

# vetcelerator

VETCELERATOR CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMING A LEGACY –  
A FAMILY'S JOURNEY TO OWNING AND RUNNING AN INDEPENDENT VETERINARY PRACTICE

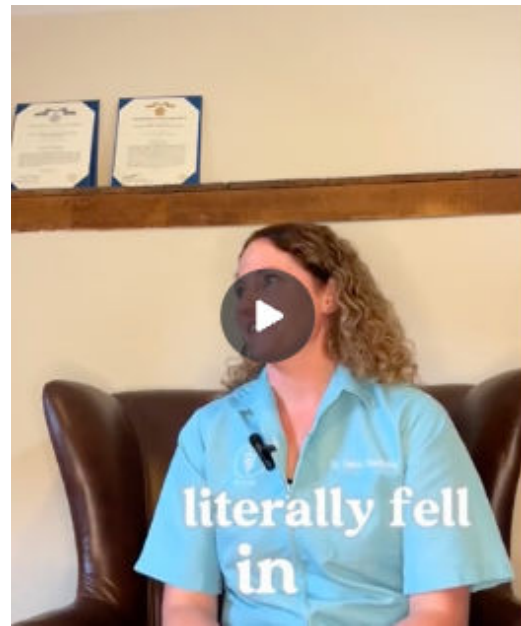
## Transforming a Legacy



### BACKGROUND AND VISION

Dr. Nena Stebbins is a veterinarian with a big heart and a down-to-earth way of looking at things. Growing up in a small Tennessee town, she always had a deep love for animals and a soft spot for the kind of community where everyone knows your name. Though she once dreamed of escaping the cozy confines of small-town life, her journey brought her full circle, right back to the kind of place she holds dear.

As a military spouse, Dr. Stebbins moved often, working in clinics all across the country. Each stop gave her a fresh perspective on what makes a practice tick—and what doesn't.



**"I've worked in a lot of different places, having been military with my husband, and I've seen how staff are treated and how they feel they're treated," she says.**

This experience fueled her desire to create a clinic environment where everyone, from staff to clients, felt valued and respected.

Despite her extensive experience, Dr. Stebbins never imagined owning her own veterinary clinic. **"I did not want to own, had no interest in owning,"** she admits, reflecting on how her husband, with his MBA, had always encouraged her to consider ownership. But the stress and responsibility associated with it were deterrents—until life had other plans. Dr. Stebbins started to reconsider her stance when the corporate-owned clinic where she worked began changing in ways she couldn't influence. What followed was an unexpected opportunity to purchase a local practice—a chance that ultimately led her to create a thriving family-owned business.

### THE CHALLENGE

Owning a clinic was never in Dr. Stebbins' plans, but life often has unexpected turns. As Dave sat at their daughter's horseback riding lessons, he overheard that the local vet planned to retire and sell his practice. Initially, Dr. Stebbins didn't give it much thought—she was content with her current position. However, her husband nudged her, suggesting, "Just take a look." And so, what started as an ordinary day at the stables quickly turned into the beginning of something far more unexpected.

The real turning point came when she finally visited the clinic. What she had intended as a simple visit felt more like a homecoming—familiar, warm, and full of potential. Suddenly, the idea didn't seem so far-fetched after all.



**"We drove up, and I instantly fell in love with the barn,"** Dr. Stebbins reminisces. **"It reminded me of home."** What began as a hesitant visit quickly blossomed into the start of a new chapter.

**"I told myself, if it's meant to happen, it will. If not, then so be it."** With that easygoing mindset, she and her husband moved through the negotiations without pressure, fully prepared to walk away if things didn't feel right. But everything fell perfectly into place, and before they knew it, the papers were signed, and they were officially the new owners.



## BUILDING TRUST AND WINNING OVER THE COMMUNITY

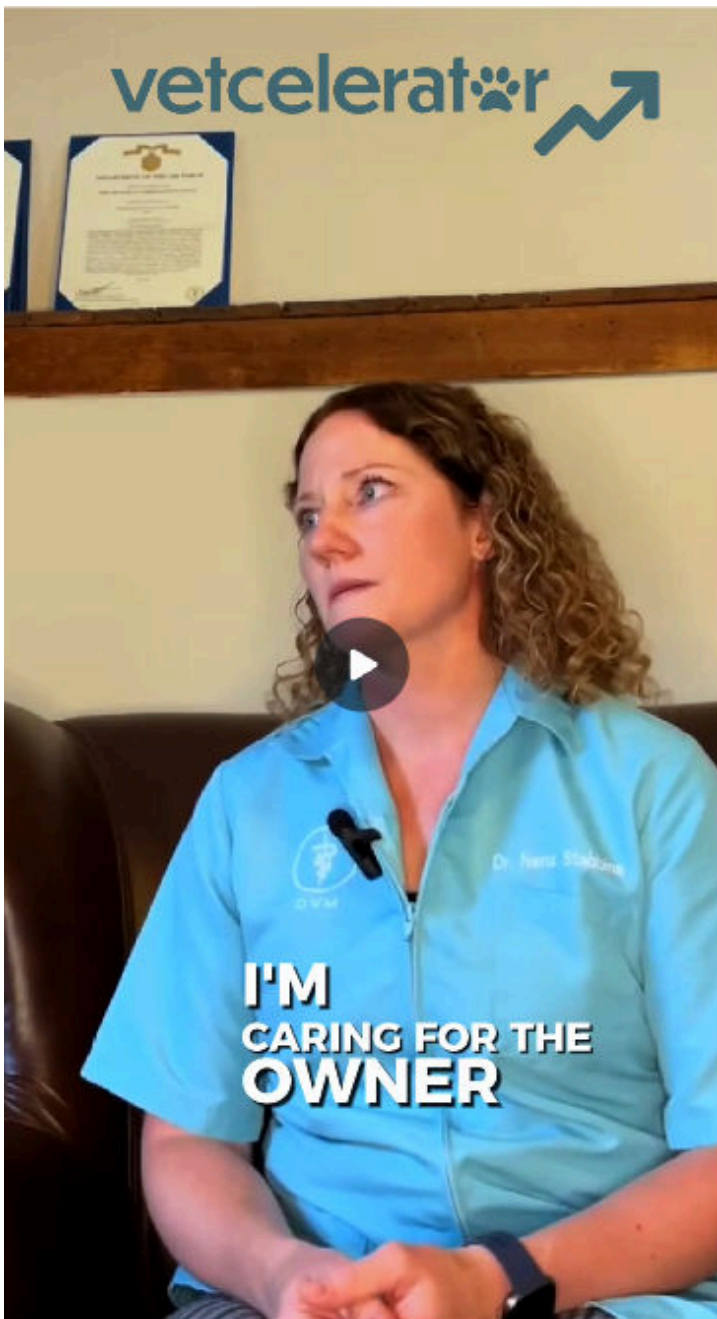
In Dr. Stebbins' words, the first three months of ownership were **"hectic, very hectic."** Taking over a practice managed by Dr. John for nearly 40 years was no small task. Dr. Stebbins knew she had big shoes to fill and a community to win over. **"I really thought clients would give me more pushback just because I'm not John, and I don't do things the way John did,"** she admits. However, the transition was smoother than expected, with many clients appreciating her approach.



A key part of Dr. Stebbins' philosophy is creating a supportive and family-like environment in the clinic. **"I spend more time here than with my own family, so I wanted to build a culture where people know I care about them, and they care about me,"** she explains. This approach, combined with her commitment to listening to pet owners and working within their means, quickly gained the trust of her clients. **"I'm not here to tell people how to treat their animal,"** she says. **"It's my job to educate them so they can do what's best for their animal within their means."**

Despite the inevitable challenges, such as dealing with outdated computer systems and technical glitches, the reception from the community was overwhelmingly positive. "In the beginning, you could tell people were hesitant to meet me, but once they realized I'm not going to do every test under the sun and spend all their money, it's been really good," she says.

One of the unique aspects of Dr. Stebbins' approach is her preference to be addressed simply as Nena. **"I actually hate being called 'Doctor' outside the exam room,"** she shares. **"That's what I do, not who I am. Outside of that, I'm just Nena."**



## A TRUE FAMILY BUSINESS

The genuine family involvement in the day-to-day operations of Dr. Stebbins' practice sets it apart from many others. Her husband, Dave, plays a crucial role in the business, leveraging his MBA to manage the operational and financial aspects. **"I told him when this whole thing started, if we're doing this, you're doing it with me. There's no way I'm doing it alone,"** Dr. Stebbins says. This partnership allows her to focus on what she loves most: the medicine. **"I'm soft-hearted," she admits. "If it were up to me, I'd probably give everything away for free, but that's where Dave is my rock."**

The family doesn't stop there. Dr. Stebbins' mother, who moved in with the family, is another vital part of the clinic. She works as the clinic's receptionist two days a week, providing a warm, familiar face for clients. **"This is a truly family-owned business,"** Dr. Stebbins notes with pride. Her mother's presence at the clinic adds to the close-knit atmosphere that Dr. Stebbins works hard to cultivate.

Cassie, the previous owner's daughter, was instrumental in facilitating the ownership transition, and remains a vital part of the team, ensuring continuity and stability during the handover.



**"Cassie was the reason the deal went through," She was on top of everything, pushing it through."**

The family dynamic doesn't stop at the clinic doors. The Stebbins family has fully woven themselves into the community, with Dr. Stebbins often found chatting with clients about their kids, swapping stories, and making sure the clinic feels like a cozy extension of home. Even their children are part of the clinic's extended family, pitching in when they can or simply being around, adding to the warm, family-friendly atmosphere that makes the place so special.

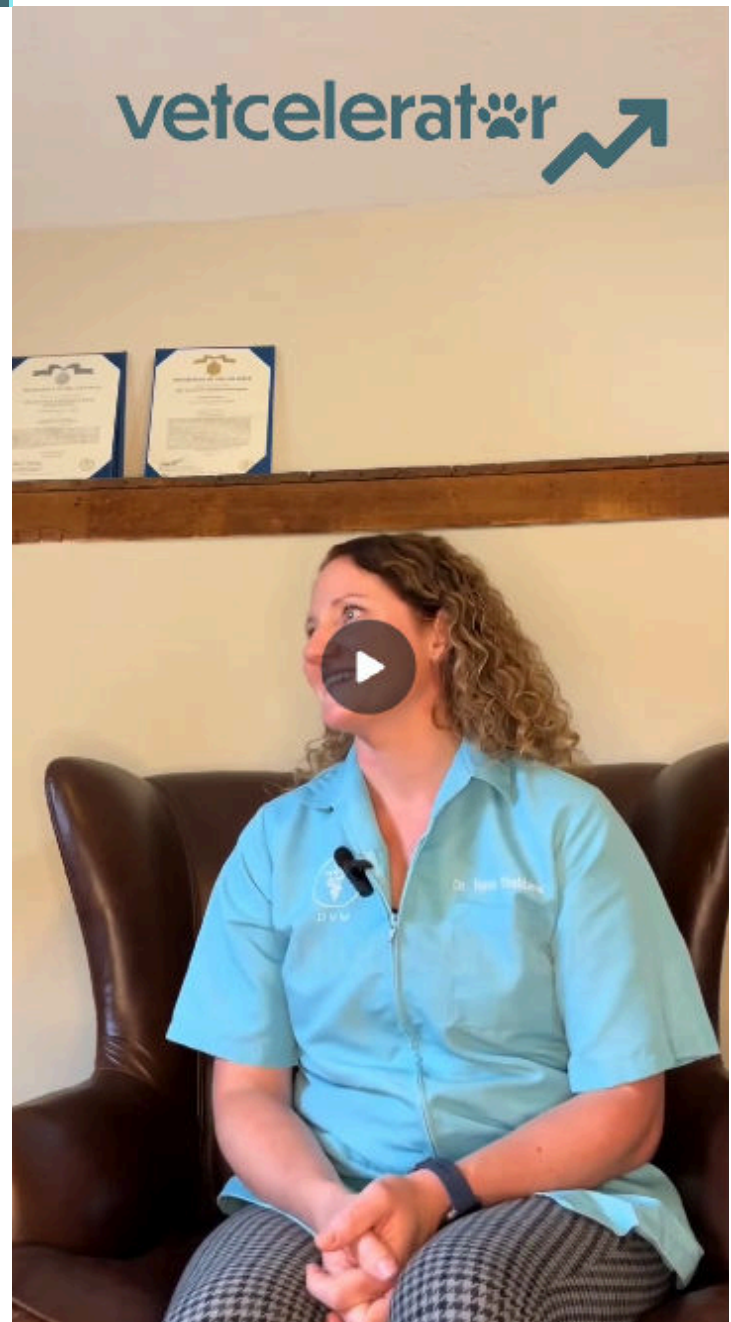


## LOOKING AHEAD

As the clinic approaches its first anniversary under new ownership, Dr. Stebbins envisions a future that maintains the small-town feel that drew her to the practice in the first place. **"I want to keep it small. I like knowing the clients when they walk in, asking how their kids are, and just maintaining that personal touch,"** she explains. Growth is on the horizon, but it will be carefully managed to ensure the clinic remains true to its roots.

Dr. Stebbins' journey from reluctant practice owner to the heart of a thriving family business is a testament to the power of community, family, and a commitment to compassionate care. Her story is a compelling example for any veterinarian considering the leap into practice ownership—showing that with the right support, it's possible to create a fulfilling, family-centered career that makes a lasting impact on the community.

With Vetcelerator managing the clinic's website and digital presence, Dr. Stebbins can focus on what she loves most—caring for her patients and building lasting relationships with their owners. **"I'm just about the medicine,"** she says.



**"Vetcelerator takes care of the rest, and that peace of mind lets me stay fully committed to my practice and my community."**



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### CLINIC HOURS

Monday: 9am - 5pm  
Tuesday: 9am - 5pm  
Wednesday: 9am - 5pm  
Thursday: 9am - 6pm  
Friday: 9am - 5pm  
Saturday: Closed  
Sunday: Closed