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Several years ago I took a look at my overall experience practicing veterinary medicine and made an important distinction. I love being a vet and I find tremendous satisfaction in helping animals and providing valuable service for this community. But there's more to it than that. These days you also have to know how to run a business and, in that regard, I knew there had to be a better way to do things.

About that time, I was contacted by Silkin Management Group, a nationally recognized practice management company in Portland, Oregon. I had no idea what to expect, but I was intrigued by the idea of learning from someone who already had experience optimizing business practices. So I decided to take part in their free analysis.

As we moved through the process, certain words and ideas caught my attention. I had always focused on the medical side of things and never really viewed things with an eye for increasing the efficiency of our operation and using systems to unburden the management side of the practice. I came to see that as my practice grew, we hadn't followed through with basic administrative techniques. The result was increased stress and inefficiency, which made us quite vulnerable to decline. In fact, I could already see the signs of burnout taking hold. I knew it was time to take action to remedy our situation so I could keep the practice moving forward. I started the Silkin program and now I consider it to be the best business decision I ever made.

Right away we started looking at areas of the practice that needed more control. I had boiled my own assessment down to, "We need help managing staff!" and that was true, but at the time I didn't realize that was simply a symptom of a more basic problem. Once we identified the source of the problem, Silkin showed us simple, effective steps to take to address the structure and systems involved with staff management. From that point forward everything started to turn around. I knew it was working when I was actually able to take a real vacation for the first time in many years. I was thrilled upon my return to find that, in my absence, the practice ran very smoothly because we had truly standardized the operation and it could function without constant oversight and correction.

Over time, using the Silkin system, we addressed our hiring and training methods, improved staff retention, increased office morale and brought uniformity to our entire approach. As we learned to work smarter we stabilized our productivity (previously prone to erratic performance) at a high level despite current economic challenges.

Before I used the Silkin program, I couldn't imagine another 15 years of just doing things the same old way. I wouldn't have survived it! Today I look forward to every new opportunity to continue and expand in the best interest of our patients and clients. That's a whole new outlook and it makes practicing fun and rewarding.

Now I tell others what it took me too long to realize. These days, it's more important than ever to have sound management practices in place to achieve success in the veterinary profession. With Silkin's help I found that much easier to do than I ever imagined.

I highly recommend you find out more about the free practice evaluation Silkin offers. It's a worthwhile way to find the fun in practicing again and I think every doctor out there deserves that.

Sincerely,

Ed Peretti, D.V.M.