As we enter the fourth quarter of 2013 and finalize plans for the upcoming year, the editorial team at *Today’s Veterinary Practice* has decided to steer the focus of our *Practice Building* column in an important and valuable direction.

We believe the premise of “read it today, use it tomorrow” is what truly sets us apart from other journals, and this philosophy is the inspiration for our new Practice Building series: *Building Today’s Veterinary Practice*.

Beginning in our next issue (November/December 2013), our Practice Building articles will tackle the relevant issues facing practices and their teams as they strive to continue growing their businesses—and bring these issues to life through real world examples.

Throughout 2014, each article will focus on a different practice development component related to creating a healthy, vibrant practice. Following are several of the topics this series will address.

**INVESTING IN YOUR PRACTICE**
Whether you are an existing practice deciding between expanding current space and investing in a new building, or a new practice starting from scratch, this series will:
- Analyze the universal factors involved in these important and critical decisions
- Introduce resources and services that aid today’s veterinary practice teams, especially owners and managers
- Describe techniques for making the most out of these growth decisions.

**PRACTICE LENDING & CAPITAL INVESTMENTS**
Do the words “investing” and “deductions” make you want to run in the other direction? No need to worry as this series will:
- Explore the many options available for securing capital for expansion, equipment purchase, and practice acquisition
- Analyze the many forms of capital leases and “free equipment” programs
- Introduce the concept of return on investment as it relates to your practice.

**PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
Technology is changing day to day and choosing from all the technology available to find the best fit for your practice can feel overwhelming. This series will:
- Evaluate the numerous options available on the market today
- Navigate through the process of picking the right system for your practice
- Research the many IT support systems that enhance practice operations and data management.
ADDITION THE NEXT LEVEL OF SERVICES
Building your practice by driving client growth is linked to offering the best patient care and, for proactive owners and managers, making a visit to the clinic a one-stop shopping experience. This series will research:
• The latest technical equipment, including digital radiology, advanced dental imaging, ultrasound, endoscopy, and other clinical diagnostic tools
• Specialty medical services, such as behavior consults, rehabilitation assistance, emergency care, and nutrition/weight-loss programs
• Alternative channels for product sales including online pharmacy and retail storefronts.

MARKETING & CLIENT DEMAND
You know you need to market your practice, but despite the wealth of information available, you are still not sure where to start. This series will provide updates on the latest, and most effective, digital marketing tools on the market, including:
• Website designers and providers
• Social media tools
• Online lead generation programs
• Proactive customer feedback tools.

EFFECTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
The “heart” of any practice is its veterinary team, and this series will explore the many options available for:
• Implementing effective management policies
• Managing payroll and overhead expenses
• Understanding benefits and the many providers, including internal programs and outsourced solutions.

REAL-LIFE CASE STUDY
In veterinary school, we were all trained in the theory of medicine, but the actual learning began when we could put those practices to work in a real world setting. The case study has become the standard for medical education and, this upcoming year, this new series will also share a practice building case study that is close to this author’s heart.

In September, my wife and I opened a new practice outside of Philadelphia. As part of the Building Today’s Veterinary Practice series, we will share the numerous decisions and challenges we faced in converting an 1840s farmhouse into a state-of-the-art veterinary hospital—from securing funding, purchasing equipment, building a practice management and IT platform, making staff hiring decisions, and marketing a new practice.

My hope is that you will see through our eyes the real world application of many of the principles that will be outlined in this series, as well as the mistakes and failures. We invite you to join us in tackling the journey we all face in building “Today’s Veterinary Practice.”

Do you have questions or comments about practice development that you would like to see addressed in the new Building Today’s Veterinary Practice series? Please share them with Dr. Meredith at tmeredith@todaysveterinarypractice.com.

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