



**LEADERSHIP/ LEADER:** Definition – One that leads or guides, one who has influence or power, capacity or ability to lead, guidance, direction (The American Heritage dictionary 4th edition).

**PARTNER DISCUSSIONS:** During one of our recent owner meetings we were discussing a perceived disconnect of what we as owners thought were the vision and direction we wanted our veterinary practices to head. The areas of concern were organization, client service and staff training—what we wanted and what was happening did not seem to be in sync. On reflection we came to the conclusion that we were too manager driven rather than doctor/owner driven. We gave our managers goals and expected them to send methods and information downstream to other employees and also upstream to doctors and owners. We need to concentrate on **leadership** in action and the mentoring of **leadership**. A key to leadership is the ability to delegate but this should not relieve the leader from their duty of oversight and guidance!

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Eighteen of my partners recently were treated to an appearance by Dr. Dan Parkinson of Durango, Colorado courtesy of Pfizer's Practice of Excellence Program. Dr. Parkinson began as a mobile practitioner, then to a more normal stand-alone practice and a few years ago made a commitment to a higher-quality practice with an emphasis on dentistry and general practice. Although he has sold the practice to a corporate entity which makes his long-term objectives different than ours, his view of leadership impressed us all. He believes in the team approach, effective regular communication and **leadership**. The doctors or owners of the practice need to be positive, giving feedback and guidance to everyone on staff. He quoted Jack Welch, CEO for GE—**Leadership**—“People with a passion and a desire to get things done.”

**HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND:** I am sure we all have various philanthropic organizations to which we give time and monetary support. One organization that my wife and I have supported is Gabriel's Angels. Their mission is to deliver healing pet therapy to abused, neglected and at risk children, nurturing their ability to love and trust, thereby freeing them from the cycle of violence. There are various forms of support available including volunteering or monetary support. One way that monetary gifts are used is to support the training of volunteer therapy teams, which include a human and dog components. At the level we supported, two therapy teams were sponsored. For each team we received a lovely plaque suitable for an office, exam room or reception area. One therapy team was Pam Reinke and Bennie, a toy poodle, who came to visit our office to thank us and deliver our plaque. The other team was Sue Sweney with Dobermans Athena and Thor. Other veterinarians have also supported this wonderful organization. Gabriel's Angels would very much appreciate your support if you were looking for a way to contribute in the human-animal bond arena. Its web site is [www.gabrielsangels.org](http://www.gabrielsangels.org).

**LEADERSHIP:** Definition – The quality of those who take charge or show the way. (A Students Dictionary 11th edition).

**A CHANCE TO LEARN:** Recently eight of my long-term partners had the opportunity to sit down with five principals of one of the national corporate veterinary companies. Since we each compete in the Phoenix market, we wanted to see what we could learn from each other. It was an interesting and rewarding couple of hours. Their belief in their “Branding” of their practices was very important to them. A fundamental dif-

ference though is our belief in veterinarians owning practices as opposed to the corporate ownership. But what both groups decided was that our successes and failures were directly related to the level of **leadership** exhibited by various personnel. All veterinary practices should concentrate on the hiring and mentoring of **leaders**.

**LEADERSHIP READING:** *The Gifted Boss* by Dale Dauten; *Good To Great* by James Collins; *Nuts!* By Kevin and Jackie Freiberg; *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson and Kenneth Blanchard; *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff at Work* by Richard Carlson.

**LESSONS FROM A DOG:** Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride. • When loved ones come home, always run to greet them. • When it's in your best interest, always practice obedience. • Enjoy it when someone wants to rub your tummy. • Run, romp and play daily. • Be Loyal. • If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it. • When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently. • Avoid biting when a simple growl will do. • When you are happy, dance around and wag your entire body. (from *Fish Fables* by Valley Advertising, Whitefish, Montana)

**LEADERSHIP:** Definition – authority, control, administration, effectiveness, superiority, supremacy, skill, initiative, foresight, energy, capacity, influence (Webster's New Thesaurus 3rd edition).

**WHO SURROUNDS YOU?** I am blessed by many leaders in my life. My wife, Julie, leads our maturing family. We have fine examples of leaders in the AzVMA. At my office and in our practices I want to thank the many leaders who are responsible for our success. These leaders include office staffers, receptionists, technical staff, doctors and owners. After contemplating leadership, I know there are times I have failed to provide needed leadership, but I am determined to improve and keep trying to mentor leadership in those around me.

**OUT OF THE PAST:** Recently I received an e-mail from someone with for over 13 years. She reminded me of my wife at ASU-West, working for a house sitting our pets Jake, Nine (one) and bartending at our Christmas party in the financial world for over 15 years but she now is 40 and graduating with her Bachelor's from ASU University. She told me that one of the reasons she stayed in the profession was as when she helped host our parties for the veterinarians and employees. We are in a wonderful profession that impacts on many people. (And yes I am proud of my group as she is the type of person who always goes forward!)

**THE LAST WORD:** My 8 year old daughter Quinn charges down the hall into our room pushing a doll stroller with Fred, our large orange cat curled up in the cloth bottom actually gliding along on the wood floor (Fred's half closed eyes told me he really didn't care about this form of transportation). “Quinn, I don't think that's a good idea. I don't want Fred to be scared or hurt.” “Okay Dad.” Minutes later, here comes the stroller at high speed and Fred in the same pilot's seat. I look up, but now it's my 11 year old son Jacob doing the pushing. “Jacob I just told Quinn that...” he cut me off and said, “I know Dad, don't scare or hurt Fred—I'm showing Quinn how to do it properly” and off went the stroller, Fred and Jacob. Ahh—leadership - sometimes difficult to define but I know it when I see it!