ROYAL CANIN®
ALL THINGS FELINE
What’s the plan?

- Pop quiz: how well do you know feline behaviour?

- The most unpredictable part of the feline: the owner
  - Creating personas

- The world through the eyes of a cat
  - Group exercise

- Workshop: design the ideal waiting room/consulting room / hospital for your feline VIPs
Cat Quiz
When cats rub up against your legs, they are saying?

A. I love you  
B. I missed you  
C. You are part of my family  
D. I own you
“Bunting” is a way of marking something as belonging to a cat.

The process of rubbing themselves against objects or people deposits their scent from sebaceous glands situated on their heads and along their flanks.

Bunting is most often done on inanimate objects!
All cats love catnip?

A True  B False
Cats’ response to catnip is **genetic** and while about 80% of cats do like it, 10 - 20% are not affected (and some non-responders actively dislike it).

Males are more likely to respond than females.

In most cats, the response is functionally identical to the human response to marijuana, but a small minority respond more violently, reacting similarly to humans exposed to LSD.
“Mrw-EE-ow” means “I want food”?

A. True
B. False
C. It depends who the cat is talking to
Did you know that cats don’t all speak the same vocal language to their humans?

Normally, cats only use vocalisations between queen and litter, or when they are far away from each other.

Meowing when they are close to another adult is reserved for humans – possibly because we don’t respond well to the subtlety of their visual signals.

Cats develop different “dialects” of meow based on what their humans respond to. True story!
The cat in the top left hand corner is displaying a calm and relaxed posture. Which cat is displaying confident aggression? (not fear aggression)

A  Top right
B  Bottom right
C  Bottom left
Posture
Similar to dogs, cats who are confident that they will win the fight show a less exaggerated posture than cats who are fear aggressive. The cat bottom right is doing everything he can to look as big as possible while the stiff hindlimbs and relaxed tail of the cat top right indicates it does not expect to lose.

Image: Classic feline postures, Leyhausen 1975
Cats feel safer when they are higher up?

A  True

B  False
That’s an easy one

Cats always feel safest when they are high up, which is why having tables or cat carrier trees in the waiting room is recommended for your feline patients.
Cats are solitary and should not be kept in multi-cat households

A  True  B  False  C  It depends on the cat
In general, cats are less social than dogs and most adult cats do better in a single-cat household.

However, some cats can form social alliances and become close to other cats, and as long as they have sufficient resources, most cats can cohabit in a large home.

This is unpredictable, which is why many behaviourists prefer to err on the side of caution by stating that cats are always better off in single-cat households.
In multi-cat households, how many sets of resources (litter, food, water, hiding place) should there be?

A. If there are plenty of litter trays, they can share food and water
B. One per floor
C. Two
D. One more than the number of cats
Sharing

We all know cats who do live well together, and they may choose to share some resources.

However, to ensure their welfare long-term, behaviourists recommend N+1 sets of resources in different parts of a multi-cat household, allowing everyone access to everything they need.
Creating personas
Cat owners...

Cat people are different to dog people.

Cat owners*:
• Spend more time on the internet than dog owners
• Are more likely to ask friends for advice on cat care
• Are more likely to follow friends’ recommendations about cat care and feeding than dog owners

If you can convince your cat owners that you are a good practice for their cats, their friends will hear about it and bring their cats to you too!


Accoutrements Crazy Cat Lady Action Figure, available on Amazon.com ($12.16, sourced September 2015)
The most difficult part of the cat – their owner! 
Introduction to personas…

So how do we convince our cat owners to love us?

- One of the easiest ways to ensure that you appeal to a certain type of person is to create a persona
- What is a persona?
  - Imaginary person
  - Has a name, history and personality, habits, hobbies, likes and dislikes
  - Created by using common traits
  - Combined to make one fictional persona
- First used by internet companies
- Commonly used in marketing
- Easier to feel that we are talking to a person
- Plans we make with the aim of pleasing a “persona” are often more successful than plans we make to please a “sector of our clientele”

*Why should you care?*
Creating a persona

Think of your loyal cat clients

- Age
- Gender
- Profession
- Relationship status (relating to partner and kids)
- Physical appearance – especially what they wear (brands, smart, scruffy?)
- Hobbies (use your imagination!)
- Their relationship with their cat:
  - Is it the only pet? Is it their child? Is their cat a pure-breed? Does it have a Facebook page?
  - An Instagram account? How many selfies do they take of it per day?
- NAME! (don’t really name it after a client, but make up a name to suit your persona)

The easiest way to build a persona is to use the most common characteristic.

If you don’t know, think of your friends who have cats!
Share your personas!

- Are your personas quite similar?
- What do they have in common?

We’ll use these personas again to market your practice to your cat clients and their friends.
Senses
VISION:

- The dominant sense (the one they rely on most) for hunting and safety

- Some colour vision, able to see in 1/5 of the light that humans can, but only about 1/10 as sharp

- Ideal focus at 2m (think of chasing a mouse). Objects less than 2m away are out of focus
THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A CAT

Hearing:

Similar acuity to dogs, upper limit may be five times higher than humans (dogs only two times higher than humans)

Pinnae can move through 180° to pinpoint prey
THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A CAT

• Vibrissae (touch sensitive hairs / whiskers) all around the head, and on the paws.

• The paws' sensitivity to vibration, ideal as a hunting aid, is thought to be the reason for cats' ability to "predict earthquakes"
THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A CAT

Smell:

- 6 times as many olfactory cells as humans (as many as a small dog – so they have a similar sense of smell to dogs).
- Cats have a fully functional vomeronasal organ and are even more sensitive to pheromones than dogs.
THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A CAT

Taste:
• 15 times fewer taste buds than humans and three times less than dogs

• The least developed of the senses – but made up for by intense smell and high sensitivity to the texture (crunchiness or sliminess) of food
Make like a cat…

Exercise
GROUP EXERCISE: feedback

Some questions for the cat (and for observers)
1. How did it feel?
2. What was worst for you?
3. Was it worse than you expected?

Most people who go through this exercise feel more overwhelmed than they expected to.

Thinking like a cat can help us look at our own practices in a new light and can help us see where small improvements can make them more comfortable for feline patients, even if they are already pretty good!
What can you do to make a cat's visit to the vet the best possible experience?
Summary and resolutions…

➢ Write down the one thing you would like to change in your practice to make it even more cat friendly

➢ Create a persona in YOUR practice with your colleagues

➢ Think like a cat….REALLY THINK LIKE A CAT!
THANK YOU!