



**State Road Animal Hospital
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A little over one year ago, I was at a crisis point in my veterinary practice. The stress of dealing with the myriad responsibilities that confronted me as the owner of a solo veterinary clinic had become overwhelming. I was working harder than ever, yet the practice was not making enough money to cover our expenses. The financial worries and long work hours were adversely affecting my health and my personal life. And I was becoming increasingly frustrated because due to my financial and time constraints, I was unable to serve in my community to the extent that I desired. It was becoming apparent that if I were to continue owning a veterinary practice, something had to change. That is when I made the decision to hire a consultant. After conducting a careful search to find a company whose philosophy of practice aligned with mine, I chose Silkin as my consulting firm. This has ended up being one of the best decisions I have ever made, and I wanted to share my experience with you.

Now, I will be the first to tell you that I never envisioned using a consultant for my practice. Like most veterinarians, I take pride in being independent and being able to solve my own problems. For a long time I felt that I knew best how to deal with issues in my practice. In fact, by all appearances, the practice was successful. We had a new facility and a healthy flow of clients. But below the surface, we were grappling with a growing number of issues that were occupying too much of my time and energy. As a result, my wife and I were seriously talking about selling the practice. But in spite of everything, I was not quite ready to walk away from the career that I loved. So we made the choice to invest in the Silkin program.

What first impressed me about the Silkin philosophy was their holistic approach to a practice. From my initial conversations with Silkin representatives, they seemed to understand that every area of the practice impacts the entire organization. That feeling was confirmed when I met with a Silkin analyst for about four hours to do a complete practice evaluation. They understood that in order for us to provide the highest possible level of care for our clients and patients, the practice as a whole had to be viable and healthy. This meant that every aspect of the practice had to be functioning well, with a high degree of teamwork and communication among staff. They designed a program that suited our specific needs and supported my vision for the practice.

As we worked with our Silkin consultant, I learned about delegating appropriate levels of responsibility to my staff so that I could focus on being the doctor and the owner. We got an organizational structure in place with training programs and a system for evaluating each individual on their job duties. We tackled internal staff issues that were creating a drag on the practice. We addressed some basic problems with our style of office communication and set up a new, but simple and very efficient internal communication system. All of these things have created a much more efficient practice and a lower stress environment at work. I have learned how to be proactive in maintaining control of my practice while fostering a positive attitude and respect for others. We work better as a team now than we ever have.

The Silkin program has allowed me to continue doing the job I love with better results than I had ever anticipated. Addressing and handling the efficiency and organizational issues in the practice has allowed me to provide a higher quality of medical care for a greater number of clients than ever before. As a result, I feel better about my practice and the degree of service we can provide to our clients and our community. In the process, we have been able to increase our production by 50 % over 16 months, so we now have the resources to give back to the community that supports us. We have been able to accomplish all of this in the face of a Michigan economy that is suffering, and we have done it without raising our prices!

I would highly recommend Silkin. I feel they can help any practice that wants to improve their level of service and expand their capabilities. If you are looking for help in your practice situation, please complete the enclosed form or contact Silkin directly to find out more about the practice evaluation they offer.

Sincerely,

Tom Armstrong, D.V.M.