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YOUR PRACTICE AND PANDEMIC OUTBREAK: ANYTHING YOU COULD PREVENT?

Abstract

Risk management, a major element of prevention, applies not only to (financial) managers, but also to veterinarians. It is a concept of what needs to be done and in what order, it is scheduling with a special regard to risky events and it includes the 360° review. Risk management is key when looking ahead and planning the future. Therefore, some thoughts on a possible future in veterinary medicine will be given.

Introduction

From a managerial point of view, a veterinarian practice does not differ much from any other business. It demands office administration, human resource management, marketing and alike. Managing a business is however not limited to such tasks related to the daily business, it also consists of strategic thinking: Thinking ahead to proactively deal with threats and opportunities – in the veterinarian world, we would call it prophylaxis.

Pandemic outbreaks are never limited to one practice only, making collaboration of veterinarian practices in order to collectively deal with such problems essential. It should be defined what all practices in a specified area need to be doing in case of a pandemic outbreak or other determined circumstances. This requires the veterinarian practices to discuss their goals and to agree on a common goal and concept – if one is enough for the specified area. Defining goals and concepts is not enough, however. Very important is answering the question of how it should be communicated to the public, to the clients so they understand the message. Apart from this obvious goal of risk prevention, communicating with the clients leads to less anxiety and more confidence in our work as veterinarians.

The aim of the article

This presentation's aim is to convey an understanding of what risk management is and why it is vital for each and every entrepreneur. Every veterinarian is used to the word prophylaxis and he or she will be an expert in it. As veterinarians, we have studied veterinarian medicine; we have learnt how to do an excellent diagnosis and how to choose the best therapy to improve the health of our patients and how to sustainably increase their quality of life. We have learnt how to support

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the quality along the line: From the food and stable to the fork and table. What we have not learnt, is how to run a business.

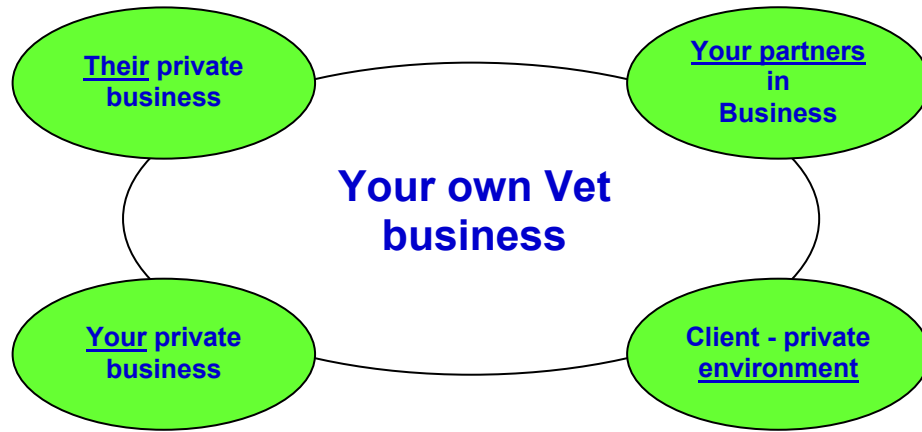
Most veterinarians end up running an own practice with the necessity of paying bills for the infrastructure, administrating the employees salaries, communicating with the public to acquire new patients and to manage costs in order to make profit with your business to enable future investments. As every organisation, it also needs to be lead; stakeholders demand attention and the organisation needs to know where it is heading to. It needs careful planning and looking ahead.

Risk prevention is an integral part of this looking ahead. Pandemic outbreaks lead to huge damages and loosing time – inevitably. To avoid this, we need a good pandemic plan that prepares the veterinarian practices for upcoming events. We need to consider emergency processes while we still have enough time to do it properly. Once there is a pandemic outbreak, there will be no time left for preparation. An early, intensive and serious planning of potential situations is essential for the sustainable success of a business.

Material and Methods

The 360 degree approach and a checklist are introduced to obtain an understanding of and discuss holistic risk management and prevention.

360 degree view:



Possible checklist

- 1.1 Define responsibilities and establish a hygienic - plan
- 1.2 Practice organisation (timely and local guidance of the patients)
 - 1.2.1 Reduction of visits to the practice
 - 1.2.2 Separate patient /client flow
 - Local separation
 - Timely separation
 - Adaption and reorganisation of the practice rooms
 - 1.2.3 Keeping patients in-house with (e.g. Influenza) - infection
- 1.3 External communication (public, families, clients)
- 1.4 Education of the employees (start and ongoing)
- 1.5 What is a need as reserve and how much
- 1.6 Diagnostic measurements
- 1.7 Medical, therapeutical, prophylactic measurements
- 1.8 Prevention in working medicine

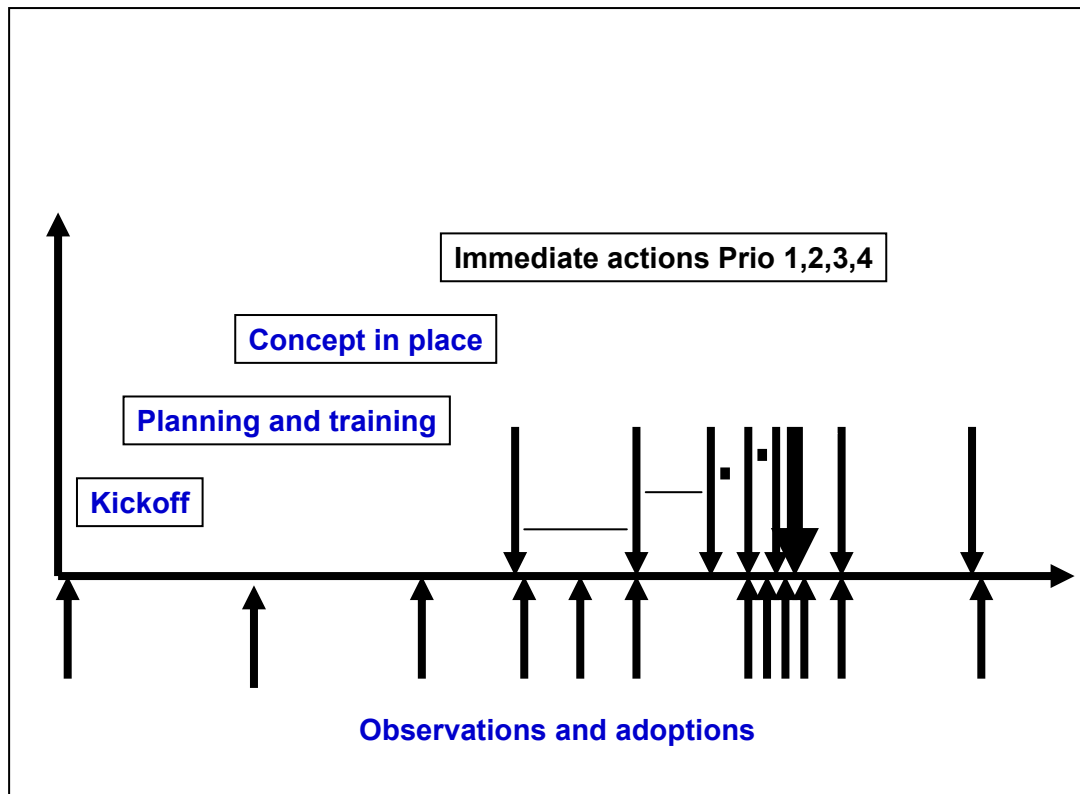
Results and conclusions

It has been proved that the combination of an early planning, quick measures and a professional approach that veterinarians put on every day with their patients guarantees a good chance not to be lost in case of a pandemic outbreak. Being prepared is all about not being surprised.

Reference

- Swiss department of internal affairs, Department of Health, Section Public Health, Pandemic plan: Handbook for practice preparation

Time – Schedule for a reasonable risk management



Summary

This presentation's aim was to explain the necessity for a professional risk management in every business, with a special focus on veterinarian practices. Early preparation for pandemic outbreak helps avoiding dangerous surprises by events like pandemic outbreaks. The critical points and the complexity of risk management have been discussed using a checklist and the illustration of the 360° view.

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