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Most Admired CEOs: Q&A with David Boguslawski of CityVet

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Submitted photo

Dave Boguslawski, CityVet

David Boguslawski of CityVet was honored at the Dallas Business Journal's 2023 Most Admired CEOs Awards.

Tell us about a problem or challenge that you have faced or are currently facing as a leader. How have you or how are you

currently overcoming that issue?

The industry faces a significant shortage of veterinarians. We have created a really desirable culture and development program that attracts great people and retains over 90% of veterinarians. Additionally, for more than 20 years, our veterinarians have had real equity ownership in their clinic which tends to attract experienced leaders. We have also tried to create transparency in every aspect of the business and remove as much administrative burden as possible so our veterinarians can focus on providing the absolute best care for pets and their pet parents.

What is a vital lesson that you learned in your career that you were only able to learn through experience?

Understanding both my own and other people's personalities and behavioral traits. Over time, I have really grown my ability to read people and listen well. I believe if you really understand your own strengths and blind spots, and what is needed to succeed in a particular role, it will allow you to target exactly the traits you need to succeed. There are attributes like attitude and desire you want from everyone, but the diversification of our collective innate or learned skills and behaviors is what leads to truly high-performing teams. As a leader of a high-growth company, it's a jigsaw puzzle I am always thinking about. It leads to better hiring and better coaching and development of current staff.

How do you create an environment in which employees feel empowered to try new things or to take (calculated) risks to move your company/organization forward and without fear?

It is important to let the team know what you want to have some control over, versus what you trust them with. Over time, more items move to the trust category. And when a mistake is made, it is extremely important not to overreact, and to help them out of it rather than try to assign blame. It is also important for leaders to take ownership of mistakes even if someone on their team caused them. When the team feels that protection, they feel safe to continue to take risks. Lastly, when corrective feedback is needed, do it in a private setting, be direct with what you are feeling, but also ask good questions rather than entering the conversation assuming you know what happened.

What was the last change your company/organization implemented based on an employee suggestion? What impact did it have?

We actually do this quite regularly because we ask our teams for anonymous feedback through surveys every quarter, review them as a team, and determine what to move forward. My team is measured and compensated on this survey, so we never forget we work for our clinics and veterinarians, not the other way around. When we ask our teams anonymously if they endorse Home Office support, they score us 9.1 out of 10.

One of the most impactful programs we recently implemented is a parental leave program. While our benefits were always good, our veterinarians were asking for an enhanced paid time off benefit to support more time away from work to bond with their new babies. We added paid maternity and paternity leave to support this need and it was very well received!

Outside of your company's culture and its people, how do you maintain a cutting-edge approach that sets you apart in a fast-changing world and economy?

There are a number of ways in which we do this. We attend trade shows and network with top executives of other companies. We follow other industry verticals like human healthcare to see what consumer behavior and technology have been trending. We send Net Promotor Score surveys to our customers to get their feedback on what we can do better. We are currently rated at an overall score of 93. I intentionally hire veterinarians onto my management team so we have a clinical view of priorities. Lastly, we have a strong board of directors that is plugged into other industries and shares what they see.

ABOUT CITYVET

2022 Revenue: Did not disclose

Number of employees: 500



Alexa Reed

Associate Editor - *Dallas Business Journal*

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