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Bite-Sized Tips for Real Success



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Putting Power into Empowerment: Five Simple Acts to Build Others Up

Empowerment is a cornerstone of effective leadership and business growth. It's more than just delegating authority—it's about cultivating an environment where team members thrive. Mastering empowerment is crucial for running a successful business while maintaining personal well-being.

When done right, empowerment creates a team that operates effectively without constant supervision, freeing leaders to focus on growth and other pursuits. It's the path to a practice where every role is fulfilled with ownership and excellence, embodying the organization's mission and values.

This workbook will guide you through simple acts in the 5 key areas of empowerment, helping you transform your leadership and practice one step at a time.

Simple Acts of Empowerment

1. **Share Purpose**

By setting clear expectations and providing ongoing feedback, you create a framework for your team to thrive and take ownership of their roles.

- Begin by communicating the practice's mission, vision, and purpose to ensure that everyone understands the overarching goals and their role in achieving them.
- Ensure these purposes statements are simple and easy to remember, so you can use them regularly to connect the dots between decisions and care.
- Provide detailed job descriptions that outline each position's purpose, duties, responsibilities, and performance metrics. Use the job descriptions to create clarity on the purpose of their work.

This clarity helps employees understand what is expected of them and how their work contributes to the practice's success. Regular feedback offers constructive guidance and praise to help employees grow, improve, and feel valued for their efforts.

2. **Create Trust**

Trust is built over time as you get to know your coworkers and employees better. The more you know about each other as people, the more you can empathize and understand them. Private 1:1 meetings, when used well, are a great way to more quickly get to know your direct reports or the members on your team, gather and provide feedback, and move important work forward.

- Schedule, prioritize and protect private 1:1 time with each direct report.
- You may meet more frequently with leaders, but monthly to quarterly is a good cadence.
- Prepare for the meeting with an agenda that you share with your employee.
- Be prepared to give and receive feedback.
- Consider having offsite 1:1s in a coffee shop or quiet cafe, where the environment is private and more relaxed.

3. Show Respect

Demonstrating respect for each team member's role is a fundamental aspect of empowerment.

- Start by using their names consistently, whether in person, on business cards, with clients, or during introductions. This simple act acknowledges their individuality and importance within the practice.
- Show recognition for the significance of every position, from veterinarians and technicians to support staff, and express appreciation for the great work they do.
- Establish boundaries with other roles that allows everyone to be recognized as owners and experts in their specific responsibility.
- Model these behaviors and train your other leaders, including doctors, to also show respect to their teammates in this way.

4. Build Community

Well-planned and effective team meetings create opportunities for growth, collaboration, and empowerment. Use these gatherings to build relationships among team members, fostering a sense of camaraderie and collaboration.

  - Schedule and protect regular team meetings. Close the clinic and turn over the phones so all can focus on the meeting.
  - Begin each meeting by reviewing the practice's purpose, goals, and achievements, ensuring that everyone remains aligned and motivated.
  - Encourage active participation and collaborate on problem-solving, allowing team members to contribute their ideas and expertise.
  - Allocate time for learning and development, such as discussing new techniques, sharing case studies, or inviting guest speakers.
  - Consider sharing agenda creation responsibilities or delegating agenda items to individual members.
  - Regularly plan events outside the business on weekends or after hours to allow the team to get to know one another and their family members. When the team knows each other personally, they will build trusting relationships that create bonds and also improve teamwork.

5. Invest in Growth

Investing in your team's professional development is a key aspect of empowerment. By demonstrating your commitment to your team's growth and providing the necessary

resources and support, you empower them to take control of their professional development and contribute more effectively to the practice.

- Utilize one-on-one meetings to build relationships with your employees, discussing their aspirations, challenges, and progress.
- These meetings provide an opportunity to give and receive feedback, fostering open communication and trust.
- Work with each team member to create personalized development plans that outline their goals, required skills, and training opportunities.
- These plans should align with both the individual's career aspirations and the practice's needs.
- Plan routine learning events for the entire team, and consider investing in formal, academic learning, conferences and workshops that will engage your team and improve their skills.

Bonus Skill: Get the team to solve problems without you

As leaders and owners, we often want to fix problems for the team and quickly answer their questions to provide support. It's quick and you have the authority. However, when you do that continuously, especially in areas that they should be fixing problems and owning outcomes, you keep them from growing into that expectation. You also train them to keep asking you questions, because that really easy for them. You're giving them fish!

Instead, you need to teach them how to fish, so they're not dependent on you for survival. How do we do this? Stop answering the questions. Stop solving the problem, and delegate it back to them. Teach them that they have all the resources and authority needed to fix this themselves. Yes, sometimes you need to step in, but not that often. And the more your team is empowered, the less they will need you to do so.

Think about the hat you want to wear when presented with a problem. You options are:
Options:

- "OK, thanks." Huh? Who is doing what? Perhaps nothing is happening.
- "Let me take care of that." NO! This is what you want to do LESS.
- "Here is how to fix it." This is directive and may be needed for the first time newbie.
- "Do you know how to fix it?" Asks if they feel they have the skills to take care of it, while you check in.
- "What's your plan to fix it?" This is a delegating approach, making it clear they still own the problem.
- "How can I help you with this?" This is a supportive approach. They own it, but you're finding out if they think they need help.
- "What do you need from me?" Same as above.

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Worksheet: Use this worksheet for planning your change and communication.

- What will I start doing differently to empower my team?

  _____

  _____

- What is the primary reason behind the change?

  _____

  _____

- How does this change align with your practice's goals and values?

  _____

  _____

- What benefits will this change bring to the practice, team, patients, and/or clients?

  _____

  _____

- What is the action plan and timeline for implementing this change?

  _____

  _____

- Is this something you can get done in the timeframe chosen?

  _____

  _____

- What support might you need for this change?

  _____

  _____

- Plan to tell the team on this date:

  _____

  _____

- What will look different? How?

  _____

  _____

- How can others support you in this change?

  _____

  _____

Could you use some direction and support for bringing a change to life in your hospital? Reality Vet Coaching & Consulting is here to help. Scan the QR code for more information or email me at drkellycooper@realityvet.com.

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