

10 THINGS **GREAT** LEADERS DO CONSISTENTLY IN THEIR **VETERINARY PRACTICE**

By Randy Hall



INTRODUCTION

WHEN YOU LEAD, PEOPLE NOTICE

Not long ago I had an opportunity to speak with veterinary professionals from across the country at a conference. At this event several attendees were recognized for various achievements. One individual, it seemed, hardly had time to sit down before she was called back up to be recognized again.

Her name was Jenifer. I only met her on the bus ride from the airport, but even from this limited interaction I wasn't a bit surprised by the recognition she received. Her leadership skills were clearly evident.

Everything about Jen - the way she carried herself, her energy level, her interaction with others, her desire to help - demonstrated that she was a leader. At the dinner she listened intently to conversation, made everyone around her feel important, and participated without dominating the discussion. You could tell Jen understood that leadership is not about the leader; it's about everyone else.

Interestingly, Jen is not the practice owner or lead veterinarian. Her role within the practice wouldn't be considered at the "top," in the hierarchical sense. And yet, you could see people consistently seeking her out and asking questions to learn more about how she was building and sustaining a thriving veterinary practice. She always shared, and always did it with a smile and a sense that it was a conversation she could learn from too.

Jen was a reminder to me that leadership isn't about position; it's about mindset. It's not about being in charge; it's about making a difference. It's not about telling; it's about sharing. And it's not about having authority; it's about adding value.

My bet is that anyone could watch a group of people interact for a while and identify the leaders in the room without knowing anything about the team. These people stand out. They constantly consider how to add value for others, rather than acting to benefit themselves.

Try identifying the leaders next time you are around a team of people. Then ask yourself, would I be picked out as a leader if someone was watching me?

 Randy Hall

10 THINGS

LEADERS DO CONSISTENTLY IN THEIR PRACTICE

1

Ask good questions

The more I work with great leaders the more I understand that their goal is not to give people information, but to make them think. We as humans, can't unsee, unlearn or unthink, and so just by using questions that cause thought, we are able to expand people's minds and therefore change their future.

2

Plan to show up at their best

Many of the great leaders I work with have a routine and pattern in the morning that helps them show up at their best for their team and their business. They purposely and consciously prepare to lead, rather than showing up and just hoping they can.

3

Build habits as much as skills

We absolutely need to develop our skills in order to be effective as a leader. But most of the skills we think about, such as coaching, leading change, creating engagement, sourcing and developing talent, also require that we simply do some key things consistently. Anyone can be a great coach, but the great ones build habits that allow them to consistently be the person that can help others improve, grow, and succeed.



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4

Focus on both leadership and management, but they know the difference

Great leaders do not try to manage people. What normally happens when we think about people as things we need to manage, is that we end up telling them what to do, using incentives or consequences to motivate, and essentially wishing they were different. That's far different from leadership designed to support, develop and coach in ways that help people become their best.

5

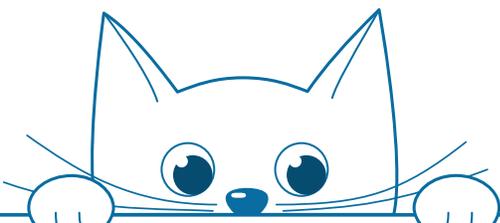
They learn about their team's goals

Great leaders know that you don't give goals to people, you discover the goals they have. They approach people with a desire to understand them, learn about them, and find a way to effectively support them in the pursuit of those goals. They know that people moving toward their own goals are more engaged, more productive, and more successful.

6

They understand that accountability is not something you do to someone

So often we hear the phrase "hold someone accountable." But what that really means is that we issue consequences after they have done something wrong. Great leaders follow a process that helps their team think and act with accountability consistently, rather than just waiting until they don't and then punishing them for it.



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7

They know the difference between authority and leadership

Authority is simply the ability to make organizational changes. It might be compensation, or promotions, or shifts in work or responsibilities, or even employment. That's not related to leadership in any way. A title can give you authority but it does not make you a leader. Leaders cause people to think and work differently because of the way they interact with them, not because of the changes they make to the organization around them.

8

They continuously learn

You never stop becoming a better leader, exploring new ideas, new questions, new approaches to human behavior change or to creating a fully engaged team. Leadership is not a destination, it's a continuous improvement journey that allows you to have more impact on an ever-growing group of people, who become better than they would have been without your support.

9

They think longer term

There are so many times when we have to sprint in our practice. The end of the month, the end of the quarter or the end of the year, all present deadlines and measurement intervals where we rate performance and determine our worth. But the amazing leaders I have been around consistently think longer term. They focus more on progress and improvement than perfection, and they are willing to invest in potential in ways that cause it to emerge and produce amazing results over time.

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They view mistakes as opportunities

They know that humans learn by what they do next after a mistake is made. While repetition of the same mistakes over longer periods is rarely good, they know that anyone stretching, growing, trying new things or building new skills, will screw up more than they will be correct at first. They embrace those missteps as opportunities for improvement and a chance to create a new and better path forward, and they treat them as moments along the path to success, not as failures.

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