CATalyst Council, Inc. 
Backgrounder

The CATalyst Council is a national initiative to champion the cat in light of troubling statistics released by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Feline health is a prominent concern in the animal health industry. The 2007 AVMA U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook revealed an owned cat population of 81.7 million, almost 10 million more than domesticated dogs, making cats America’s number one companion. In 2006, 36 percent of those 81.7 million cats did not visit a veterinarian compared to only 17 percent of dogs. Cats are twice as likely as dogs to not see a veterinarian, leaving many cats undiagnosed and untreated for illness, disease, pain and discomfort.

The CATalyst Council was formed in May 2008 from two grassroots efforts – Re-Branding Felix and the CATalyst Summit. Following these two meetings, the CATalyst Council, a not-for-profit corporation headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., was created and includes three distinct groups: veterinary medicine, shelter/animal welfare and related industry entities, such as foundations and cat fanciers, the media and commercial companies. By virtue of the open and inclusive structure of the board, these bodies are able to represent a broad range of diverse stakeholders in feline healthcare and welfare. Many of these stakeholders participated in the CATalyst Summit. Working together, the CATalyst Council intends to make a difference in the way the United States sees and experiences cats.

The CATalyst Council’s purpose addresses the organization’s desire to change society’s image of cats as aloof creatures, not in need of human contact or care. The vision of the CATalyst Council is to raise the level of care and welfare of cats by cat owners – one that any owner will embrace through the human-animal bond and can achieve – supported by the highest quality veterinary care, preventative medicine and cat-friendly products.

The 2009 CATalyst Council board of directors includes: Dr. Jane E. Brunt as executive director; Dan Kramer, senior marketing manager of industry relations, Pfizer Animal Health, as chair; Robert Rohde, president, Dumb Friends League, as vice chair; Dr. Alexis Nahama, vice president of marketing, VCA Animal Hospitals, as secretary; and Dr. Karen Felsted, chief executive officer, National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues, as treasurer. Other board members include: Dr. Anna Worth, American Animal Hospital Association; Dr. Christine Jenkins, Hill’s Pet Nutrition, Inc.; Bill Lopez, Merial; Jim Flanigan, American Veterinary Medical Association; Jan McHugh-Smith, Society of Animal Welfare Administrators; Dr. Diane Eigner, American Association of Feline Practitioners; Heidi Jeter, Morris Animal Foundation; and Steve Dale, nationally syndicated pet columnist and radio show host.

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