Laser Therapy, which has helped countless horses get back to work and into the winners circle.

AAEP Resources

▶Sox For Horses, Inc.
www.socksforhorses.com • 850-907-5724
Products: Bandage socks for equine
Profile: Silver Whinnys®, the proven bandage sock for equine, allows oxygen to benefit the tissue. Silver acts as an antimicrobial barrier, inhibiting bacteria from reaching the skin while wicking away exuding material from the wound surface. The double-layered construction protects against UV exposure and stops biting insects from reaching the skin.

▶SmartPak
www.SmartPak.com • 800-461-8898
Products: Supplements, tack, equipment and supplies
Profile: SmartPak is celebrating five years of ColiCare, their free colic surgery reimbursement program. ColiCare brings the veterinarian back to the center of the horse's care with annual wellness services. Visit the SmartPak booth to learn more about the program, as well as our line-up of gastric and hindgut supplements. AAEP Booth #6030

▶Standlee Premium Western Forage
www.standleeforage.com • 800-398-0819
Products: Standlee offers a complete line of forage varieties in a wide range of product formats, including pellets, cubes, chopped, bales, shreds, treats and bedding
Profile: Standlee Premium Western Forage® is a family-owned business located in Southern Idaho. The company offers a complete line of baled and bagged forage products, along with other fine products (beet pulp, straw and shavings). Quality is evident in their products and in the way they do business. After all, their family name is on every package, and has been for three generations.

▶Triple Crown Nutrition, Inc.
triplecrownfeed.com/compare
800-451-9916
Products: Horse feed, supplements and fibers
Profile: The secret to raising a successful horse begins with a superior feeding program. The Triple Crown program of feed, supplements and fibers focuses on three critical areas: revolutionary formulations, premium ingredients and our EquiMix® Technology. Feeding your horse Triple Crown feed will keep your horse healthy and in supreme condition. EM

Ad Index

AAEP booth #7106

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