

From Veterinarian to Entrepreneur: How to Go from Being an Employee to Being a Business Owner

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Introduction

Many independent veterinarians operate as job owners, trapped in their daily routine without being able to delegate or grow. This talk proposes a change in mindset: to stop being a technician who solves everything and become the architect of a sustainable, scalable business aligned with a clear personal and professional vision.

The Mammoth of Social Approval

One of the main invisible barriers in this process is the need for social approval. This "mammoth," although seemingly harmless, conditions key decisions: from hiring staff to raising prices or making unpopular but necessary changes.

Identifying it and learning to manage it is the first step towards true business autonomy.

Management vs Administration

Many veterinarians confuse administering with managing. Administering is maintaining what is there, while managing is directing change, making decisions, planning for the future, and taking risks. Moving from an operational role to a strategic one involves developing new skills: planning, analysis, decision-making, and leadership.

Finite and Infinite Games

Inspired by James Carse's theory, we explore the difference between playing to win (finite game) and playing to keep playing (infinite game). The veterinary entrepreneur adopts the infinite approach: seeking to build a business that evolves, survives market changes and serves as a platform for a greater purpose.

Financial Management: The Key to Moving Beyond Self-Employment

Without financial control, there is no business. Basic and advanced tools are discussed to provide a clear understanding of profitability, cash flow, margins, and projections. The goal is to stop working just to cover expenses and start building wealth through informed and strategic decisions.

Leadership and the Greiner Model

The growth of a veterinary clinic goes through different stages, each with its own leadership challenges. Larry Greiner's model helps us understand how to scale a business without collapsing: growth through creativity, direction, delegation, coordination, and collaboration. Recognising the current phase allows us to anticipate crises and adapt intelligently.

Conclusion

Transitioning from veterinarian to entrepreneur is not just a technical matter, but a profound change of identity. It requires courage, training, and a support network. This talk offers a roadmap for leaving self-employment behind and building a business with impact, purpose, and a future.