

Evolving Business Model Trends and Starting Tomorrow With New Business Learning Strategies

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Summary

Corporate consolidation is at an all-time high with practice multiples hitting previously unseen valuations. During this session, we will identify the major business model trends that have the greatest likelihood of impacting the average practitioner and what practices are doing in the wake of these changes. Specific focus will be on the Lean Startup Method and how practices are reshaping themselves to accommodate changing consumer demands.

Corporatization Trends

According to Brakke Consulting, corporate practice groups will comprise 50% of the US and Canadian market by 2025. This is for the majority of small animal practices. We haven't seen nearly the acquisition rates for mixed animal and equine practices. Most of this is fueled by private equity investments primarily focusing on the small companion animal market. There have been enough market studies to show that small animal commerce is relatively immune to recessions versus other markets. As such, private equity and venture capital are helping to fuel growth of corporate practices. The growth of practices, both de novo and acquisitions have created downward pressure and competition for veterinarians and paraprofessionals. This pressure has opened up new modes of practice for veterinary professionals.

Remote Relief Locum Emergency Practitioners

One of the areas of growth has been remote, relief, locum, and travelling vets. Throughout the Canadian and American markets, more and more vets have unhooked themselves from traditional practices and are exercising their licenses through different modalities. One of those modalities was mentioned earlier in the day through the use of telehealth and virtual care tools. In other instances, veterinarians are beginning to take advantage of relief/locum shifts at various hospitals. In some instances, vets are making upwards of \$600-700-900/day working in a small animal clinic. ER vets are, in some instances, making \$1300-1500/day working in clinics. Other vets are simply travelling from location to location, touring across the United States and Canada, providing relief services. It's a lot of work to get licensed in each state and province, but many of these vets think the trouble is worth it because of the advantage of not being pinned down to a particular practice. In one instance a vet was travelling from relief site to relief site during Hurricane Harvey to provide care to those in need. In another, a vet sits on a beach in Mexico during her extended vacation and provides telemedicine consultation services to her clients, sometimes racking up \$200 for a 30min consult. The options for being able to provide veterinary services are only expanding. Once people start realizing the cost of living in other places in the world and the minimal number of interactions that are required in order to provide a nice living, then more vets will become remote workers who are able to have the real work life balance that they seek. The most productive and forward-thinking practices are already working on ways to incorporate this into their work flows through simple means like providing a telehealth service option to their clients and their staff members who want to be at home with their newborns.

Lean Startup

The most productive means of modifying business practices involves following the steps laid out in the Lean Startup, a book by Eric Ries that discusses the evolution of a business through understanding the customer segments, building a product that will get them excited, and then testing that product with the ideal customer base before ploughing ahead with that product into

a market that may not be interested in the product at all. Through various implementations that myself and my colleagues have worked on in the past, we have come up with a modification of the business model canvas that so many startups use, and instead we've modified that canvas for the purposes of developing an implementation strategy for the clinic. This canvas helps to focus efforts and streamline communication.