

# MAXIMIZING YOUR COMMUNICATION with CLIENTS







# BREAKING NEWS

## Pet Food Recall

[www.menufoods.com/recall](http://www.menufoods.com/recall)





# WHY FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION?





# Communication?

## **KPMG Study:**

Top Two Reasons Clients Chose Their  
Veterinary Healthcare Provider:

1. Kind and Gentle
2. Respectful and Informative





# So We're Doing Great...

- **Not so fast...**
  - Since these were the top two choices, it indicates clients are selecting on these criteria.
  - Choice implies one is better than another.
  - Focus on communication and your practice will be chosen!



# Client Communication Filters

- Gender, Age, Size
- Invasions of Body Space
- Foul Language
- Lack of Education
- Aggressiveness, Hostility, Rudeness
- Timidity
- Poor Grammar, Enunciation
- Body Odor
- Inappropriate Clothing





# But Teach Our Staff?

- Essential If We Are to Maximize Human Resource Leveraging and Improve Level of Service
- Better Educated And Effective Staff Will Allow You To Produce More Revenue = Higher Wages
- Builds Confidence And Self Esteem Of Team Members = Longer Staff Retention







# The 85/15 Principle

## SUCCESS



- Communication Skill
- Technical Ability



# Communication

Definition:

An exchange or sharing of information among entities.





# Effective Communication

## When Communicating, You Have:

- Limited Control of Listener
- Complete Control of Transmitter





# Effective Communication

## 16 Communication Outcomes

Primary needs met well enough?		Feeling good enough when we're done?	
Mine	Yours	Me	You
yes	no	yes	no
no	yes	no	yes
no	no	no	no
<b>yes</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>yes</b>

**Without clear, shared awareness, the odds of effective communication happening in any situation are about 1 in 16 - only 6%!**



# How Do We Communicate?

## 1. Verbal

- Tone
- Inflection
- Rate
- Vocabulary
- Context





# How Do We Communicate?

## 2. Non-verbal

- Gestures
- Posture





# How Do We Communicate?

## 3. Written

- Words
- Pictures



Seaside Animal Care, PA  
9256 Beach Drive  
Calabash, NC 28467  
Phone/Fax: (910) 579-0550  
www.SeasideVet.com



**SURGERY REPORT**

PATIENT: Jake Taylor  
SURGERY DATE: 1/5/2006

**PRE-SURGICAL BLOODWORK**  
Pre-anesthetic blood tests (CBC, serum chemistries and electrolytes) – acceptable for anesthesia

**ANESTHESIA**  
Jake received pre-operative pain relief medication – 150-mg carprofen by subcutaneous injection. Domitor<sup>®</sup> butorphanol short-acting injectable anesthetic was administered. Anesthetic reversal was accomplished using Antisedan.

**SURGERY**  
Patient presented for removal of a mass on the front right footpad (see photo). The tumor was as completely excised as anatomically possible. 3-0 PDS was used for internal closure and 3-0 Ethilon suture was used to oppose the cutaneous tissues in a simple interrupted pattern. The entire tissue sample was submitted for histopathological review to determine the cell type (malignant versus benign).

**TREATMENT AND HOME CARE**

1. Review all handouts.
2. A protective wrap was placed over the surgery site to prevent licking of the site. Remove the wrap in two to three (2-3) days.
3. If the wrap becomes soiled or wet, remove at once. **IMPORTANT.**
4. After removing the wrap, you may gently clean the incision site with a warm wet washcloth (do not use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol) daily for one week or until sutures are removed.
5. Give two (2) 500-mg cephalixin antibiotic capsules by mouth every twelve (12) hours until completed in five (5) days. 20 count. 0 refill.
6. Contact the hospital if your pet begins licking, chewing, scratching or rubbing at the site. We will provide you with a protective collar to prevent injuring to the surgery site. **IMPORTANT.**
7. Return in seven (7) days for recheck examination and suture removal.
8. We will contact you as soon as histopathology results arrive, usually in five to seven (5-7) working days.
9. Good prognosis for surgical recovery. Future prognosis is based on pathology results.
10. Contact the hospital if you observe excessive drainage or a foul odor from the site, excessive or persistent bleeding blood in the stool, dark stools, vomiting or diarrhea, lethargy or decreased activity, decreased appetite for 36-48 hours, difficulty breathing or coughing, yellowish or discolored eyes and/or mucous membranes or any other abnormality you feel uncomfortable with.

*Thank you for allowing us to treat Jake.  
If you have any further questions or concerns,  
feel free to call the hospital.*

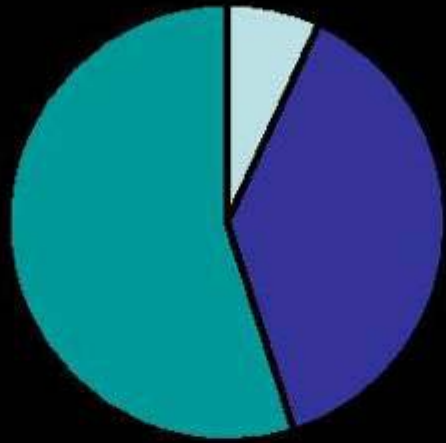
Ernest E. Ward, Jr., D.V.M.

Tumor prior to Surgery –  
Right Front Paw



Page 1 of 1      *"the most advanced and compassionate in pet health care"*









# Verbal Communication

- Tone, Inflection and Rate – ~38%
  - “Accent or inflection expressive of a mood or emotion”
  - Kind and Gentle = Softer, slower





# Verbal Communication

- Vocabulary – ~7%
  - Use Medical Terms, but “Back It Up”
  - Don’t “Dumb It Down”
  - Stay Informative
  - Avoid Fillers





# Verbal Communication

- Content and Context – ~7%
  - Make Sure Client Follows Explanation
  - Avoid Being Tangential
  - Use Silence To Emphasize Points
  - Repetition
  - Reinforce with Written Reports





# Non-Verbal Communication

**“Evidence suggests that humans of all cultures smile when happy and frown when unhappy.”**

M. Argyle  
*Bodily Communication*  
(1988)





# Non-Verbal Communication

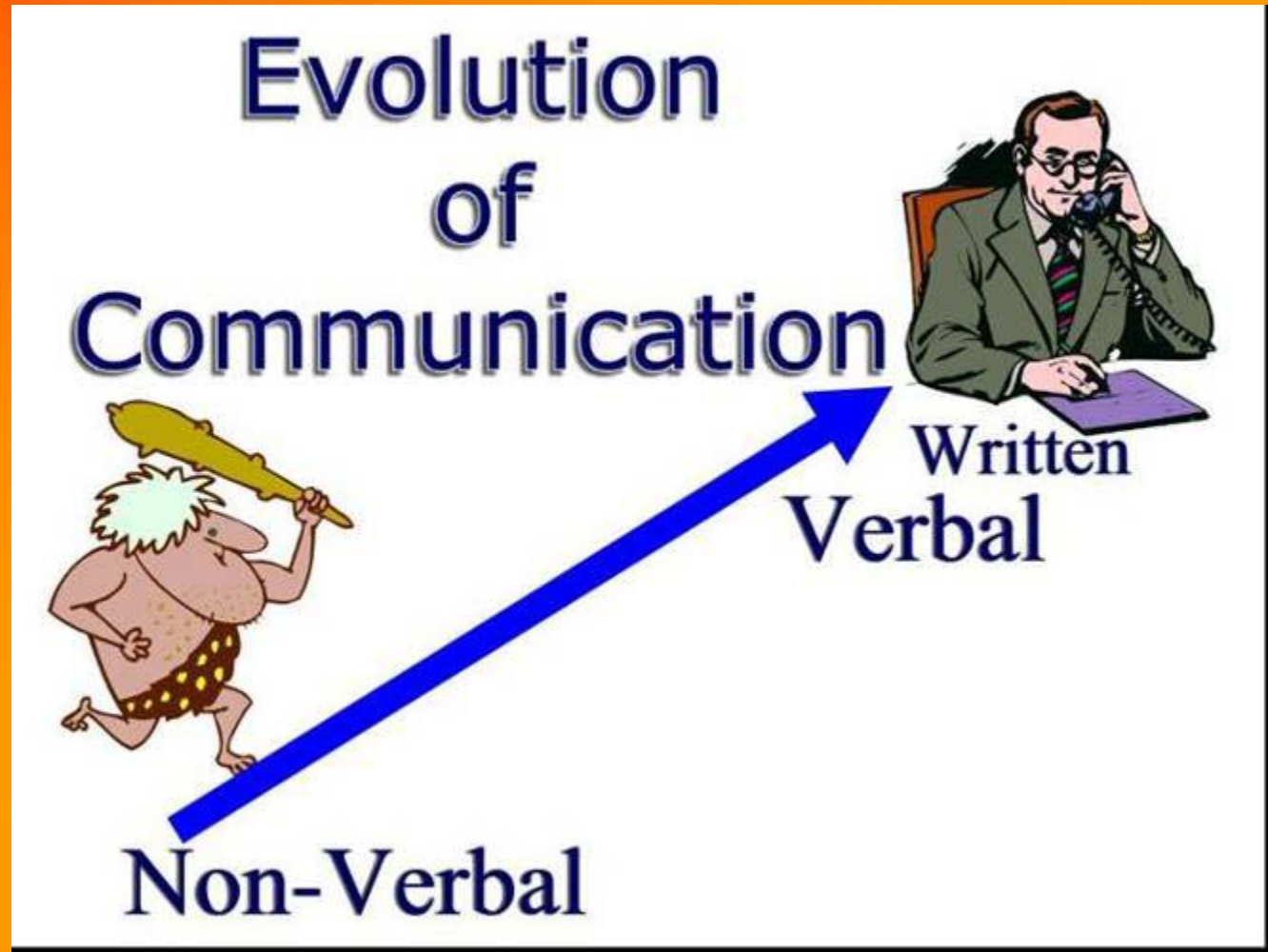
“Only about **7%** of the emotional meaning of a message is communicated through explicit **Verbal** channels. About **55% comes through Non-Verbal**, which includes such things as **gesture, posture, facial expression**, etc. It is behavior other than spoken or written communication that creates or represents meaning.”

Albert Mehrabian

*Nonverbal Communication* (1972)



# Non-Verbal Communication





# Body Language

- **Every movement. Each gesture. Each smile and frown.**
- **How you move within the space around you.**
- **Where you look. When you look.**
- **How you look when you look.**
- **“A bunch of stuff we can’t even begin to measure.”**



# Non-Verbal Communication

WHAT  
TO  
AVOID







# Non-Verbal Communication

## Gestures

**DON'T**

– Crossed Arms





# Non-Verbal Communication

## Gestures

### **DON'T**

- Frowning
- Lip Biting
- Excessive  
Eye  
Aversion





# Non-Verbal Communication

## Gestures

### **DON'T**

- Playing with or Twirling Hair
- Hands Near Face When Speaking
- Eyes Glancing Upward and to Left





# Non-Verbal Communication

## Gestures

### **DON'T**

- Clasping Hands Behind You
- Shrugging When Making Assertions





# Non-Verbal Communication

## Gestures

### **DON'T**

- Lean Over
- Rest Head on Hands





# Non-Verbal Communication

SO WHAT DO  
WE DO?





# Non-Verbal Communication

## Make A Big Entrance

- Warm Smile
- Introduction
- Physical Contact
  - Handshake
  - Elbow Touch
- Know the Client and Patient –
  - “Bullet”: Name, Age, Sex, Breed, Reason for Visit, Pertinent History





# Non-Verbal Communication

## Gestures

### DO

- Smile
- Eye Contact
- Open Hand gestures, Palms-slightly upturned
- Open Arms
- Counting With Fingers
- Sweeping Gestures to Mark Progress







# Non-Verbal Communication

- Posture
  - Sit or Stand Upright
  - Lean Slightly Forward
  - Takes Notes Sparingly
  - Sit When Appropriate
  - Comfortable with Feet on Floor or Crossed Ankles





# Non-Verbal Communication

- Dress
  - Transparent Hair and Makeup
  - Avoid Perfume and Cologne
  - Professional Attire
  - Dress To Suit Your Size
  - Minimal Jewelry
  - Clean, Short Nails





# ROLE-PLAYING



# VIDEOTAPING



# Written Communication

- Direct Reflection of Your Commitment to Excellence
- People First, Paper Second
- Grammar, Vocabulary
- Clear Graphics, Logos
- Read Aloud, Edit, Rewrite and Re-proof
- Succinct, Concise, Direct





# Written Communication

- Personalized Is Best
- Written Discharge, Exam, Surgery, and Dental Reports

1056 Beach Drive  
Coburns, NC 28607  
919.579.5550 ph/fax  
www.beachsidevets.com

AAHA

### FELINE ANNUAL EXAMINATION REPORT

Pet's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. Weight \_\_\_\_\_ lbs. Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. What heartworm and flea preventive are you using? None Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. What brand of food do you feed your cat? How much do you feed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you provide any dental care for your cat? No Yes \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you have other pets? If yes, are they currently vaccinated and on heartworm and flea preventive?  
None Yes \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does your cat go outside: Never Rarely Occasionally Daily Mainly Outdoors Outdoor Cat
6. Does your cat: Board Groom Travel with You Other Animal Contact \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you noticed any lumps or bumps on your cat? None Yes \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you noticed any of the following: Coughing or Labored Breathing Cumping Lethargy  
Increased Thirst Increased Urination Vomiting Diarrhea Constipation Dry, Lusterless Fur
9. Does your cat have any behaviors you wish you could change? None Yes \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are there any health issues you'd like to discuss with the doctor? None Yes \_\_\_\_\_

<b>GENERAL</b> Weight: <input type="checkbox"/> Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Thin <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Ideal _____ lb. Alertness: <input type="checkbox"/> Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Lethargic <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous GRV: <input type="checkbox"/> FVRCP <input type="checkbox"/> FeLV <input type="checkbox"/> FIP <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<b>MOUTH / TEETH / GUMS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appear Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Tartar <input type="checkbox"/> Calculus <input type="checkbox"/> Broken Teeth <input type="checkbox"/> Gingivitis <input type="checkbox"/> Ulcers <input type="checkbox"/> Periodontal Disease Stage _____/4
<input type="checkbox"/> FeLV / FIV Test <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Parasite Test <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<b>HEART AND LUNGS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appear Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Congestion <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Heart Murmur <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult Breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>COAT AND SKIN</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appear Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Parasites <input type="checkbox"/> Itchy <input type="checkbox"/> Dull, Scaly, Dry <input type="checkbox"/> Mange Mites <input type="checkbox"/> Matted <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<b>LEGS AND PAWS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appear Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Nail Problems <input type="checkbox"/> Turn or <input type="checkbox"/> Limpness <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>EYES AND EARS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appear Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge <input type="checkbox"/> Mites <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive Wax <input type="checkbox"/> Infection <input type="checkbox"/> Odor <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<b>GUTTRACT / ABDOMEN</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appears Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhea <input type="checkbox"/> Vomits <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Parasite Test <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>NOSE AND THROAT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Appear Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Inflammation <input type="checkbox"/> Sneezing <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Notes: _____

**ANNUAL CHECKLIST**

Have Need	Have Need
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Heartworm Preventive _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Care _____
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Flea Preventive _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Microchip / Identification Tag _____
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Food _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Blood Tests _____
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Multivitamin _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Next Appointment \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

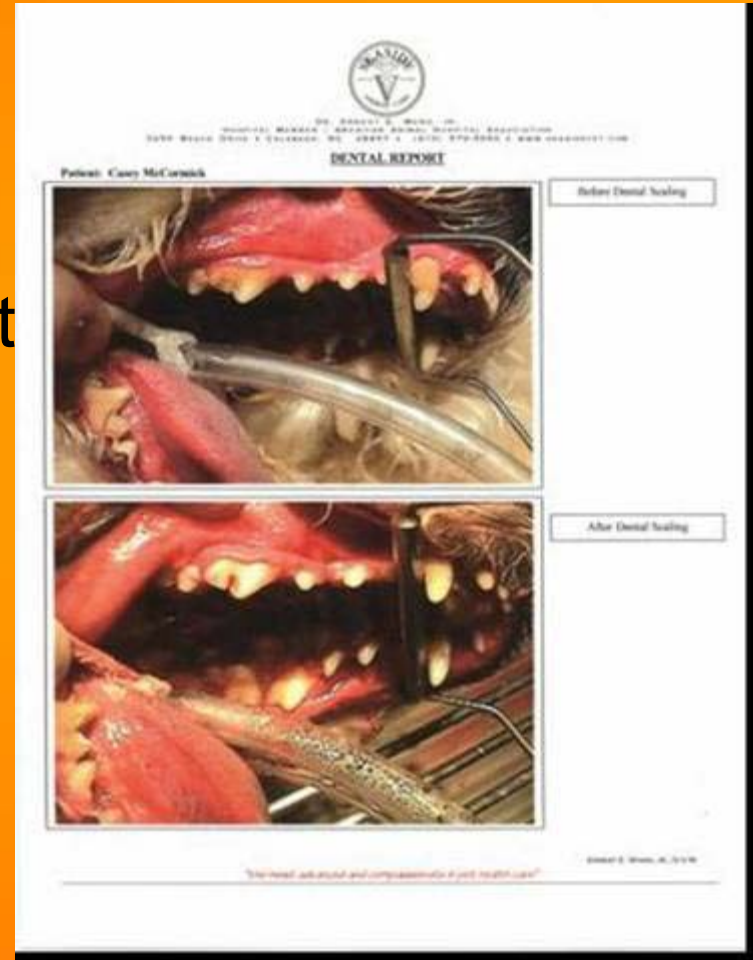
10/1/10





# Written Communication


- Use DIGITAL PHOTOS
- Latent Image Effect Creates Higher Value
- Improved Communication











# Written Communication

- Dental Radiology Reports

  
Dr. Robert D. Ward, DVM, MS, and Associates  
HOSPITAL MEMBER - AMERICAN ANIMAL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
8338 Basin Drive • Cambridge, NC 27847 • (919) 879-0550 • www.seasidevet.com

**DENTAL RADIOLOGY REPORT**

PATIENT: Masey Hudler  
DATE: 02/09/2006

 Right side of mouth (4 <sup>th</sup> upper premolar)	
 Upper Incisor	
 Left Side of Mouth (4 <sup>th</sup> Premolar)	

*"the most advanced and compassionate in pet health care"*



# Written Communication

- Uses:
  - Surgery, Dental
  - Radiology
  - Training
  - Fun Stuff
  - Website

**Seaside Superstar**

**Stweeby Freeland**

**Seaside's 7 Success Secrets**  
For Dog's Eyes Only

1) Man's Best Friend - and don't you forget it. Milk it for all it's worth.	5) 'Begging' is simply a means of attaining a goal.
2) Cat Naps - not a bad idea - just a bad name.	6) Develop healthy forms of individual expression - the midnight bark, the far-away stare, invisible intruder alerts - get the drift?
3) Don't forget that 'puppy-dog eyes' trick Mom almost every time.	7) You can never get enough scratches and rubs - hold out for what you deserve.
4) If that doesn't work - try the 'whimper-whine' technique.	

**SEASIDE ANIMAL CARE** 9256 BEACH DRIVE CALABASH, NC (910) 579-5550  
visit us at [www.seasidevet.com](http://www.seasidevet.com)







# Written Communication

- Website
- Current Hospital Brochure

**Seaside Animal Care**  
*when they're more than pets...*

Home | Super Stars | Hospital Tour | Contact us

learn about our hospital and take a tour  
**About us**

learn about our medical and surgical services  
**Services**

read our pet health information  
**Pet Health**

shop for your pet's supplies  
**Online Store**

About us | Services | Pet Health | Online Store

## Welcome to Seaside Animal Care

Thank you for visiting our home on the internet. You can learn more about our hospital and staff, purchase your pet's prescription drugs and medical supplies and search for pet health information.

- American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) Accredited since 1996
- National Practice of Excellence Award Winning Hospital
- Award-winning Doctors
- High-tech Diagnostic Equipment
- Highly Trained Nursing Staff
- Boarding Services for Established Clients

910-579-5550 ph/fax  
9256 Beach Drive (Highway 179)  
Colabash, NC 28467  
M-F 7:30 am - 6:00 pm  
Sat 9:00 - 12:00 pm

**Click Here For Client Registration Forms**

Fill out the Forms Prior to Your Appointment and Fax, E-mail or Bring With You!

**Online Store NOW OPEN**

Visit our secure online store and order your pet's medical supplies, nutritional supplements and grooming aids from your home. Items can be shipped to your doorstep or you can arrange to pick them up when you're next in the office.

**Today's news**

The 3-year canine distemper/hepatitis/parvo vaccine is available. Visit [www.continuumforpets.com](http://www.continuumforpets.com) for details on this vaccine breakthrough.

**Online Store**

**Revolution**  
Buy 5 get 1 FREE!  
Rx MED - Clients Only





# Time For a Break!

**See you at 9:35 am for Part 2!**

- The First 4 Seconds
- Techniques for Improving Your Communication with Clients during Appointments

