

VetSCOPE NEWS

A thoroughly modern VN

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A Thoroughly Modern VN

Maeve Fenton, Old Church Veterinary Hospital, talks to VetSCOPE about veterinary nursing

In the late '70s veterinary nurse Maeve Fenton faced a big decision. Take up the job offer in her Sligo home or the one in Ballyshannon nearer her boyfriend? She opted for the latter, and it's safe to say that – having married the man and stuck at the job for 30 years – she made the right choice.

Maeve had a good start in the world of veterinary nursing. She trained at famous Irish veterinary surgeon Ham Lambert's practice in South Richmond St., Dublin. Ham is notable as a companion animal vet that was 'ahead of his time'. Competition to train at his practice was fierce and, Maeve says, 40 people applied for four places in the year she got in. She says of the practice: "It was the most fantastic place to train in Ireland. I know small animal practices now that aren't doing the same business that Ham was doing then."

When, in 1978, Maeve made that important career decision, she joined a practice run by Frank O'Kelly and Tommy Walls. Gerry

Gilligan joined in 1979 and was made a partner shortly after. She says that Frank, who she describes as "a very forward thinking person", was keen to expand the small animal side of the practice, and employing Maeve was seen as a key way of doing this. The predominantly farm animal practice, having attained registered companion animal hospital status in 2002, is now roughly 50:50 companion and large



Gerry Gilligan, Maeve Fenton and Nick Garvey

animal. Frank sadly passed away in 2001, and the current partners at the practice, which is now known as Old Church Veterinary Hospital, are Gerry Gilligan and Nicholas Garvey.

But don't let this talk of the '70s fool you. Maeve Fenton is a thoroughly modern veterinary nurse. Thirty years on she is now the practice

manager at Old Church, and she takes a wide and varied interest in the future of veterinary nursing in Ireland. Training and education are top of her list, and Maeve has taught at Greenmount College in Antrim, trained VNs on-site and, most recently, helped in the launch of the new VN programme at Letterkenny Institute of Technology. Maeve says that the new approach to VN training, primarily courses for VNs that are run by VNs, is positive. "A veterinary nurse needs to be trained professionally but she also needs to be trained by other veterinary nurses. A VN's job and a vet's job are completely different and, when it comes to skills such as bandaging and fluid therapy, VNs win hands down."

Maeve also believes that VNs are a financial asset to a practice. "At the end of the day, the training is very tough and the VNs coming through are worth their weight in gold. They're a huge benefit to the practice and are vital in bonding with clients; they bring a lot of business through the door." One key area where she sees a natural

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Welcome

Veterinary practice management consultant Alan Robinson believes that practices that utilise and charge for their nurses wisely as health advisors see the most improvement in economic performance. In this edition Maeve Fenton, veterinary nurse, spoke with VetSCOPE on nursing within veterinary practice.

We constantly strive to keep our own business moving forward and in this edition, we are pleased to launch our new look website. To learn more about our high quality practice management solution please visit www.vetscope.ie

Have you noticed the new terminology entering the vocabulary of commentators to describe the current economic climate? Our feature on identifying the key performance indicators in your practice may help you identify a few "Green shoots" of your own!

Google Maps can help us find local businesses and get driving directions. In this issue we suggest you consider if putting your practice on Google Maps could benefit your practice?

Stephen Lawler

Stephen Lawler
Lawler Developments Ltd

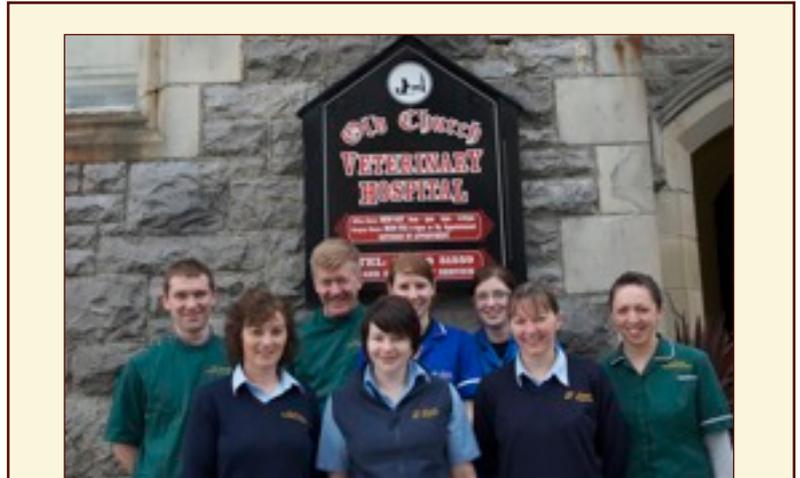


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role for VNs is through practice management software and customer relationship management. "We've been using VetSCOPE since 2004. We had been computerised prior to that but the main advantage with VetSCOPE is that we can access the clinical cases as well as the accounts. All the paperwork, the filing cabinet and the people who couldn't file properly have gone out the window!" During that first year of using VetSCOPE, she says that there was plenty to learn but that there was also ready advice and support from Lawler Developments. She says that Stephen, managing director of Lawler Developments, walked her through the process. "He's the most efficient and tolerant person. For the first year that we went with VetSCOPE I was continually on the phone asking him this question and that question and a lot of people would have said 'Do you not know that yet?' I believe he has the patience of a saint!" Now the VetSCOPE software is up and running in both Ballyshannon and the newer branch practice in Donegal town. Maeve says that they try to utilise the software to its greatest ability and, most recently, have started to use the VetSCOPE stock control function.

All of this frees Maeve up to do the job that she has enjoyed for the last three decades. "I live, eat and sleep my work and I'm very involved in the practice. I'm 30 years in the same job but it's never boring because there's always new things involved."



Old Church Refurbishment

As the name suggests, Old Church Veterinary Hospital is housed in an old church – a Methodist one to be specific. The practice moved to these premises, in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, just over 20 years ago. Since then, the practice has gone from strength to strength, and a branch practice was opened in Donegal town in 2004. Between the two practices there are six vets, two qualified nurses, one trainee nurse and three administration staff.

In the last 12 months, the main practice has undergone significant redevelopment. The main change is the expansion of the practice facilities into an upper floor. Parts of the practice such as the accounts and testing offices and pharmacy were moved upstairs, which has created extra space downstairs for an extra consult room and prep room; there are now two of each. The restructuring has also allowed the practice to accommodate a revamped reception area, and there's a lab and grooming room upstairs. The new facilities are all computerised and an increase in the number of computers and VetSCOPE licences has further aided the expansion.

New look VetSCOPE website

Lawler Developments have launched a new VetSCOPE website. With a modern, easy-access layout, www.vetscope.ie is designed to give visitors a clear insight into who we are, and offer advice and information on this high-quality veterinary practice management software. Features of the site include:

Product information: Find out more about the VetSCOPE suite of products. We clearly define the features and functionality of our product range. This section also contains useful tools such as the VetSCOPE mobile/ VetSCOPE handheld comparison chart.

FAQs: Curb any confusion with the answers to commonly asked

questions on VetSCOPE and its services.

News: Keep up-to-date with news and reviews from around the world. In this section, international veterinary news comes from ScienceDaily, one of the internet's most popular science news web sites, whilst tech news comes from online media site cnet. You can also catch up on the current edition of the VetSCOPE newsletter, or look through the archive of past editions.

The new VetSCOPE website also provides a further tier of support from Lawler Developments. Aside from the usual telephone/email support routes, you can now contact this market-leading company



through the website. Busy vets and practice managers can now submit and track online support requests for advice and information on VetSCOPE.

Register now at www.vetscope.ie. Only registered users will have access

to our support area featuring video tutorials on using VetSCOPE software.

We hope you like the design of the new website and find the content useful and informative.

VETSCOPE NEWS



Don't drown in practice information: Use key indicators

It's been said that a modern Sunday newspaper contains more information than the typical 15th century person was exposed to over an entire lifetime. It's true that extra news and advice can be a bonus but information overload can occur. Under these circumstances, we tend to start 'tuning out'. This can be a dangerous move when running a business but, luckily, you can target your attention on several key indicators to achieve practice success.

Veterinary practice management consultant Pere Mercader says that choosing what practice information to analyse involves hitting a balance. Speaking at an international veterinary business conference held recently in France, he said: "A lack of information generates costs in the form of erroneous decisions with financial consequences. But excess information also generates costs related to obtaining and interpreting data or 'analysis paralysis'."

So how do we achieve this fine balance? VetSCOPE affords the opportunity to generate meaningful, timely data on practice performance.

Let's look at five key indicators recommended by Mercader:

1) Revenue growth; i.e., practice revenue, from month to month and compared to previous years. Mercader advises practice revenue should be subdivided into

'revenue provided by medical services', e.g. consultations, surgery and hospitalisation etc., and 'non-medical services,' e.g. medications, food and accessories, to see exactly which areas of your practice are growing or declining.

2) Revenue 'quality'; It's also important to look at the range of areas from which your revenue comes. The more diverse the range of services your practice provides, the more resistant you will be to competition. Try not to get too dependant on one type of veterinary service. Mercader recommends, for example, that vaccination revenues in companion animal practices should not amount to more than 15% of total practice revenue.

3) Team productivity; Effective employees are essential to the running of a business, but are you over-staffed or under-staffed? By taking the total salary cost to the firm (gross wages plus social security, levies etc.), including an appropriate salary for the practice owner, and expressing it as a percentage of total practice revenue, you can work out the cost of personnel to a practice. According to Mercader, the average cost of this is between 38-45%. Anything over 45% suggests that the practice is over-staffed, he says.

4) Client dynamics indicators; You may know how many clients you have on your books, but do you know accurately

whether this figure is rising or falling? Mercader says that it's important to keep track of your net patient flow. This is measured as patients gained (new patients plus patients that have returned to the practice after a 12-month absence) minus patients lost (deceased patients plus patients who have not returned within the last 12 months). Expressed as a percentage of total active patients (any patients that have been seen within the last 12 months), this will give you an idea of where your client list is heading.

5) Financial indicators; There is a wealth of calculations, tests and analyses that you can do on your practice figures. Mercader says that, as a rule of thumb, practice purchasing and inventory policy should be reviewed if it results in greater than a sixty-day supply. With accounts receivable, expressed in euro as a percentage of the practice's annual billing, we can look at our client credit policy. Has anything changed recently? Are we becoming lax with following up accounts?

It's easy to feel overwhelmed when it comes to coping with practice accounts but, as with any clinical case, the secret is to target your effort in specific areas for the greatest rewards.



Pere Mercader

VetSCOPE training day at AIT

Feedback has been very positive following veterinary nurse training sessions held by VetSCOPE at Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT). Student vet nurses on the Institute's degree programme were given a beginner's guide to practice management software. Aims of the sessions were to familiarise students with computerised systems and increase their confidence in the features and various functions of this versatile software in veterinary practice.

According to staff at the veterinary nursing facility, the sessions were extremely well received by the students and feedback was excellent. It is hoped that the sessions will become a more frequent fixture at the facility – where VetSCOPE software was installed in 2008 – in future academic years.



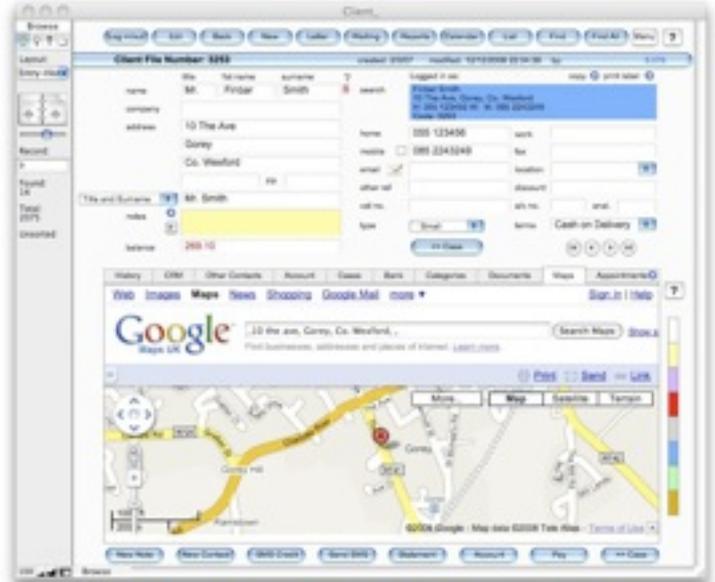
VETSCOPE NEWS

Put your practice on the map with internet technology

More and more people are turning to the internet to locate products and services. This trend is particularly obvious amongst the young with statistics showing that – aside from word-of-mouth – the internet is the most popular way for the under-35s to research a purchase. If, so far, you've avoided marketing your practice on the world-wide web, there is an easy way to get started – Google Maps.

Google Maps is a fast and free way to get your business onto the map – literally. This website allows you to upload information about your practice, including contact

details, opening hours, pictures and, if you have one, details of your website. Once you have registered, these details will be viewable online and visitors to Google Maps can locate your business premises easily on both a map and a satellite picture. Aside from the handy, pictorial directions this site provides, it also increases your exposure online. This is particularly useful for clients that are new to the area, or want to switch vet, and have no recommendations. A person can simply type in 'Mayo vets' and, if that's where your practice is, contact details and practice information for your



Find distance and get driving directions to any local business

business will appear on the left of the screen.

To get started, visit <http://maps.google.com> and click on 'Put your business on Google

Maps'. You will then need to log in to your Google account. If you don't have one it is, again, easy and free to do. Follow the online steps and, once you have used the validation code from Google, you are up and running. Fast, free and an added service for your clients – what's not to like?

VetSCOPE search tip: Find that date

When searching for dates, it is possible to search for a full year by just typing in the four digit year. For example, to find all records for 2009 just find and enter "2009" in the date field. To search for a particular month just enter the month number and the four digit year. For example to find all

records for Jan 2009 enter the find mode and enter "1/2009" in the date field. To find records between two dates, enter find mode and then enter the first date two full stops and then the second date to find a range of data between these dates. For example 1/1/2009..28/2/2009.

VetSCOPE Upgrade

We continually work to develop and enhance VetSCOPE software. The next version will have many new features and will save you even more time and money.

Release Date:
Late September 09

Price Beater - Dymo Labels

Prices are per box and exclude VAT. Viking price correct at time of printing. Available while stocks last. Delivery not included. Minimum order applies.

	VIKING PRICE	OUR PRICE	SAVING
Large Prescription Labels 99019	€27.99	€14.95	40%
Small Prescription Labels 99012	€24.99	€16.95	39%

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CONTACTING VETSCOPE

You can contact VetSCOPE by telephone on +353 (0)1 2602207 or mobile +353 (0)87 2243249 and in the UK on +44 (0) 208 144 2602 Email: info@vetscope.ie or in writing to 44 Fosterbrook, Stillorgan Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland

