

# Let's talk about innovation

## A new series in the Fountain Report

By David Haworth, Aaron Masecar and Aaron Wallace

Innovation is amazing. It has moved us forward and allowed incredible advances in what we do and how we do it. It comes in an incredible variety of contexts and applications, and that's why we're making it the basis of a series of articles in the Fountain Report.

For our purposes, innovation is any product or service that is created de novo for veterinary medicine or a product or service created for some other purpose that is applied to veterinary medicine. And there are thousands of them. Literally they are all around us. There are so many that we look past some of the most impactful innovations without realizing that they are, in fact, innovative.

We'll explore those innovations in this series. We'll explain them and frame them to help you understand the context. Because another key aspect of most innovations, especially those early in their lifecycle, is that they will improve. Computers may be one of the most dramatic examples of the past fifty years. One of the authors of this article is old enough to remember computers without hard drives, when all memory was contained in tape drives and punch cards. It was a huge improvement to be able to store data on fragile 5.25-inch floppy disks because it allowed computers to be in homes instead of institutions.

Now, less than 50 years later, extraordinary amounts of data are stored on our phones. Cell phones—mini-computers more powerful than the largest mainframes of the 1970s—have revolutionized almost every aspect of our lives, and along the way they have rendered nonsensical many of the plots of movies and TV shows of the past, when the whole storyline revolved around not having change for the pay phone. What's a pay phone, Grandpa?

So innovation surrounds us, including in veterinary medicine. It manifests as new things that help us provide medicine cheaper, faster or better. It manifests as new ways of doing old things that increase efficiency or access to veterinary medicine. And it manifests as new ways of doing business that shake up our traditional way of thinking about the practice of veterinary medicine and animal health.

The changes this profession is going through are enormous. The fundamental reason for our existence has changed from primarily being one of public health and protecting the food and transportation of society to being healers of family members. The challenges we face are serious. But looking at our problems through the lens of opportunities for innovation, and recognizing that from the beginning of time, humans have

### Highlights:

- Innovation is everywhere in veterinary medicine, whether it's new products being created or products and services from elsewhere entering the industry.
- In this new Fountain Report series, industry experts David Haworth, Aaron Masecar and Aaron Wallace will highlight key innovations in veterinary medicine, along with the people who made them.
- You can get in touch with the authors and let them know if there are any areas of innovation you want to hear about.

faced problems and solved them by creating new solutions, we can have faith that we will move past these challenges successfully, if only on our way to encounter new ones.

Crucially, innovations are brought to us by individuals and organizations. So in addition to innovative products and innovative practices, these articles will focus on the innovators themselves: their motivations and how we, as a profession, can encourage those. What are their hurdles, and how can we collectively evaluate those hurdles, leaving the right ones in place and eliminating those that don't advance the development of breakthrough innovations to improve our work and improve care for our patients?

And finally, how can we as a community encourage these innovative people and companies and attract them into our space? Veterinary medicine is an amazing

field. We do so much good for the world. But our problems are real, and a driving force to solve those problems is the people who look at our field in a whole new light. We need them. We need their products. And that is what we want to explore with you.

If there are specific areas of innovation you're interested in, we would love to hear from you. Please reach out to [j.david.haworth@gmail.com](mailto:j.david.haworth@gmail.com) and give us your ideas. This is a rich area to look at, and we hope doing so will bring value to your work.



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