

## Human & Dog in Urban Environment – Could Basic IMS Standards Help to Improve Human & dog Mutual Understanding?

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*Modern life, particularly urban one, is well regulated. Standards are developed for almost every sphere of human activities including proper treatment of nature and different working processes. IMS standards, particularly ISO 14001 and ISO 9001, are widely spread. In this human made environment we indicated some space and rules for pets, dogs in particular, how to behave, eat, walk, then for us the advices how to become their pack leaders... Also we could apply some widely used requirements and rules from IMS (Integrated Management Systems) standards for dogs' owners, trainers and breeders. But we'd better always keep in mind that dogs are animals, a part of nature. Why not to see our attitude to dogs through these standards we invented to preserve nature and improve working processes? It will help to put aside the anthropocentric position and to look at dogs as a specific world that exists side by side with ours and that we only learn how to respect and communicate with.*

**Key words:** dog, city, urban environment, dog owner, IMS

### 1. INSTEAD OF A PREFACE

An eventual dog owner has various resources to find information about a chosen breed. He/she can read books and magazine articles about health, behavior and best training methods of the breed. The simplest variant is to search the needed information by key words in the Internet. It'll give thousands of written and video information in a half of a second. However, how many of those who plan to get a dog do it?

This was the reason why it seemed practical to write an article more about education of dog-owners than about education of dogs. Working, sport, hunting and other specialized dogs that get specific training are excluded from the theme while the so called pets and their owners are in the focus of my attention. And – just for clarification – this article is devoted only to urban dogs, as attitude towards dogs in country side is a big and particular issue.

Following the suggestion of the ‘TEHNIKA’ magazine, which of course has its own editorial politics, I tried to interrelate the topic of human&dog in the

urban environment with the basic IMS international standards ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 [1, 2]. Reading these standards thoroughly I found out that some of their requirements could be applied here. Of course it'd be rather difficult to interpret particular provisions of the standards in relation to the process of education of dog owners. However the very idea of a precautionary attitude and measures to the processes which characterized human–dog key relationships, to the environment and to each of its objects in every activity as well as treatment of clients and partners in the same format can be implemented.

In our opinion all quality management principles [1], especially: leadership, process approach, improvement, evidence-based decision making, relationship management (trainer-owner), could be applied to all processes describing human & dog relationships in urban environment. We especially emphasize the importance of applying the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle and risk-based thinking concept [1, 2] for the continuous improvement and achieving high quality of human–dog key relationships.

ISO 14001 gives a systematic approach to environmental management. Its main purpose is to protect environment and give the adequate respond to changing environmental conditions [2]. For example, one of the main goals of responsible dog's owner is to prevent environment of pollution [3].

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Another, very important, field of IMS implementation is that cynological organizations, which deal with training of dogs and educating of dogs' owners, could be certified according the requirements of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 international standards [4]. But that is a topic for another article.

## 2. A DOG IN OUR LIFE: WHO OR WHAT?

Man's affiliation with the dog dates back 135,000 years. Since then, there have been considerable changes in society and as a result, our relationship with dogs has altered dramatically. Many breeds of dog were originally bred to work, but now many are kept solely as companions. In spite of this, dogs still need ample physical and mental stimulation to prevent behavioral problems [5].

If dogs could talk, perhaps we would find it as hard to get along with them as we do with people (Karel Capek) [6].

A person can easily express his or her attitude towards a dog by just answering a simple question "Why do you have a dog?" The range of answers can be rather broad: for morning jogging, for evening walking, for kids, to have a companion, etc. Once I asked this question a family of a father, mother, two grown up daughters + a German shepherd puppy. They (except the puppy) glanced at each other a little awkwardly, obviously not knowing what to say. This simple question never came to their mind.

The most shocking reply I've heard from a lady who had taken into her rather modest Moscow flat a female alabay (Middle Asian shepherd dog): to have a beautiful dog laying on the sofa – the lady answered. I was nearly knocked down by this phrase and felt greatly pity for the dog. A straight and unpretentious answer as 'we always had dogs' seems much more sympathetic.

It is more than obvious that very often people in cities take dogs to their homes even not considering what kind of animal a dog is. This light minded position causes sad results. It seems (may be wrongly) the new generation that grew up in summer cottages and on beaches (not with grandmothers and grandfathers in villages where there were pigs, chickens, and of course, dogs and cats) has quite abstract ideas about animals in general (with their instincts, needs, etc.), and dogs in particular.

Once I met with an outrageous expression of this absence of understanding. I came with my dog to a veterinary clinic rather late in the evening and was surprised to see a lot of people with dogs there. While waiting in the line I spoke with a man who had a young beautiful alabay. The alabay looked quite healthy, and the dog and the owner communicated with each other

very well. Yes, the man said, the dog is young and healthy. But with his wife they decided to get rid of the pet because of her behavior: she bites furniture being alone in the flat. However, I was much more shocked when those who decided to get rid of their dogs were called to come inside and almost all the crowd went to the entrance. None of the dogs returned to their homes.

As it is a rather expensive way, many of those who discovered that it was a mistake to take a dog, prefer other cost-effective methods: for example to take a dog at a great distance from the house and leave him or her there. Once walking in a forest my friends found a very young borzoy dog, torn to a tree.

Obviously she stood for a few days and obediently waited for her master. The reason for this cruelty was that the dog had problems with her eyes, so her owner didn't want her any more. Fortunately, this story got a happy end.

Undoubtedly, these are extremities, and most people take care of their dogs and treat them as friends and members of families. All those people are sure that their dogs are happy. However, paradoxically, it's a big question.

A dog lives with a human for thousands of years and tuned to life of people even in a modern urban environment. Laykas live in warm flats, mastinos for half a years (at least in Moscow) walk in snow on their rahitic legs, light legged afghan hounds dully walk on leashes, German shepherds lose their working qualities without adequate training. Most of the dogs eat granules and have small city green spots for walking. This list of elements of the "happy" city dog's life can be continued [7]. Indeed, dog's love to a man, tolerance and generosity is unlimited.

No, I'm not against having a dog in a city. Fare from it. I'm just against treating a dog as an addition to our life. A dog is not an object in our life that is at our full disposal. Dogs – are a specific world, that exists side by side with our world and that is to be understood and respected if we want to communicate adequately. In short, it would be useful to put aside the anthropocentric model of the world (which we were taught and are attached to starting from school) and start to respect a DOG IN A DOG [8].

What do I mean?

Firstly, a dog is a predator and has some level of aggression, which is expressed in different situations and because of various reasons. Usually, people feel tension when speaking about aggression, mostly because they apply it to a human behavior.

However, at the same time people forget that it is the natural ability of a dog to be aggressive, and we use it in a protection, security and body-guard work, in cynological sports (IPO, mondioring), etc.

As example, figure 1 shows a dog in attack during defense training. Adrenaline at these moments is very high [9].

A dog that has an adequate psyche doesn't become aggressive without any reason. There is no doubt, that it's necessary to give a dog a proper training and socialization, however, it'd better keep in mind that aggression is in dog's nature. The best way out seems not to put your dog in a situation when a dog this very aggression can express.

Once in our district lives an owner of a male German shepherd and always declares that all dogs should be friends. With this quite an inadequate idea in his mind he let his GS communicate with every dog without asking the other owner if it'd be OK. Naturally, conflicts emerged constantly as not all dogs share the idea of global friendship. This story had a rather unhappy end as once this owner let his GS play with another strong male who was playing with a female. The owner of course blamed everybody: angry bad dogs and their uncultured masters. However, the reason for his GS being badly bitten is that his master failed to understand the basis of animals' behavior.



Figure 1 – Mondioring training. Defense work. Attack of a Dutch shepherd

An aggression towards dogs and towards humans are different qualities. A dog can be unfriendly to another dog as, for example, a rival, however doesn't mean that this very dog will be aggressive to a human. And contrary, a dog can be very friendly with other dogs but aggressive towards a human that is, as rule, a result of an inadequate treatment. I knew a charming malteze who became very angry and is biting as answer to a tiny attempt to hug him. However the reason for such a impoliteness was that as a puppy he lived in a family with a small child. Evidently nobody explained to the kid that a dog is not a live toy, which he can hug and play with whenever he wants. In an outcome, a year later the merry and dynamic malteze puppy was transformed in a psychologically unbalanced, suspicious and nervous creature.

A dog, as an each living being, has individual boundaries that should be respected and not violated. As example, figure 2 shows a dog that chose a place between two plastic chairs and feels there very comfortable, protected and sure of himself.

It's nice if a dog has a place in a flat, where nobody touches him, time for walking, training and communication with the master and other members of the family, also has four-legged friends. However, these individual boundaries are not unchangeable.



Figure 2 – Individual boundaries have a unique design

Changes of the dog's character and relationships with the environment with years - is a big and specific topic [10]. And a lot of beginners in the cynology are not aware of it and not ready for it.

What's the usual "dog's story" in a family? A family takes a sympathetic puppy of a breed those people likes (A choice of a breed is also a big theme. As a rule it is chosen as in a film, fashionable or some friends have. The worst variant is to show respectability or a high financial status of the owner.). A puppy of five-six months usually knows general rules of good dog's behavior, and all members of the family are happy that they applied minimum efforts while their pet understands everything. They are sure that further he or she will be only better and better. However, life is full of paradoxes. At about eleven months a pretty pet is transformed (if there is no proper education) in a stubborn and nasty creature (males as a most). Owners cannot understand this metamorphosis. Often people come to us with about year old pets that jump in an uncontrolled manner, knock down kids, bite furniture and cables and sometimes owners themselves. Once a whitest shpitz was brought to us because he considered the flat as a WC and did everything to infuriate his owner (it was a way to attract attention that the dog lacked).

The reason for all these human-dog misunderstanding is that people do not want to think that the character of the dog is constantly changing, and it's

necessary to make some practical efforts to canalize these developments in an applicable way [11].

To understand properly these modifications and to react on them in the urban environment is maybe more important than in the countryside. In a city a pet lives with his master in the same flat and communicates with him constantly.

### 3. CONCLUSION. A LEADER OF A PACK? TRY TO GAIN THIS POSITION

Some years ago a concept of a master as a leader of a pack was well accepted. And as a consequence we believe that being a leader of a pack we have the right to require a total obedience of a dog, that the dog automatically takes the lowest step in the hierarchy. There is no doubt that a dog should obey the master. In a city it is a must for the comfort of other people and for the dog himself will be safe. But is this model so simple? Why it doesn't work always, and owners to install their leader-of-the-pack role use shouts and punishments? By the way shouts do not always make a dog obey but can make him or her even more nervous.

We never think that the dog – to be obedient – needs to recognize the owner as a leader. In nature in a pack a leader is not nominated by some higher boss as in our human bureaucratic society. To become a leader a wolf or a dog should apply a lot of efforts, to be stronger, braver, clever and more experienced than the others. What's the conclusion for an owner? He should work to be recognized as a leader of a pack. Unfortunately, very few of them think in this way.

Let's compare this situation with the one in children's environment. Who usually becomes a leader? Those who stronger, braver, suggest something new (good or bad - is another topic).



Figure 3 – Enjoyable training in any weather

What's the most popular way of spending time with pets? In most cases people walk with a dog on a

leash, in the same streets or parks, play with balls or let play with other dogs while chatting with friends. So, to become a recognized leader for your dog it's more than desirable to make it possible for your dog to REALIZE HIS OR HER TALENTS and to provide constantly something new; to teach new exercises, to go to a training ground, to your friends, to change places of walks, to teach to behave properly in transport, in an open café or a market, to take your dog to a country side, to teach to swim etc. As example, figure 3 shows an owner with her dog making a new agility exercise on a training ground) [11].

You can think about a lot of interesting things how to spend the time mutually interesting, and with years the pack model will be transformed into friends model. As example, figure 4 shows an owner and a dog that have good mutual psychological contacts.



Figure 4 –Together

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## REZIME

### OVEK & PAS U GRADSKOJ SREDINI – MOGU LI OSNOVNI IMS STANDARDI DA POMOgnu DA SE UNAPREDI UZAJAMNO RAZUMEVANJE OVEKA I PSA?

*Savremeni na in zivota, posebno gradski zivot, je dobro regulisan. Postoje standardi za skoro sve vrste ljudskih aktivnosti uklju uja i adekvatan odnos prema prirodi i razli itim radnim procesima. IMS standardi, posebno ISO 9001 i ISO 14001, su veoma popularni. U sredini koju je uglavnom kreirao ovek ima i mesta i pravila za ku ne ljubimce, posebno za pse, kako da se ponašaju, jedu, šetaju, i saveta za nas kako da postanemo njihovi lideri... Tako e možemo da primenimo neke široko koriš ene zahteve i pravila iz IMS (Integrisani Menadžment Sistemi) standarda na vlasnike pasa, njihove trenere i odgajiva e. Ali treba imati na umu da su psi životinje, deo prirode. Zašto da ne iskažemo naš stav prema psima koriste i ove standarde stvorene radi o uvanje prirode i poboljšanja radnih procesa? To treba da pomogne da zaboravimo na antropocentri no shvatanje sveta, nego umesto toga da prihvatimo da psi žive u zasebnom svetu koji postoji rame uz rame sa našim i koji moramo da poštuemo i da se nau imo kako da komuniciramo sa njim.*

**Klju ne re i:** pas, grad, gradska sredina, vlasnik psa, IMS