Getting to zero through animal facility design

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Overview of Topics

- Programs changing Animal Shelter Facility Design
- Reducing length of stay by creating healthy environments for animals
- Designing for efficient flow and operations
- Designing to encourage volunteerism
- Encouraging adoptions and public visitations
- Discouraging adoption returns by creating less stressful environments in the shelter
There are a number of programs that are being adopted throughout the world which are affecting how animal shelters are designed, including:

- Out of shelter foster care – reducing the need to house animals long term in shelters
- Out of shelter rehoming – via rescue and community groups
- Managed Admissions – reduces inefficiencies within the shelter and streamlines operations
- “Adoption Demand” – Some animals are in more demand than others and these demands vary from community to community. Fast track high demand animals to the adoption floor.
- Transfers between shelters and other groups
Steps to designing a new or expanding an existing Animal Shelter

- Defining Goals and Gathering Information
- Addressing the numbers
- Addressing stress in animals and staff
- Determining animal housing needs and non-animal needs
- Retail Theory
  - Featuring “Product”
  - Featuring “Companions”
  - Communicating Value
  - Limiting the Display
- The Five Senses – See, Hear, Smell, Touch, Taste
- 6th Senses – Hiring “People People”, Transparency, Authenticity
- The Adoption Experience
- Overall Impressions – Welcoming, Positive Messages, Lightness, Brightness, Humour and Creativity, Welcoming Community
Defining Your Goals & Gathering Information

- Smaller, Achievable Goals
- Within Context of Resources
- Facility Isn’t the Only Answer
What is your current metric of adoption animals per head of population per year?

Metric:
2-4 adoptions per 1000 people per year
Example:
100,000 people = 200 - 400 adoptions

Where would you like it to be in the future with a new facility:

- 5-8 per 1000 people?
- 8-10 per 1000 people?
Animal Environments

Environment affects the behaviour and stress level of people and animals

“Dominance aggression comes from anxiety.”  Dr. Karen Overall
Stress and Disease - impact on cats in shelter

Probability of URTD

Days in Shelter

- Litters of kittens
- Individual kittens
- Adults > 6 mos of age

Journal of Feline Medicine, Oct 2009
- Upper Respiratory Tract Disease in Cats
Routine to Reduce Stress
How to Reduce Stress

- Do Not Crowd!
- Follow Current Guidelines
- Keep it Quiet
- Bring In Natural Light
- Provide Fresh Air
Reduce Crowding – research indicates that reducing crowding results in higher adoption rates and lower euthanasia rates

Refer to research paper by University of California Davis:

Discouraging adoption returns by creating less stressful environments in the shelter
Guidelines for Cat Housing

The guidelines for cat housing vary from state to state in Australia and New Zealand, however we always recommend that clients follow the most stringent guidelines (VIC Code of Practice) for cat housing:

Table 5. Minimum cage, module and colony pen sizes for cats or up to three kittens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cat housing</th>
<th>Minimum Floor Area (square metres)</th>
<th>Minimum Width (centimetres)</th>
<th>Minimum Height (centimetres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory eight day period</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional period</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modules**</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colony Pens** (area per cat) for up to eight cats</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** A module or colony pen must contain at least two levels, excluding the floor, and these levels must be connected to the floor by means of a ramp or pole.
Examples

Transitional – Cat Condos
Examples

Modules – Walk in Cat Runs
Examples

Colony Pens
Quick Fixes for Cats

- Masking Noise – use electronic masking devices such as background music, water features and sound absorptive materials
- New Caging or Enrichments – consider warm materials like fibreglass cages or hospital grade cat condos
- Quiet Latches and soft closing hinges
- Exhaust Fans – you should aim to change the air 10-12 times per hour from within the cat enclosures
- Windows / Pleasant Views
- Keep cats housed individually from seeing each other – reduces stress on cats
Guidelines for Dog Housing

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height of dog/puppies at shoulders (centimetres)</th>
<th>Minimum Area (square metres)</th>
<th>Minimum Width (centimetres)</th>
<th>Minimum Height (centimetres)</th>
<th>Increased floor area for each additional dog (square metres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>above 70</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 70</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 40</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples
Examples
Quick Fixes for Dogs

- New Pens or Enrichments

- More Exercise Areas that are not in direct view of dogs in pens

- Install Visual Barriers between dogs – will reduce dog barking noise by 50%

- Noise Baffles or Divide the Room

- Masking Noise – use electronic masking devices such as background music (harp music best to reduce stress in dogs), water features and sound absorptive materials

- Fresh Air Improvements
Good Ventilation & Natural Light
Create a Pleasant Experience for the Animals

- Stressed out animals are not very adoptable
- Do as much as you can within your budgetary limitations to present happy, healthy and lovingly cared for companions.

Ideas Include:

- Create socialisation spaces for dogs and cats for volunteers to interact and provide enrichment
- Give the animals defensible space
- Put the best air flow in the animal enclosure rather than in the public space
“Adoptions increased 40% after the remodel” – Sue Conroy, The Lost Dogs’ Home - Cat Adoption
Featuring “Product”
Featuring Companions
Communicating Value
Communicating Value
Limiting the Display

- +/- 30 Cats
- +/- 20 Dogs
- Using Pre-Adoption Housing
The Five Senses

- Vision
- Hearing
- Taste
- Smell
- Touch
Smell

Typical

Ideal
Smell
Touch
Touch
Touch
A café or resting areas make the visit a memorable one.
6th Senses

🐾 Hiring “People People”
6th Senses

- Transparency
- Authenticity
Transparency
Transparency
Authenticity
The Adoption Experience
Overall Impressions
Welcoming
Positive Messaging
Lightness & Brightness
Creating Companions
Creating Companions
Creating Companions
Welcoming and Educating the Community
Conclusion