



# VHMA MEMBER PROFILE



## Todd P. Herzog, RVT, CVPM

Hello, my name is Todd Herzog. My path in the veterinary profession started in 1995 when I took a part-time position at a 24-hour animal hospital working in the kennels. At the time, I had no idea this would turn out to be such a huge turning point in my life, leading me to where I am today.

My first practice was in a very progressive hospital. The owners had a vision and built a culture based on total quality management and principle centered leadership. No team member was left behind. The medicine and patient care was exciting and I felt I was contributing to something worthwhile. Not only was I contributing, but my opinion actually mattered.

After one year I was promoted to the role of Veterinary Assistant. This is when I decided to pursue a career in the veterinary profession. I was finally in a place where I felt I knew what I was meant to do. Pet owners and Veterinarians now entrusted me with the care and well being of their pets. What an amazing feeling!

I continued to study all that was available, reading textbooks and journals and attending courses and conferences that included a wide range of material including leadership and management.

In 2001, I earned my license as an RVT. I was leading a group of seven Veterinary Technicians and Assistants and had been placed on the leadership team for the hospital. It was in this year that our hospital was awarded the Veterinary Economics "Practice of Excellence" Award. We were the only hospital in Washington State to ever achieve this recognition and I am still proud of that accomplishment to this day.

I was also at a point where I hungered for more. I still enjoyed my role as an RVT; however, I was finding that I enjoyed the business aspects of the practice even more. One of the things I observed was a great deal of debate within the field regarding the duties of and RVT and an Assistant. Salaries were low for these positions. I knew from what I had learned that this did not have to be the case. There were successful models of veterinary practices that utilized all roles of the team to their potential, provided extraordinary patient care, had outstanding facilities and provided a very good quality of life to the owners and employees.

I decided my future in the veterinary profession would be in management and I needed to make another decision. The direction I wanted to go was not available to me in my then current job. I had to look for another hospital. I was hired as a RVT at Apple Tree Cove Animal Hospital. Once again, I was very fortunate because I had found a hospital where the ownership encouraged personal growth and provided the resources to learn and grow in many directions.

I continued to work in the role of an RVT but started my search for an education in management specific to the veterinary field. I started taking classes through VetMedTeam.com. At this same time St. Petersburg College started its certificate program in Veterinary Hospital Management. I enrolled and completed this program in 2004 and was hired on as the Practice Manager at Apple Tree Cove Animal Hospital. I also took a position with VetMedTeam instructing the very management courses I had taken myself. In 2005, I achieved another milestone in my career by earning my Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM) designation.

It's been three years since I began my job as Practice Manager. My duties have increased as I have grown and this year my role changed to Hospital Administrator to include an expanding list of duties necessary within the practice. My job with VetMedTeam.com has also grown. I started teaching, advanced to the role of Assistant Continuing Education Director and now hold the position of Director of Marketing.

I have worked in this profession for 13 years now. I can truly say I have enjoyed every one of the roles I have held: Kennel Attendant, Veterinary Assistant, Registered Veterinary Technician, Team Leader, Practice Manager, Hospital Administrator, Instructor, Assistant Continuing Education Director and Marketing Director. I look back regularly to determine why I still love this profession. It always comes back to the same thing – leadership! It is the key. Consequently, I will strive to improve in my role as a leader. We are all leaders, no matter what the role, and it is leadership that helps our teams grow and enjoy this profession. When that happens, the pet, client, practice and profession will all win.

I still have much to learn and much to give back. This profession continues to change and evolve and it has proven to be an exciting adventure. The great part is that there is always another opportunity ahead and I have chosen to take advantage of the next one, which is ownership of Apple Tree Cove Animal Hospital. I look forward to this new role as a practice owner and encourage all others that have considered this opportunity to take it. I think it will prove to be a life changing experience and hope that I can provide the same opportunities and quality of life that have been afforded to me over the years.

