ASSOCIATION STRATEGY

How AVTE turned one presidential address into an operating framework

Helping an association find its organizing idea

Association of Veterinary Technician Educators (AVTE)

Launched at the 2024 Annual Conference in Houston · Now AVTE's operating framework

1 night
working with the president to frame One Community for her address

1 week
from the speech to a shared framework on paper

3 domains
every partnership must advance: leadership, innovation and mentorship

The challenge

Veterinary technician education had no shortage of committed people. What it lacked was a common center. Educators, programs, credentialing bodies and practice partners each worked hard, mostly on their own.

The result was a community struggling to come together around what mattered most: supporting students and the veterinary medicine they go on to practice. AVTE needed an idea big enough to bring that community together quickly, and to turn conflict into a can-do approach that could unify it.

The moment

That idea took shape in Houston in 2024. After a series of conversations leading up to and at the annual conference, AVTE's leadership decided to move forward with One Community, a collaboration that values each member's contributions to advance veterinary technician education, student success and the organization itself.

TVDA worked through the night alongside then-President Jen Serling and other officers to frame it inside her presidential address. She delivered it the next day. Within a week, AVTE's leaders and TVDA had a one-pager that defined the idea and committed AVTE to new ways of working.

> “Achieving student success demands a genuinely collaborative effort across individual and organizational levels. Anything less risks failing our students and the communities they will serve.”
>
> **Jen Serling** · Then-President, AVTE · introducing One Community, Houston 2024

WHAT TVDA DID

One Community isn't a slogan. It's a set of habits AVTE practices every week.

01 Partnerships with a filter

Every partnership has to advance leadership, innovation or mentorship. A vague “should we?” becomes a quick yes or no the board can defend.

02 Sponsors as year-round partners

Sponsors are invited in for the whole year, not just a booth at the conference. The conversation shifts from what a logo costs to what a relationship with educators is worth.

03 Programs that connect educators

The One Community Podcast and the Vet Tech New Faculty Academy both started from one question: does this connect educators to each other?

04 A convener at the national table

AVTE now sits at national tables it once watched from outside, working alongside other national veterinary organizations.

> “AVTE's board already believed in this. You could hear it in every hallway conversation in Houston. Our job was to help them say it clearly, and then build it into the work so it would stick.”
>
> **Todd Von Deak, DBA, CAE** · Co-Owner and President, TVD Associates · Executive Director, AVTE

WHAT TVDA CAN DO FOR YOU

Find the idea

We listen across your board, members and partners until the common thread is clear. Usually it's already there.

Make it usable

We turn it into a short set of commitments your board can use to guide key conversations and critical decisions.

Build it in

Partnerships, sponsorship, programs and communications all carry it, so it lasts well past the launch.

Looking for the idea that ties your association together? Let's talk.

Book 20 minutes with Todd at calendly.com/toddvondeak, or send us a note at tvdassociates.com.