**Creating the Ultimate Client Experience**

Do you ever wonder what clients think when they enter your practice? This may seem like a strange question, but a client’s perception of their veterinary experience can go a long ways in the growth and production of your hospital. Here is a step by step guideline that will allow you to evaluate how your clients view your hospital.

**The Waiting Room and Reception:**

To start with it goes without saying a smile is worth its weight in gold. Does your receptionist greet each and every client with a hello and a smile? It would surprise you that many times this is not the case. Unfortunately, if this is the first contact the client has with your office and they will make their initial impression off of this interaction. Along with how your client is greeted, you should also take a moment to look over your waiting room and assess how it looks and speaks to the client. Is it clean? This will be the first thing a client will notice. Make sure there is no urine or feces on the floor. Also, be cognoscente of any hair or dirt in corners, on seating areas or on tables/counters. If this is the case the client is going to assume that the back end of your hospital is as dirty as the front. This creates an assumption by the client that not only is your facility not kept up, but also creates a feeling of substandard medicine.

Moving back to the receptionist, be sure that the individual is well informed and well prepared. They should know the mission and vision of your hospital and be able to convey that message to your clients. Your receptionist should also be engaged with your clientele. What I mean by this is not just a hello and we will have you in the room shortly, but rather a,” Hello Mr. Smith, I see you are here with Flufly for her annual DHPP, Rabies and heartworm test. Is there anything else we can do for you today?” Along with the ability to engage the client, your receptionist should also be able to answer simple questions and give basic recommendations to your clients. If you have a real superstar receptionist, they will be able to recognize and greet your clients and patients by name as they walk through the door. This above anything else will create a sense of bonding for your client and your hospital.

**What Happens in Your Exam Rooms?**

Continuing with giving your client the ultimate veterinary experience is how the patient and client are treated in the exam room. First thing to remember is that time is money. Clients do not mind spending the time in the exam room as long as they feel they are getting a bang for their buck. They best way to give your client value to this part of the experience is to have a well-trained rooming technician. This individual should not only be personable, but also be able to articulately provide information to the client as well as perform the basics of the checking in process of the examination.

The hardest part of finding the proper individual for this task explaining to them that rooming is one of the most important parts of veterinary medicine. You may ask yourself why I made that statement. Most of us get into veterinary medicine to interact with the animals, have hands on in treatment and assist in surgery (if you are a technician). We end up with a view of the rooming tech as a step down and not what we really want to be doing throughout the day. What most of us do not realize is that most of our daily production is produced in this 10 x 12 room.

So what makes a good rooming technician? This biggest criteria is to have a technician that is not only personable, but also understand all aspects of veterinary medicine from assessing why the patient is at the hospital to making recommendations in regards to prevention. This requires your technician to do more than run in quick and get a TPR. Instead, they need to take a few moments to talk with the client and discuss what is going on with the patient. This will accomplish two goals. First off it lets the client know that you are interested in why the patient is in the office today, but it also allows you to provide the veterinarian with a more complete history of the reason of the patients visit. Lastly, the more knowledgeable your technician is, the more comfortable your client will be with the quality of medicine you provide.

**Enter the Veterinarian:**

This may sound funny, but we all have certain expectations when the veterinarian enters the room. The basics are well groomed, well-educated, well prepared and professional individual. Sounds simple right? You would be surprised how many times this is not the case. There has been more than one case when I have seen a disheveled veterinarian enter the room.

So what expectations are there when the veterinarian enters the room? Appearance is a key. Make sure that your hair is maintained, your appearance is clean and believe it or not clients appreciate a doctor who comes in the room with a white doctor’s coat. This simple task allows the client to differentiate the veterinarian from the rest of the staff. Along with your appearance is being prepared for the examination. This involves knowing the clients and the patients’ name, knowing why the patient is in the exam room and properly greeting both. Remember, clients come to you for your professionalism and expertise.

Last but most important is not only performing the exam, but also being able to explain what you are doing and your findings in a manner your client can understand. This is probably one of the hardest things to do. You want to make sure that you talk with the client in a way they understand, but not to talk above them or down to them. The biggest key is to make sure the client understand what is going on and feels that they are getting the best medicine money can buy.

**The Perfect Exam:**

Below you will find a perfect scenario for a veterinary visit:

Mr. Smith enters your hospital with his dog Fluffy. He notices a well maintained waiting room with little or no odor around.

Receptionist: Good afternoon Mr. Smith (with a smile), I see you have Fluffy hear for her examination, DHPP, Rabies and heartworm test. I noticed that you also are due for a refill on your flea prevention and heartworm medication, can I have that ready for you when it is time to check out.

Mr. Smith: that will be great. Thank You.

Technician: Hello Mr. Smith, would you bringing Fluffy over to the scale so we may obtain an accurate weight today?

Mr. Smith: Sure (brings Fluffy over to the scale)

Technician: I see Fluffy weighs 42 pounds today. Can you please follow me into examination room 1? (Mr. Smith brings fluffy into room 1 and places her on the table.) I notice you are here for your yearly examination, DHPP, Rabies and heartworm test is that correct?

Mr. Smith: Yes, also Fluffy has been scratching a little, can I have the doctor look at that while we are here?

Technician: That is not a problem (answers while taking TPR). Is Fluffy current on her flea prevention (check skin to see if there are any fleas or flea debris).

Mr. Smith: I try and stay current but may have missed a month or two.

Technician: Not a problem I am not seeing any sign of fleas, but there may be other issues causing the itching you may wish to discuss that with the doctor. (Meantime the technician should check the teeth, nails and ears and make suitable recommendations in regards to dental disease of if the feel other areas need to be checked out.) Ok Mr. Smith, I have notated all finding and concerns in your chart and the doctor will be with you shortly.

Mr. Smith: Thank You

Doctor Bob: (enters the room) Good Afternoon Mr. Smith how are you today?

Mr. Smith: I am doing fine, how are you?

Doctor Bob: I am good, I see Fluffy is here for her yearly examination and vaccinations and you have a concern about her skin.

Mr. Smith: Yes that is correct.

Doctor Bob: (performing his exam) I see some irritation of the skin that can be from allergies, let me send home some shampoo and fatty acids with you. These should help relieve the itching and inflammation. Everything else on Fluffy looks great so let’s vaccinate her and get her on her way.

Mr. Smith: that would be great, thank you for addressing all of Fluffy’s issues today.

Mr. Smith and Fluffy leave the exam room and head up front.

Receptionist: I hope all went well with Fluffy’s examination today. I have your flea prevention, heartworm prevention and medications Dr. Bob wanted you to use to address the skin irritation. Also we are happy to let you know the heartworm test was negative today. Is there anything else we can do for you today?

Mr. Smith: That will do it for today, thank you for a wonderful encounter for Fluffy as well as me.