

Promoting Excellence  
in Animal Health Sales

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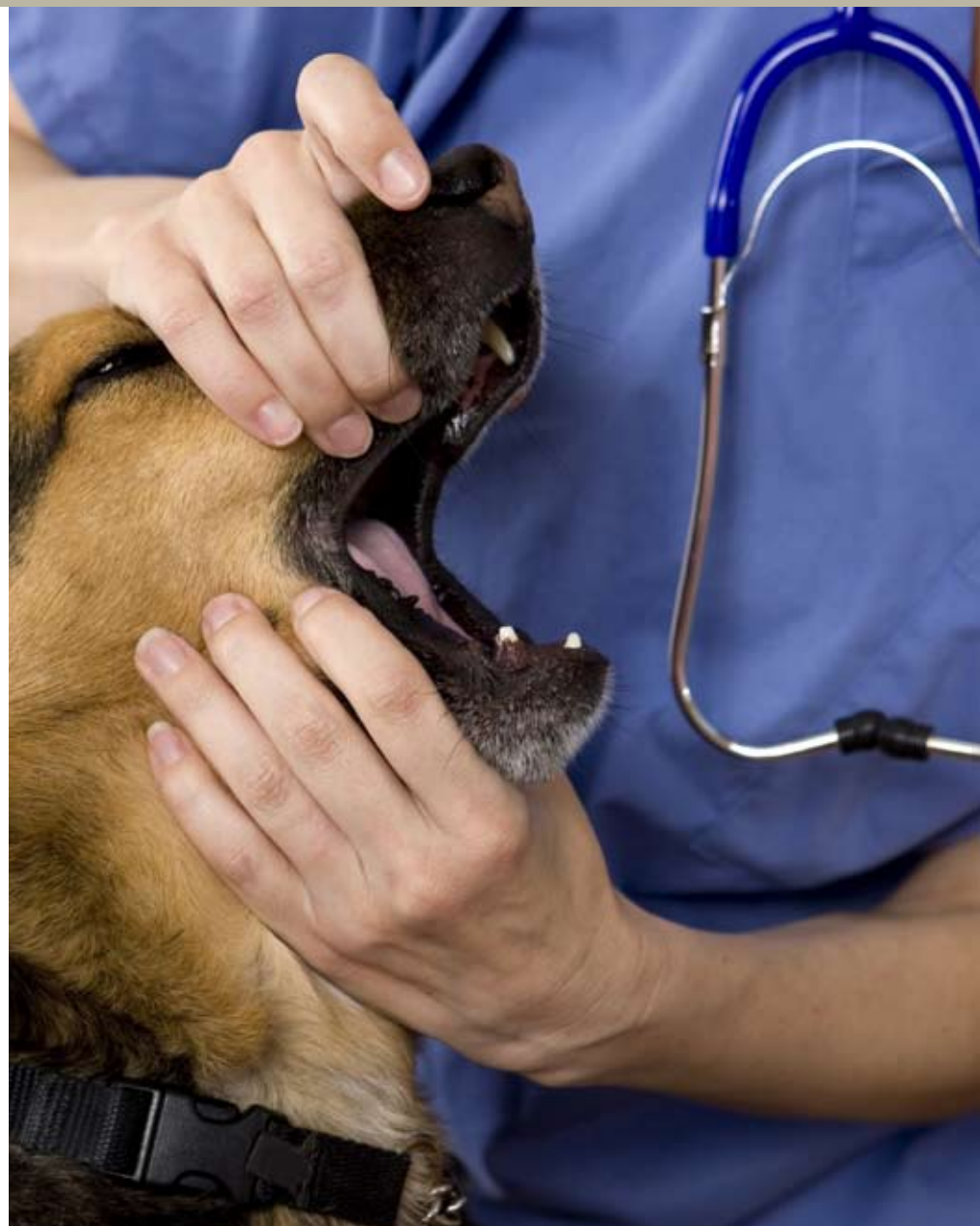
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# Basic Training



**I**n my mind, selling is simple. It always starts with the basics. If you have a half-way decent personality and you're willing to make the calls, you can be successful in sales. All too often it's over thought and we get ahead of ourselves, especially in challenging markets. While I'm a big fan of good sales training, being a student of your business and doing all you can to prepare yourself to bring value to your customers, if you don't pay attention to and execute on the basics, none of it will help you become successful.

I have told young people who want to pursue a career in sales that it's a very rewarding profession. Sure, you will experience rejection. You will make mistakes in terms of the products you pick to sell, the customers you choose to pursue and yes, it's a demanding profession, especially when you're building a territory. The best way to start is by understanding and executing the basics. Show up, do what you say you're going to do, and bring a great attitude that customers will embrace. Those are the basic building blocks that have to be in place first.

One of my brothers is a very successful salesperson and is currently a partner in a medical sales business that covers the United States with top-notch product lines most people would love to have in their bag. He started selling copiers door-to-door right out of college even though he had offers to jump into medical sales. Why? He wanted to learn to *sell*. He wanted to master the basics and he understood that knocking on the doors of upstate New York businesses day after day in miserable weather would position him over the long term to be to a great salesperson. He was right, and I think that is a large part of why he is so successful today.

I'm not saying don't seek out the best products to sell, or surround yourself with the best people, or put together the right strategy, or think creatively and pursue customers that will appreciate and pay for your value. Those are all very worthy endeavors! I'm just pointing out that we shouldn't forget the basics. Make the calls, treat your customers well and earn the business. Sell. That creates long term success in any business.

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# What We've Learned

## Lessons from a challenging economy

By John Graham

**P**aying attention to business is one of the major benefits of a downturn in the economy. Ford figured it out. And so has Starbucks by bringing back the founding CEO, closing nearly 1,000 marginal stores and – most significantly – introducing their own instant coffee. This could be a brilliant move. While proudly passing up the \$4 cup of coffee, you take the instant stuff home and keep a little Starbucks in your life.

Everyone is tired of hearing bad news. Yet, pushing all that aside misses the point and so do all the layoffs and foreclosures. Dwelling on the real but negative skews your perspective: *everyone is so preoccupied with getting through a recession, they can easily fail to learn from the experience.* Like students who are so focused on graduating they miss the education.

To help avoid missing this recession education, here are six clarifying lessons from the current state of the economy.

### Cutting prices can kill business

In a recent Yankelovich survey, 70 percent of the respondents assume a brand that lowers its prices during a recession is already overpriced. Further, 62 percent believe the products are old, perhaps ready to expire or are about to be revamped.

There's more. In the same survey, 65 percent assume that leaving prices unchanged is a sign that the brand is popular,



while the same percentage believes it indicates that the product is already a good value.

In the food business, McDonalds, Burger King, Chili's, Applebee's and others recognize the price-cutting problem by creating new value menus that don't compete with their regular offerings. Some car manufacturers are responding with the same strategy by introducing new, lower-priced models such as the Nissan Cube and the Kia Soul.

### Tough is normal

Referring to the devastation of the recession, people say, "We didn't need this." Of course, you didn't need all the job losses, dashed personal plans and families forgoing basic necessities.

What you need is an attention-getting wake up call. Whether you agree with it or not, that's what the President gave the banks and the auto industry.

The lesson in all this is simply that tough is normal. Just ask the people of Fargo, N.D., about tough. They didn't whine or whimper when the Red River reached a crest at more than 40 feet. They filled and stacked more than 3 million sandbags in record time. They won some and lost some and after the river began receding, the plain talking, gutsy Mayor, Dennis Walaker, gave the city a new challenge, "Our word for the day is restore and recharge." That's the right memo!

Tough is normal and it's time to get used to it.



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## Get the right vision

In *Epic of America*, James Truslow Adams explored what it was that gave America its prominence. As David Kamp, writing in *Vanity Fair* notes, “What Adams came up with was a construct he called ‘that American dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank.’” He wrote those words in 1931, the heart of the Great Depression.

## Give customers a reason to have confidence in you

GM’s “value-added” strategy for clearing out its obese inventory included a 100,000-mile warranty, a plan to make up to nine monthly car payments of up to \$500 each if you lose your job and throw in it’s Onstar emergency system for a year. Unfortunately, GM has an unparalleled credibility crisis: *consumers don’t believe them*.

If GM would ever consider leveling with consumers, they might inspire confidence and sell more cars. The pitch might go something like this: “Look, folks, we’re in a jam [We’re all aware of this]. We’ve got hundreds of thousands of cars sitting around the country on dealer lots [We’ve seen dozens of pictures of acres of cars] and we need to sell them fast because we need the cash [Now, we’re listening]. We can’t give them away [Makes sense] but we’re going to do everything to give you more value than ever for your dollar” [Seems reasonable]. Come in and let’s talk about it” [Call to action].

Far fetched? Impossible? Everything else has failed, so why not try it? Honesty creates confidence and trust.

## Give the customer a solution pitch

Why do some folks think a “sales pitch” is what it takes to make a sale? What the customer wants is a *solution pitch*.

A good example is Kraft Foods. You know Kraft mac-and-cheese, but you probably draw a blank when it comes to the company’s other brands. In the past, they would have poured on the ad bucks to get your attention, but not today.

Since more people are eating in, but have less time to prepare meals and are watching budgets, Kraft came up with an incredibly creative solution: an iPhone app called iFood. The promise is saving time and having great meals.

When you pick your recipe on iFood, you can also pick the store where you want to shop, and iFood not only gets you there, but it also tells you the aisles in your store where the items are located! And when it comes to ingredients, Kraft products are highlighted as you might expect.

Best of all, the iFood app is free and it’s so effective, it has one guy I know cooking for the first time in his life. His Creamy Chicken Enchiladas are terrific. By the way, how do you think he feels about Kraft Foods?

Give consumers a solution pitch if you want to pull in more customers.

## Improve customer experience

Many companies talk about “delighting customers,” but few seem serious about giving customers what they want. Apple is a

major exception. While shopping traffic is less than robust these days, there’s always plenty of action in the Apple retail stores.

Here’s why: Apple focuses on improving the customer experience. For example, the customer greeters serve a specific purpose. They don’t just say, “Welcome to Apple.” They ask the people coming in what they are interested in. They then log them in on a Mac, which connects the customer instantly with a personal shopper who stays with them, answering questions, providing detailed product information and offering helpful sug-

**Give consumers a solution pitch if you want to pull more customers.**

gestions on how to get the most from what they buy. The personal shopper delivers the product to the customer and takes care of the transaction right on the spot. There’s no hand-off or unanswered questions. Most of all, the customer feels valued.

The salesperson performs one more surprising, but highly appreciated task: the rebate.

No need to mail it in and wait 10 weeks, hoping the check will arrive. The rebate is immediately deducted from the price of the total sale and the customer receives an e-mail confirmation.

Apple’s personal shoppers send a powerful message to customers: “We want you to know that our service, as well as our products, go beyond your expectations.” Instead of cutting back in a challenging business environment, Apple has further improved its customer service.

Here they are, business lessons taught by a recession. Instead of just trying to getting through or survive a difficult period, the lasting benefits will be learning from it. ■

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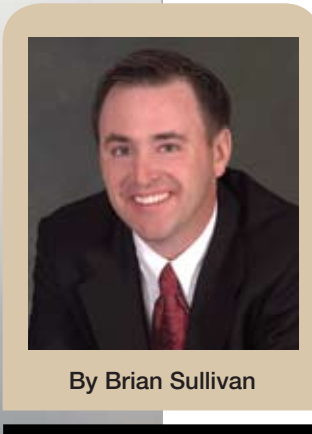
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# Coaching Them Up

Moving your team with purpose



If you find yourself in a management role within your company, you no doubt had a positive attitude, aptitude for the job and the performance to back it up. You worked purposely, managed your time and tasks well and showed the passion of an effective leader. As a result, you were pegged to move up the chain of command. Chances are, you remember that day



By Brian Sullivan

vividly when your VP, manager or supervisor sat you down for a cup of coffee and broke the good news to you. YES! You were ready for the big time. From there, you were given orders, told what needed to get done and sent on your way.

But if you are like many who are thrown into a leadership role, you had little or no formal management or coaching training, so were forced to figure it out on your own. In the process, there were times you found yourself frustrated that your new team of direct reports didn't do the job the same way you did. How could that be? Well THAT had to

get fixed. To do so, you put your "personal signature" on your new role, and that took some occasional tough love. But for some reason, the more you dished out the demands of the job and your expectations, the more your team pushed back and sometimes even pulled away. "How could this be so difficult?" you asked.

## The cold hard truth

Too many new managers are never trained how to lead others. Their employers mistakenly believe the skills that make somebody a good tactical performer in one job can be easily transferred to the role of coaching that role. Not true. This is not to say the best sales performers or operational managers can't be great leaders ... they can. But just as there needs to be a repeatable process to consistently perform in those roles, there also needs to be a specific process to leading and coaching.

The following is called the PRECISE Leadership Formula, and it can be used by any new manager or seasoned leader to influence a team or individual in a purposeful way. Before your next coaching session, review these steps and plan out the expected flow of the

conversation. Will it go exactly as planned? Probably not. But by thinking through the session in advance and by making notes prior to your “sit down,” you will carry out your objective more quickly and easily.

### Prepare

- State the objective of the meeting.
- Identify the importance of the situation (on team, associate, organization).
- What will you say to establish the objective and importance of the discussion?
- What details about the situation will you look for from your associate(s)?
- What might they ask for? What can you give? What will you ask for in return?

### Respect and trust

- Set a positive tone for the discussion.
- What will you say or do to “bring the walls” down?

### Engage with questions

- Seek information.
- Identify and uncover issues and concerns.
- What questions will you ask to get the associate to open up, to sell themselves, to prepare them to sell others, to get little yeses?

### Convey solution

- Seek and discuss ideas.
- Explore needed resources/support.
- What ideas do you have to help this person/team be successful? What will you say to begin exploring ideas? How will you help the person/team explore needed resources? What support can you provide?

### Indecision

- Question to isolate concerns.
- Confirm the concern has been addressed.
- What might the person/team be concerned about? What will you say to uncover those concerns? What questions might you ask to “peel back the onion”?

### Secure agreement

- Agree on a plan for meeting objectives and tracking progress.
- Specify actions to take, including contingency plans if necessary.
- Confirm needed resources and support, including your own.
- Confirm how and when to track progress.
- What might you say to guide the person/team toward deciding on actions? What could you say to spark contingency thinking? What might you say to help the person develop appropriate tracking methods?

### Explore for other coaching opportunities

- Find additional opportunities to coach.
- Start the process again.
- In what other areas can you be of assistance to your associate? What additional coaching objectives might you have?

By being more PRECISE before, during and after each session, you will find it easier to lead your team toward your vision, mission and objectives. In addition, you will find your team more excited to follow your lead. Make these steps a habit, and you will find yourself surrounded by a team that looks to you as their leader ... a leader who leads on purpose, with purpose. ■

To download a FREE copy of the PRECISE Leadership Coaching Sheet as you see above, go to [www.preciseselling.com/preciseleadership.htm](http://www.preciseselling.com/preciseleadership.htm).

Brian Sullivan is President of PRECISE Selling, a sales and leadership training company. He is currently writing the book “PRECISE Leadership, the Strategic and Tactical Field Manual for the New Leader”, co-authored by the War Planner of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Col. Kevin Benson. To learn how to turn your leaders into Precision-Guided leadership weapons, go to [www.preciseleadership.com](http://www.preciseleadership.com) or e-mail Brian at [bsullivan@preciseselling.com](mailto:bsullivan@preciseselling.com).





# Thinking Dental

Haven't made a strong push with dental products and equipment with your customers? Here are reasons you should.

## Dental care treats systemic disease

Jim Auvil, a board certified veterinary dentist at Cincinnati, Ohio-based Grady Veterinary Hospital, stresses the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene for pets. It's not just to stave off bad breath. In fact, according to Auvil, bad breath is often the first sign of disease and bacteria in the mouth. And it doesn't stay put. Problems in the mouth can spread through bacteria in the blood stream before the immune system has a chance to fight it off, jeopardizing every facet of a pet's health. Dental cleanings are actually a front-line defense that veterinary offices can offer customers.

"It's not just needing a teeth cleaning and oral care, it's a systemic disease," says Auvil. "Twenty percent of animals that come to hospitals need some type of dental care. That can spread to any place."



## It's only going to get better

Chicago-based investment firm William Blair & Co. surveyed and received responses from more than 1,000 professionals in the veterinary market on the state of the economy, with about 78 percent of them doctors (See "Straight from the Source" in the July-August issue of *Veterinary-Advantage*). When asked about their clients' spending habits in 2008, 46 percent of all respondents indicated that pet owner spending had declined, while approximately 43 percent said that spending either remained steady or increased over previous

As the recession eases, dental could be one of the first segments to experience growth with more owners being educated on the overall health benefits for their pets that comes along with dental cleanings.

## Equipment sales

Grady says improvements in dental suite equipment such as upgrading wet tables and switching to digital X-rays has streamlined efficiency at his practice, thus increasing the number of cleanings that doctors can perform in a day.

# "Small breeds of dogs are going to have more problems than the larger breeds of dogs."

– Jim Auvil, veterinary dentist, Cincinnati, Ohio-based Grady Veterinary Hospital

periods. That's not perilous stuff. In fact, 32 percent of the survey participants said they expected spending by pet owners to increase during 2009.

What does this mean for dental care in veterinary offices? Grady Veterinary Hospital owner Jeff Grady, DVM, says in the past, customers would need only one or two consultations regarding procedures such as dental cleaning before they decided to go ahead with it. Now it takes a little extra nudging.

"They'll do it eventually, they're trying to put things off as much as possible on certain things they perceive as not emergencies," Grady says.

"It's enabled us to do an extra one every day," he says. "Before, four [procedures] were no problem, and five was kind of pushing it. Now it's not really pushing it. Hopefully as we keep improving this we'll also improve that number."

## Repeat business

"Small breeds of dogs are going to have more problems than the larger breeds of dogs," says Auvil. The small breeds, such as Chihuahuas, might need to be examined every six months and have cleanings more often than the larger breeds, such as Labradors, who Auvil recommends be examined during their yearly vaccination visit. Regardless, it's not a "one-and-done" procedure. ■

Look for more on veterinary dentistry in the upcoming September-October printed issue of *Veterinary-Advantage*.



# New Product **Spotlight**

## UtiCare announces iPet Glucose Meter promotion

UtiCare has announced a limited-time promotion for the iPet Glucose Meter Kit, buy one, get one free (a \$79.95 value), beginning Aug. 1 and running through Sept. 30. The iPet is designed as a convenient, accurate and cost effective pet glucose meter. The 12-piece kit includes everything a pet owner needs to start specifically calibrated at-home testing on dogs and cats. An instruction video is available at [www.ulti-care.com/iPet-Blood-Glucose-Monitoring.html](http://www.ulti-care.com/iPet-Blood-Glucose-Monitoring.html).

## Vetericyn VF now available to vets

Vetericyn, Inc., launched Vetericyn VF, a special veterinary formulation of the FDA-cleared technology, Vetericyn wound and infection treatment. Vetericyn VF offers licensed veterinarians a powerful new treatment option that works in tandem with an animal's immune system to fight infection and speed healing time. Vetericyn VF is the first non-toxic broad-spectrum topical antimicrobial on the market, according to the company. It kills bacteria (including staph and drug-resistant MRSA), viruses, fungi and spores without harming healthy tissue. Vetericyn VF is designed to replicate the immune system's natural response to invading pathogens with an oxidative burst of neutrophils, the most common white blood cells in the body. It is scientifically designed to treat a wide variety of wounds, skin ulcers and abrasions. It can be used to treat hot spots, ring worm, pigeon fever, rain and cinch rot, eye and ear infections, fungal infections, skin rashes, cuts and burns, post-surgical incisions and topical infections.

## VSSI, Inc. has introduced a new sliding door for the company's modular kennel runs.

This industry exclusive door design maximizes kennel room space and can be operated with one hand. The new door is made of stainless steel and features a marine

grade anodized aluminum glide that is permanently lubricated, thus requiring no maintenance. Sliding doors are available on four-foot wide runs and provide a 24-inch opening. A 34-inch wide "swing" door style is still being offered.

VSSI kennel runs are constructed of medical grade type 304 stainless steel. Units are available in three or four foot widths and five or six foot lengths. Multiple units can form an interlocking system in a choice of configurations.



## Sempermed announces SemperShield extended cuff nitrile exam powder-free glove



Sempermed introduced the SemperShield extended cuff nitrile exam powder-free glove. The gloves feature extra thickness and an extended cuff compared to a traditional nitrile exam glove. They also feature a textured surface for a secure grip, and are designed for high-risk

applications. SemperShield nitrile offers all the benefits of a nitrile glove and has been tested and approved for use with chemotherapy drugs.



# News Briefs

## Summit VetPharm makes two appointments

Summit VetPharm announced two new appointments: Doug Drbal as director of marketing and Sebastien Gray as product manager. Drbal will be responsible for leading the company's marketing efforts and supporting the sales initiatives. Gray will manage the marketing of all Vectra® ectoparasiticide products. Before joining Summit VetPharm, Drbal held the position of director of corporate accounts at Pfizer Animal Health, where he developed and coordinated the marketing and sales efforts for multi-million dollar accounts. Gray comes to Summit VetPharm from Ceva Animal Health, where he held the position of technical marketing manager for Companion Animals and Equine. At Ceva, Gray was responsible for global marketing strategies as well as the product launch of Senilife®.

## Sanofi-aventis to acquire Merck interest in Merial

Sanofi-aventis and Merck & Co., Inc., announced that the companies have signed a definitive agreement under which Merck will sell its 50-percent interest in the companies' current animal health joint venture, Merial Limited (Merial), to sanofi-aventis for \$4 billion (U.S.) in cash. Following the close of the transaction, sanofi-aventis will own 100 percent of Merial. In addition to the Merial agreement, Merck, sanofi-aventis and Schering-Plough announced the signing of a call option agreement. Under the terms of the call option agreement, following the closing of the Merck/Schering-Plough merger, sanofi-aventis would have an option to combine the Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health business with Merial to form an animal health joint venture that would be owned equally by the new Merck and sanofi-aventis. The sale of Merck's interest in the Merial joint venture is subject to clearance by the European antitrust

authorities. Merck said it anticipates completing the transaction before its planned merger with Schering-Plough is finalized, which is expected to occur during the fourth quarter of 2009. The companies said Merial and Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health will continue to operate independently until the closing of any potential combination of Merial and Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health.

## VetCentric partners with Elanco Animal Health

VetCentric, Inc., announced an affiliation with Elanco Animal Health, a division of Eli Lilly and Company. VetCentric's prescription management service enables Elanco to expand its reach to veterinarians and pet owners. The agreement enables VetCentric to offer its partner clinics access to the entire Elanco Companion Animal Health product line, including Comfortis and Reconcile. Comfortis is the first FDA-approved, chewable, beef-flavored tablet that kills fleas and prevents flea infestations on dogs for a full month. Reconcile is a once-daily, chewable, flavored tablet for the treatment of separation anxiety in conjunction with a behavior modification plan.

## MWI Veterinary Supply expanding

MWI Veterinary Supply Inc. announced today it will expand its distribution operations, creating more than 30 new jobs by the end of 2009. The company, which distributes veterinary medicine supplies to veterinarians, said it will invest more than \$1.5 million to lease existing warehouse space for its cold storage and distribution operations. The new center will service growing markets throughout the Midwest and the Great Lakes regions. The company plans to begin hiring additional warehouse and management associates later this summer in preparation for the opening of the new facility in October.



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