

For it is understanding our personality that one enables us to understand what qualities we bring to another person and let us understand how that other person may perceive our value to the situation. We also need to understand those same things about the people we work with. For instance, if a person that we are working with is very low key, tending to be very cautious about all the facts and figures about a given situation, if our personality type dictates that the facts and figures, while important to us, may not be as important to us as just getting the job done. The person we are working with may perceive us as being uninterested in the important things that influence his life, that being the detail of the facts, figures, or the information that influences his decision. Therefore, those two personality types may not connect well. Many more examples can be given, but the relevance is obvious. It is important for us to understand what another person wants in order to effectively communicate and subsequently motivate that person. We have to communicate and motivate all people on their terms.

Veterinarians don't think much about selling, but a good sales course would do us all good for salesmen are trained to understand the need to communicate benefits to his prospective customer on the customer's terms. For instance, if you were buying a new car that would run really fast, work really good driving around town and your need was not speed but dependability and a salesman presented the benefits other than those that matched your needs, he would probably not get your business. Assuming that all veterinarians have the same needs could be devastating to his business for we don't; some of us drive different kinds of vehicles for different reasons. The primary aim of communication is to find out how the other person sees his needs. Effective communication becomes truly listening—asking questions and listening

for the response, understanding those responses and understanding then how we can interface with that person to supply the needs in his world, as he sees it.

Motivation is really no different, for you see all of us are motivated by different things. For example, money and success are not equally important to everyone. What we view as success is not the same for each of us nor each of our clients. Motivation would imply a goal oriented background. We must understand the goals of our clients. Frequently, our clients have only short-term goals, perhaps to keep this set of cattle healthy. But, there are many other goals that interface with their decisions that do not involve us. Understanding all of the needs are important in order to help with his herd health program. Having healthy cattle is one thing but there are many aspects of his and our life—personal life, family life, professional life, community life, and spiritual life. These are details we must understand in order to effectively motivate the people to attain the goals that they see as important to them. Reality to each and everyone of us is the world as we see it. It is the world as we understand it and is the world as it affects us.

To review, communications and motivation starts with understanding ourselves, our personality, and understanding the personality of the people we interface with. The number one aim in communication is to acquire information about the other person's needs—we do that through asking questions and through listening. The aim is not to get across our ideas, for only after we understand their situation through listening and asking questions, can we interface our information to their situation. Motivation becomes much easier when we understand their world, their goals and can become a team member in their life. In doing so, we not only provide their success but for our success as well.

## How I Motivate and Communicate with Clients in My Practice

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Motivating yourself and your client to improve their operation is something that I try and work with on a daily basis.

The thing that I think is important is that we need to think of the client's needs first, not ours, but what is our client's need and our client's want to be successful. The dairymen's needs have changed treatment to production medicine and the question that I have is: Do we fit those needs? I guess I've had trouble thinking that we've done a poor job fitting those needs and we'd have to change. Listen to what the dairymen want and then we must provide it. Let's not provide what we want, but let's provide what those dairymen need. Let's listen to his needs and figure out what he has and what he wants to

be successful. If we don't offer them what they want somebody else will. You know we always talk about how tough it is to make a living, but there's more business there than we know what to do with. The thing is if we don't provide it, somebody else will. So we need to do a better job and listen to that dairyman's need. The more we provide, the less they'll need from others. We're the single biggest, most important, central source of information that dairyman has. He needs to come to us.

Veterinarians can be the limiting factor to a farm's success. As I travel around the country speaking at meetings, producers come up and ask me, "How do I get my veterinarian involved?" That's just like saying, "I want to

buy, but he doesn't have anything to sell." So I really believe that sometimes we are the limiting factor in their success. Because if we're good, they'll be good.

Quality milk is the secret to survival. The industry is doing everything in its power to make it. They want healthy wholesome beef. They want wholesome milk. They want all those things and quality milk is the key to being successful. So they're opening the doors for us—it's time for us to walk through them.

We've got to offer total programs. That is what the dairyman really wants. Otherwise, he has to go to four or five other people before that. What I like to talk about is the total herd management approach. I talk to my clients about all these. I don't just do the brown arm part. That's probably to the point where a lot of times I walk out the door and we forgot to palpate the cows, because we've spent more time working on other parts of his farm. We have to make our programs easy. If they are not easy, they won't work. Probably more important, they've got to be clearly understood. They've got to know what we want to accomplish and what they want to accomplish.

The veterinarian's problem is there is not enough time and he has too many clients. The veterinarian gets to the point where all he has to do is check a few cows as he's driving by. That's not what our dairymen want. The solution is simple. We need to reduce the number of clients or hire more veterinarians. It's really been fun for me. My client numbers have dropped in half but my income has gone higher than I ever expected possible because I'm doing more for each individual farm. So this is the idea—you want to get to peak efficiency, but probably not with the brown sleeve.

Veterinary medicine is changing. There are more graduates and we have a different clientele. We have to change to survive. Medicine is a small part of what we do on a daily basis. We rarely give shots anymore. We do much more on management and working on ways to make our clients feel successful.

You must get involved and that is what is important. They are not going to come and pound on your door and ask you to do it. You have to get involved, and you have to market yourself. Everyone has his own approach to different matters. Most rewarding for me has been getting involved in total operations. Knowing the family. In everyone of my farms, I know the wife, the children and I am a personal friend and part of each family's operation.

**Confidence in yourself first, and probably the most rewarding of all is when they have confidence in you. It doesn't matter what everybody thinks of you around the world, but if your people in your own area think you are good that is the biggest reward that I can see than anybody can achieve.**

We must be able to sell yourself. You can be the best veterinarian or have the best programs in the world, but if you cannot sell yourself, you're not going to succeed.

If they don't want it, it won't work. I've found long ago of some of my programs I think are good, but if they don't want

it, they'll never succeed. Work with the client that wants your programs, and you'll be surprised how fast those programs will develop. Veterinarians are the most trusted when it comes to independent advice. We can help them in every facet of that dairy farm. We can be the ones that can lead them to that successful role.

We've got to get paid for our knowledge and that is what it is all about. You've got to take the time to realize how many hours per day you are getting paid for. You might charge \$75 an hour. You might charge \$100 an hour, but the real key is: how many hours per day are you getting paid for? A lot of us spend 8 to 10 hours a day working, but really our bottom line is we got paid for 2 or 3. You have to figure out and get paid for your time. Teach our clients not to ask how much. To me that is the sign that I've got the confidence in my clients. When I go to them with a new program, they don't ask what is it going to cost, but they ask me when are you going to start. I think that is important. When you gain that confidence, when you have sold yourself, you'll have that client asking you when you are going to start rather than what's it going to cost, because he knows that anything you are going to do for him is going to make him successful and it's going to add dollars to his pocket. Every veterinarian should be paid an hourly rate, because he's got to get paid for his time. He's got to get paid for everything he does. Again, look at what you are getting paid for the number of hours you work. Always give a little more than you're charged for. I remember this way back from years ago. Jim Jarrett always said that, "You always have to give a little more than you charge for." That's a heck of a way to build a practice. Always show them that you're willing to give just a little more than you're getting paid for.

I always say, "TTT—Target Their Troubles." That's the number one way for me to communicate with my clients, is to target their troubles. Point out their loss areas. Just don't go in and palpate cows, but point out to him where he's losing money. Point out their losses in milk production, premiums, and other areas. Point out their losses and make them aware. That gives you opportunity to plant the seeds. Don't try and solve all of his problems in one day, because he can't handle that. Point out his problems, plant the seeds, and I'll guarantee you he'll be calling you back asking for help.

Set goals for each farm, but be realistic. If you have a farmer at 12,000 he's not going to be at 20 at the end of the year. Set small goals and give lots of awards, and it makes them feel good. It makes you feel good.

The way that I plant my seeds is that I monitor cell counts monthly. We make them aware of what their mastitis picture is all about. If the counts get too high, we culture the bulk tank. What a great way to get your foot in the door. Culture to point you in the proper direction, the bulk tank sample can give you more information in a short period of time than most other techniques you can do when it comes to mastitis control. Culturing provides convincing argument for sound

milking practices. It gives you the opportunity to get your foot in the door and to give them the information they need to know that you know that the need is there. Heifer drafting—I had at least a half a dozen veterinarians come up to me and say, “You know, I carry your little article about the heifer hustle around—it’s brought more dollars to my pocket and it’s really helped.” The thing is it assures you and the client of how good a job you are doing or it becomes a real eye opener. You can get paid as much to do that as you can to palpate a cow, but you probably do the farmer more good, because he’s probably losing more money with his young stock than he is with his reproduction program.

I walk into a farm and I plant my seeds and comment that maybe his heifers are not doing as well as they should. We do a few for free. It’s amazing how well that works when you do maybe one from each age group, put it on a graph, leave the graph with the farmer, and all of a sudden before the week is done he’s calling you, asking you questions like, “What could I do? What do you suggest?” But it’s amazing the type

of income it can build, but the key to it all is that you make that farmer successful and he sees results.

Always do a complete job. I think that is where we always fall down. You get a guy excited, you get him interested, and then forget to go back or you get him on a nutritional program and you are afraid to follow up. Always do a complete job. Stay with him from the beginning to the end and that makes him successful. Probably the most important thing of all is increased veterinary service increases profitability of both. If what you are going to do for him doesn’t make him a living, then something is wrong.

**I truly feel as a veterinary profession, we can move the industry more so than anybody else. We can be proud that we can have such a big impact on the agriculture of tomorrow.**

*Transcribed from a recording of Dr. Johnson’s presentation.*

## How I Motivate and Communicate with Clients in My Dairy Practice

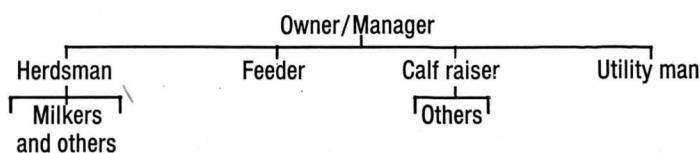
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This paper will deal specifically with the subject of motivating and communicating with personnel on large commercial dairy operations. The typical dairy in Arizona has capacity to milk 500 cows two or three times per day. One milks 4,000 head three times per day and currently averages 20,000 lb. milk according to DHIA rolling herd averages. The average dairyman raises his own replacements, purchases all his feed, runs a labor intensive, highly leveraged operation on less than 30 acres of land. Providing veterinary service to these types of herds requires motivating and communicating with several types of people on each operation. Applying people management skills to implement herd health programs is essential.

The management structure on a large dairy operation might well be described as one of “specialization.” Diagram 1 depicts a management schematic of personnel positions on an average commercial dairy.

Typically the owner or manager directs day-to-day activities of his employees along with making daily and long term business decisions for the operation. The herdsman may be

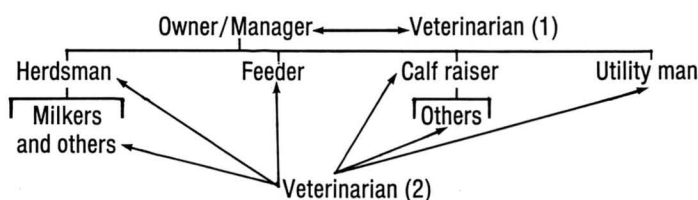
DIAGRAM 1: Management schematic for large dairy herds.



accountable only for daily animal care and stockmanship, or may be given responsibility over others including the calf-raiser, feeder or other peers as well as milkers and other general farm workers.

The veterinarian necessarily deals with farm personnel on two levels. The first is with the owner/manager. The second is directly with staff on a one-to-one basis (Diagram 2).

DIAGRAM 2: Veterinary interaction with large dairy herd staff.



1. Goal setting with owner/manager; help evaluate performance of staff.
2. Technical and instructional help for cow-side staff; monitor specific performance.

“Clearly, the number one factor in motivating people is feedback on results” (from *The One Minute Manager* by Blanchard and Johnson). This philosophy forms the basis for the approach I take with my clients. It implies four basic interactions with personnel on a dairy.

1. goal setting
2. technical and instructional support