

Book Review

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VBJ editor PAUL IMRIE on a brand-new book for those interested in mastering the crucial business skills that are the real success drivers of the profession – and career progression

WITH DECADES OF acquired business knowledge behind them, no recent books on the subject, and the profession facing difficult economic conditions, Philippe Moreau and Richard C Nap's decision to launch a book delving into the science of practice management could not have come at a better time.

Essentials of Veterinary Practice: An Introduction to the Science of Practice Management is very much a product of today's profession – veterinary practice is now a mixture of services to clients, and of people and pet relationships. That's what clients now expect, and this brandnew book delivers clear and cogent advice to help all members of the practice team to meet this demand.

Throughout, the emphasis is on people – both the clients and the practice staff – and the recognition that a practice can only be successful if it can deliver high-quality clinical care, in an efficient working structure. However, compassion for both the pets and all the people involved is a vital facet. If that sounds like a tall order, this book offers a step-by-step approach to help the reader build a lasting business founded on a modern understanding of what is required.

According to Certificate in Veterinary Practice Management holder and Vets4Pets practice partner Tracy Mayne: "Topics covering areas of practice management are often difficult to read as they are not 'sexy', and veterinary professionals generally love a good book about orthopaedics or wound management. A book with the word 'management' in the title, however, can often leave them cold. I can assure you there is nothing 'cold' about this book. The authors are extremely skilled in

breaking down their areas of expertise for us all to enjoy and understand.

“The subject matter is engaging and educational; the book is truly an essential guide for any veterinary practice wanting to stay ahead.”

Nor is *Essentials of Veterinary Practice* afraid to confront thorny topics; in the earliest pages, we encounter the recognition that clients need to feel good about the level of healthcare they receive and that they are looking for the “optimal healthcare experience” – a basic tenet of consumer theory.

While many may shy away from the terminology of retailing, it is, however, a real opportunity in the UK – and some practices do it better than others. To help you adopt the necessary skills to develop and maximise the opportunity, an entire chapter is devoted to depicting how the practice can embrace and fully exploit retailing.

The authors write: “It is important to remember that companion animal medicine is part of a consumer industry where the sentimental aspects of ownership (human/pet bond) play an important role, automatically defining the veterinary surgery as a high-quality health centre for pets.” This aptly sums up the opportunity available for any practice if it chooses to grasp the nettle – and the significant value in the book is its ability to help the team to do so.

Essentials of Veterinary Practice offers you clearly structured help in getting to grips with the realities of delivering excellent service in the real world – whether looking at how customer service can be delivered to meet and exceed the expectations of a rapidly changing client base, understanding the difference between features and benefits, building relationships with clients and within the team, the basics of communication and the vital importance of understanding how to get the message across, or simply how to work more efficiently as a team and to charge effectively.

For veterinarians, veterinary students and all other practice staff, *Essentials of Veterinary Practice* is an excellent place to start.

• *ESSENTIALS OF VETERINARY PRACTICE* is available for £33.70 (including postage and packing) by telephoning Jackie Prentice on 01733 383538, emailing jacquelineprentice@vetsonline.com or online at www.vbd.co.uk/evp/orders.pdf



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