

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS AS A LEADER

In Your Veterinary Practice



MOVING INTO A NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE (OR TAKING AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESET)

If we are interested in moving into a new leadership role or have recently been promoted, it's likely due at least in part to the great work we've done previously. After all, we've shown we know how to do the job, so it's natural for us to think we know the way to success.

But, this can be a dangerous place to be, because we may have the idea that people on our new team can be successful if they just do what we did, or worse, just what we tell them to do. When this happens, we find ourselves trying to transfer our skills to others by giving them instructions. That rarely works well and can cause a team to disengage.

Instead of telling our team what to do to be successful, we will get better, more sustainable results by:

- Building a strong foundation
- Focusing on how we want to lead well
- Helping team members create their own success

As we think about laying a groundwork, it's important to slow down, define success, listen, and learn as we familiarize ourselves with the new opportunity.



SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Step 1

SLOW DOWN

It's easy to feel like now that we are in charge we have to change things right now. We don't have to become a great leader by next Wednesday.

Instead, we want to plant the flag of where we'll measure success a little further out, 3 or maybe even 6 months.

Remember, along the way we want to build a strong culture and team.

Why this Matters

If we speed out of the gate it's unlikely we'll build our team in a sustainable way. Instead, we'll feel rushed and start to exert our will on others. And if we're headed in the wrong direction, then speed is not our friend; we just go down the wrong path faster.

Step 2

DEFINE SUCCESS

As we begin to think about what success looks like for us and our team, it can be helpful to think about these questions:

- » What does success look like in 3 months?
- » What kind of leader do I want to be?
- » How can change happen in a positive way?
- » How will people describe me?

Noteworthy

As we learn and understand more about our team, the timeframe and the definition of success we have may shift. We may learn things can happen sooner, and other things may need more time than we originally thought.

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Step 3

LISTEN

Listening builds trust, which happens when people understand we have their best interest at heart. It's dependent upon asking good questions and listening to the answers. Consider these:

- What are your goals for this role and how would you describe your best work?
- What do you want to learn more about or become more confident with?
- What do you want your day to feel like here and what kind of team do you want to help contribute to and be part of?

Remember

Leaders can shift all these things. As we assess where we are now we can better understand our definition of success and our timeline.

Step 4

LEARN

Consider these 2 things we need to learn about as leaders:

Coaching

Almost everything we do as a leader is around coaching. If we can't interact with people in a way that causes them to get better and improve performance, then we're in trouble. So, we need to become students of coaching.

Building Habits

Our new role consists of a whole new set of parameters, skills, and expectations. So we need to practice and build new habits. These help us do the stuff we want to do well tomorrow.

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As we define success:



Ask your boss or stakeholders

We may have a boss, stakeholders, or others that depend on our success as a leader. It's important to get their picture of your success as well and get aligned with them.

Look for clarity

Discussing others' definition of success for our role is another opportunity to ask good, specific questions, like:

- What does my success look like to you in this role?
- How will you measure my progress and success as I do this work?
- How often should we meet and how can we use that time to get aligned on priorities and progress?
- What things do you want to be involved in and what things should I just inform you about?

When we can align our definition of success with that of our boss or stakeholders, we are less likely to head in the wrong direction. And, it will cause them to carefully consider these things too.

Don't just assume the boss wants something. Instead, cause that picture to become clear. Even if you are the practice owner, or are starting your own practice, you can bring in others for this discussion.

As you do these things your path to success will start to become clear and within reach.

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