



Modern Technology in Progressive Veterinary Practices

Although many veterinarians eventually learn to be business savvy, most of us spend so much time on our medical training that business skills are placed low on a list of priorities. The reality is business skills are probably more important in our profession, where profit margins are not high, student debt is, and the cost of modern technology can make or break a practice's bottom line. Medical technology is changing at light speed rates and veterinary practices must evolve to meet the growing demands of the profession.

The most important and costly tool we have is our brain power, which, of course, is a prerequisite to our jobs. Compassion and caring for those that cannot communicate with us is a given. Beyond that, other tools are becoming essential in a progressive modern vet practice. Gone are the romantic days of James Harriet where a stethoscope, x-ray machine, and supporting laboratory are all a veterinarian needs to practice. Today the potential equipment list is mind boggling; digital radiography, ultrasound, in house labs, surgical lasers, therapeutic lasers, stem cell treatments, MRI's, anesthetic monitoring equipment, bone plates, dental radiographs, physical therapy pools, and so on. These are not just "toys" for a vet; they improve successful diagnosis and treatment which an educated clientele demands.



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Digital radiography provides far superior detail over standard x-ray, is better for the environment because no toxic developing chemicals are needed and uses less technician time. With a digital image and the internet we can communicate and collaborate with radiologists with a click of the mouse. Ultrasound technology has progressed to where it is the mainstay in soft tissue diagnostic capability in most progressive practices. Anesthetic monitoring equipment makes anesthesia safer than a decade ago, saving lives and allowing us to minimize risk to our patients. Blood pressure monitoring is as essential in veterinary practice as it is in human medicine.

Telemedicine has developed to where clinicians can collect cardiac information, transmit to a remote location and work with a cardiologist for an immediate specialized diagnosis. Improved dental imaging and care are decreasing the systemic diseases associated with poor dental health. The speed and

efficiency of in house blood tests is allowing faster diagnosis and more appropriate care to be immediately started for a sick pet. Stem cells can now be surgically harvested from a pet, processed and concentrated then re-injected to aid in treating certain diseases and healing injuries. Physical therapy has gone from almost nonexistent to an important modality in recovery from injury and surgery. Pet owners expect to receive the quality of care provided by these technologies. Veterinarians in general practice that are not updating to these standards soon find themselves losing clients to the practices that provide these services.

While providing all of these technologies is expensive, the bottom line is that they provide much better care for the family pet. Grow and improve are business axioms that have become increasingly important in veterinary medicine. Practices that educate their clients on the advantages of these tools then see an increased return on investment from capital equipment. In our highly competitive market keeping up with recent technological advances increases the value of medicine and allows your veterinarian to be the family doctor for your feathered and furry family members.



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