

# LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

## **Leadership: Building Capacity of the Next Generation**

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### **Abstract**

This expanded proceedings manuscript presents a comprehensive framework for leadership development within veterinary medicine. The seven-session structure addresses elevating emerging leaders, sustaining joy in practice, aligning decision-making systems, building resilience, focusing on strategic priorities, strengthening implementation discipline, and enhancing the human–animal bond. Grounded in contemporary leadership literature (2010–2022), the manuscript integrates practical tools with academic framing to support long-term organizational health and economic sustainability.

## LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

### **Session 1: Leadership – Building the Capacity of the Next Generation I**

#### **Objectives:**

- Create a path for employees to grow.
- Build capacity at all levels to make good decisions.

Veterinary medicine is at a generational crossroads. Practices cannot rely solely on owner-driven leadership models. Distributed leadership increases adaptability and resilience (Wiseman, 2010; Hamel & Zanini, 2020).

Creating structured growth pathways begins with defining leadership competencies beyond clinical excellence. The Leadership Pipeline framework (Charan et al., 2011) emphasizes readiness for expanded responsibility.

Intellectual humility improves decision quality (Grant, 2021). Leaders must challenge assumptions and guard against cognitive bias (Kahneman, 2011).

Cascading leadership means embedding clarity of vision, financial literacy, and ethical guardrails throughout the organization.

Emerging leaders require stretch opportunities, mentorship, and feedback grounded in Radical Candor principles (Scott, 2017).

#### **Key Take-Aways:**

- Leadership competency frameworks.
- Delegation ladder for cascading authority.
- Identification of high-capacity leaders through stretch assignments.

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### **Session 2: Leadership II – Becoming a Multiplier of Talent**

#### **Objectives:**

- Create leadership training opportunities to develop managerial talent.
- Leverage emotional intelligence tools.
- Build self-confident leaders who create confident teams.

Multipliers expand intelligence rather than centralize control (Wiseman, 2010). In veterinary settings, leaders must resist over-functioning.

Emotional intelligence predicts leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 2013). Brown (2018) argues vulnerability strengthens trust.

Irvine (2019) reframes adversity as growth training. Stress becomes developmental rather than destructive.

Autonomy, mastery, and purpose drive intrinsic motivation (Pink, 2011). Leaders who delegate effectively cultivate downstream confidence.

Buckingham (2022) reinforces strength-based alignment for sustainable engagement.

#### **Key Take-Aways:**

- High-capacity delegation model.
- Emotional regulation checklist.
- Confidence-building feedback frameworks.

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### **Session 3: Creating a Collaborative Customer Service Culture in a Competitive Environment**

#### **Objectives:**

- Understand your circle of service.
- Create successful handoffs at every step.
- Create an internal brand of customer service.
- Proactively prevent angry clients.

Customer service is systemic, not episodic (Duhigg, 2016). Veterinary practices must design consistent service habits.

Deep listening builds trust (Murphy, 2020). Empathy precedes explanation.

Radical Candor principles (Scott, 2017) balance directness and compassion in difficult conversations.

Gladwell (2019) highlights how misinterpretation fuels conflict. Structured handoffs reduce interpretive error.

An internal brand of service strengthens cohesion and protects the human–animal bond.

#### **Key Take-Aways:**

- Circle-of-service mapping tool.
- Structured handoff communication scripts.
- Patient and client empathy checklist.

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### **Session 4: Designing the Future of Your Practice – Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Design Thinking**

#### **Objectives:**

- Learn and practice the tools of design thinking.
- Implement innovation tools in daily operations.

Hamel and Zanini (2020) warn against bureaucratic stagnation. Veterinary leaders must cultivate innovation cultures.

Grant (2016) describes original thinkers as those who question defaults.

Psychological safety fosters experimentation (Edmondson, 2018).

Cable (2018) connects meaningful work to neurological engagement and creativity.

Amabile and Kramer (2011) emphasize small wins as drivers of innovation momentum.

#### **Key Take-Aways:**

- How Might We reframing.
- Rapid prototyping exercises.
- Client journey mapping.

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## **Session 5: Management Operating Systems**

### **Objectives:**

- Build tools to achieve 5-year goals.
- Develop systems for lead and lag measures.
- Bring vision and cohesion to your group.
- Learn the identification–discuss–solve process.

Execution discipline determines strategic success (Covey & McChesney, 2012).

Lead indicators drive lag results; clarity reduces drift (McKeown, 2014).

Lencioni (2012) argues that organizational health underpins performance.

Structured issue identification prevents reactive firefighting.

Five-year planning creates shared direction and financial stability.

### **Key Take-Aways:**

- Five-year vision framework.
- Lead vs. lag measurement dashboard.
- Structured meeting cadence for issue resolution.

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### **Session 6: Implement, Execute, and Create Stickwithitness**

#### **Objectives:**

- Build sustaining processes for change.
- Create a culture of self-accountability.

Habits shape long-term execution (Duhigg, 2012). Implementation requires repetition and reinforcement.

Balanced leadership blends humility and decisiveness (Willink & Babin, 2018).

Positive reinforcement increases resilience (Achor, 2010).

Adaptability improves long-term sustainability (Grant, 2021).

Clear milestones and ownership prevent change fatigue.

#### **Key Take-Aways:**

- 90-day execution roadmap.
- Accountability scorecard.
- Personal commitment framework.

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## **Session 7: The Business of Veterinary Medicine**

### **Objectives:**

- Understand core financial tools.
- Turn lead indicators into increased EBITDA.

Financial literacy enhances confidence and sustainability. Collins and Hansen (2011) emphasize disciplined consistency.

Data interpretation must be fact-based rather than emotional (Rosling et al., 2018).

Lead indicators such as compliance and utilization drive lag outcomes such as EBITDA.

Pink (2022) reframes regret as constructive feedback, encouraging continuous financial learning.

Understanding the language of business empowers leaders to protect both profitability and compassion.

### **Key Take-Aways:**

- Financial dashboard basics.
- Lead vs. lag financial mapping.
- EBITDA leverage identification.



## LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

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## LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

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