

VHMA MEMBER PROFILE



Jon Cunnington, MBA, CVPM



Jon is a native of northern California. He attended California State University, Sacramento where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. After graduating, he worked as a sales representative for a large business forms manufacturer where he focused on serving the health care market. After more than three years of selling, Jon attended California State University, Chico and received a master's degree in Business Administration. He then taught various management, marketing and communications courses at California State University for about two years before entering the veterinary field.



His first post began in 1994 as Operations Manager at a three-doctor veterinary hospital in Chico. The AAHA-accredited hospital also consisted of a stand-alone pet supply store. Much of the first several months were invested in understanding the hospital and pet store operations and right-sizing the hospital to bring the support staff costs in line with industry benchmarks. Within a couple of years, both owners exited active practice due to separate disabilities and left the day-to-day operation of the hospital to the senior associate/medical director, Jon and two enthusiastic department supervisors.

In 1997 Jon joined Jim Remillard, MPA, CPC, CVPM, a veterinary practice management consultant, for a practice review in southern California. This engagement served as the beginning of a very healthy part-time working relationship. Jon assists Jim with practice valuation preparation and other projects, as often as opportunity and time is available.

A few years later, in 2000, Jon seized an opportunity to relocate to the Sacramento area where he joined Loomis Basin Veterinary Clinic (Loomis Basin) as their first Hospital Administrator. Loomis Basin is a 24-hour, AAHA accredited hospital with 17 general practitioners, several board-certified specialists and a support staff of about 85. The owners, Dr. Rick Frey and Dr. Corey Cherrstrom, have incredible vision and a willingness to reinvest in their hospital. Working at the hospital has been both challenging and satisfying for Jon. In the past 15 months, the practice has completed the second of two large additions/remodels since 2000, added CT scan, digital radiology and solar power generation. The practice has also benefited from the consultative experience and insight of Jim Remillard for over 20 years, who, with Jon's and others' assistance in 2000, helped Loomis Basin apply for and receive the distinction as a *Practice of Excellence*, as cosponsored by Pfizer Animal Health and Veterinary Economics. The practice was featured in the June 2001 issue of Veterinary Economics and has since participated in the Well Managed Practice Study by Wutchiett Tumblin & Associates.

With encouragement and mentoring from Jim Remillard, plus support provided by Dr. Frey and Dr. Cherrstrom, Jon initiated study for the VHMA's certification process in 2004 and achieved certification in 2005. The thought of applying and studying for the certifying examination first seemed daunting to Jon, who like many others, has multiple tasks and responsibilities and never enough time. However, he encourages others in this way, "Don't overanalyze! Just sit down, understand the requirements to become certified and plan a course. Once you have a workable plan, work your plan." He also found a few Certified Veterinary Practice Managers who were more than willing to share their resources and advice, including creating a study guide of exam questions and answers using Microsoft Excel.

In December, Jon began serving as a mentor in the VHMA's Mentor/Mentee program. In addition, he enjoys writing management articles and speaking for the profession as opportunities present themselves. He also feels very blessed to have the support of a wonderful team of managers and supervisors at Loomis Basin and numerous colleagues throughout northern California who meet semi-annually for mutual support, continuing education, and professional development.

Jon and his wife, Becky, and their daughter, Emily, live in Loomis along with their Border Collie and two cats. He enjoys gardening, RVing, boating, fishing and puttering in his workshop. Jon and his family are also very active in their local church.