

# **HOW TO MAKE NEXT YEAR GREAT BY FINISHING THIS YEAR STRONG**



**In Your Veterinary Practice**

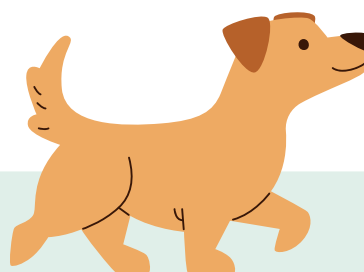
# WHY STAYING FOCUSED MATTERS

It's easy to get distracted as the year winds down and the holidays approach. We're all thinking about festive gatherings and time off, while our veterinary practices are busy with pet owners preparing for their own vacations. It's tempting to just coast to the finish line, but that would be a missed opportunity!

**The end of the year is an important time to pause, reflect, and set the stage for future success. Here's why staying focused matters:**

- **Reflect on the past year:** Take some time to consider our biggest wins and the challenges we overcame. What did we learn from both our successes and our setbacks? How can those lessons guide us in the future?
- **Assess our strengths and weaknesses:** What are we truly good at as individuals and as a team? Where do we have room for improvement? Honest self-assessment helps us leverage our strengths and address our weaknesses to become even more effective.
- **Plan for the year ahead:** What goals do we want to achieve in the new year? What steps can we take to get there? Now is the time to set clear intentions and develop a roadmap for success, so we can hit the ground running.

By taking the time to reflect, assess, and plan, we can set ourselves and our teams up for an amazing year ahead.

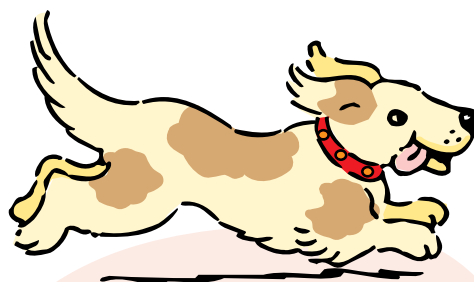


# SETTING OURSELVES UP FOR A GREAT YEAR

We know we need to stay focused, but how exactly do we do that? Here are some practical steps we can take right now to finish the year strong and set ourselves up for an even better year ahead:

- **Identify what we did well and what we might do differently:** Let's start by acknowledging our successes and celebrating our achievements. Then, let's take an honest look at areas where we can improve. Were there any missed opportunities or areas where we fell short? Identifying areas for growth is the first step towards making positive changes.
- **Have conversations with our team and boss:** Open and honest communication is essential for a healthy and productive work environment. Share your thoughts and ideas with your team and your supervisor. Listen to their perspectives and work together to create a shared vision for the future.
- **Develop a collective/collaborative vision for the new year:** A shared vision creates a sense of purpose and unity. When everyone is working towards the same goals, it fosters teamwork, boosts morale, and increases the likelihood of success.
- **Write it down - calendar, journal, etc.:** Don't let your goals and plans fade away! Write them down in a place where you'll see them regularly. This will help you stay focused and motivated.

Ask questions and build/refine processes to get there: Asking questions helps us clarify our goals, identify potential obstacles, and develop effective strategies. Building and refining processes ensures that we have clear systems in place to support our efforts.



# QUESTIONS CAN HELP US SET GOALS

Speaking of questions, here are a few that can help us dig deep and define what we truly want to achieve:

## Impact Questions:

- What kind of impact would I like to have on others? Do I want to be known for my compassion, my expertise, or my leadership skills?
- How do I want my team or others to describe me when I am not around? Would they say I'm supportive, reliable, and fair? Or is there room for improvement?
- What will the conversations with others on my team or around me feel like? Will they be positive, productive, and respectful?

## Fulfillment Questions:

- How do I want my team to handle challenges? Do I want them to be proactive, collaborative, and solution-oriented?
- What will I get to do every day that makes me excited to come to work? What tasks or responsibilities bring me joy and a sense of purpose?
- What will be better about the way I spend my time? Will I be more organized, efficient, and focused on the things that truly matter?

## Achievement Questions:

- What will I be known for in my practice or on my team? What skills or accomplishments will set me apart?
- What new opportunities might open up for me as a great leader? Could I take on more responsibilities, mentor others, or even pursue a new role?
- What will be better if I lead my team exceptionally well? Will we have a stronger team culture, happier clients, and better patient outcomes?

# CREATING HABITS TO MEET OUR GOALS

Now that we have some goals in mind, let's talk about habits. Habits are like shortcuts for our brains. They allow us to do things automatically, freeing up mental space for other tasks. But building new habits takes time and effort. Here are a few tools that can help:

- **Track our progress:** Use a calendar, a journal, or an app to monitor our progress and celebrate our successes. Seeing how far we've come can be a powerful motivator.
- **Link our new habits to things we already do:** This is called "habit stacking." For example, if we want to start journaling every day, we can link it to our morning coffee routine. After I pour my coffee, I will write in my journal for 5 minutes.

Create an environment that facilitates building our new habits: If we want to exercise more, we can lay out our workout clothes the night before or find a workout buddy to keep us motivated. Making it easier to engage in our desired habits increases the likelihood of success.



## Use Habits to Your Advantage

Want to be more reflective? Schedule 15 minutes every Friday afternoon to review the week. Need to plan better? Take 5 minutes each evening to prepare for the next day. Whatever you choose, build habits that support your goals. Consistency is key!

# WHAT CAN GET US OFF TRACK

Finally, let's be aware of the things that can derail our efforts to finish the year strong and set ourselves up for success:

- **Putting things off:** Procrastination is the enemy of progress!
- **Not writing things down:** If we don't capture our goals and plans, they're likely to fade away.
- **Ignoring problems:** Addressing challenges head-on is essential for growth.
- **Not including others in conversations, our reflection, and look ahead:** Collaboration and communication are key to building a strong team.

Not setting goals: Without goals, we're like ships without a rudder, drifting aimlessly.

As the end of the year approaches, work might be the last thing on our minds. It's easy to get caught up in the festivities and let things slide. But remember, by taking the time to reflect, plan, and set goals now, we can set ourselves and our teams up for a truly amazing year ahead. Let's use this time to our advantage and head into the new year with renewed energy and a clear vision for success!

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