A basic method for value establishment is as follows:

1. A knowledgeable lay staff member should speak with the client and form a relationship before the doctor enters the room.

2. The doctor should perform an exam, and discuss what care the exotic patient needs and how that care will benefit the patient. The doctor should not discuss money because this is a waste of a doctor's time and puts a cloud in the client's mind about the purity of the doctor's motivation.

3. The doctor should write the chart and construct an estimate of charges.

4. The original lay staff member will discuss with the client what the doctor recommends and how that care will benefit the patient. Options for lesser care should not be given. The relationship previously established fostered trust for this exchange and the repetition of the doctor's recommendations will provide greater understanding as well as an increased perception of correctness of the plan.

5. After the client has agreed to the treatment plan in principle, the estimate complete with costs, should be presented to the client in a matter of fact way.

It is important to note that the most important element of this procedure is getting the client to agree to the medical plan in principle, based on a solid understanding of the importance of each item on the estimate, before the client is shown the cost of the services. It should be clear that when a client says, "I can't afford that." They are usually saying 'My money is worth more to me than what you are selling." This is usually because the client does not understand the product and the estimate may as well be written in Greek. Services that a client does not understand have no value. Only things that directly help the pet have value.

If the client receives an estimate without a prior thorough understanding of the value of the services on the estimate, there is no value. From this position it is an uphill battle to convince the client of the value or we simply reduce the quality of care to reduce the price and placate the client. Note that by doing this you are telling the client that you add unnecessary items to your estimates. This client will from then on not trust your estimates until they are reduced and will not be terribly loyal.

For this system to work at its best, it is important that your system of charges displays only charges for services or items that give the client/patient clear and direct benefit and thus value. Charges such as blood draw fees and waste disposal fees are valueless to a client and will commonly cause clients to experience uneasiness and a lack of perceived value. However, if the cost of these charges is added into items that do provide value such as a radiograph, blood panel, or an injection, the client will perceive greater value and overall satisfaction.

The fact is, a client does not know if a blood panel should cost $55, $85, or $100. The client can be educated to understand that the blood panel is essential to the diagnosis and treatment of the pet and will therefore pay the cost of the test. A client will feel nicked-and-dimed if charges that do not have such value appear and will be more skeptical of the entire estimate or invoice. It can be beneficial to include line items for services that are actually steps of other services, and only the main value carrying service carries charges. By this method the invoice/estimate can actually total more while providing greater value.
For example, consider the following two estimates for the same services:

### Estimate of Charges #1
- Physical Exam: $39.00
- CBC & Biochemistry Panel: $65.00
- Blood Draw: $15.00
- Injectable Anesthetic: $20.00
- Intubation: $10.00
- Isoflurine Anesthesia: $55.00
- Technician Time: $55.00
- Exploratory surgery: $175.00
- Hospitalization x 3: $90.00
- Injections x9: $54.00
- Waste disposal/OSHA: $2.50

### Estimate of Charges #2
- Physical Exam: $39.00
- CBC & Biochemistry Panel: $98.00
- Exploratory surgery: $365.00
- Includes:
  - Anesthetic Induction/Intubation
  - Isoflurine Anesthesia
  - Pulmonary Assistance
  - Anesthetic Monitoring
- Hospitalization x 3: $120.00
- Injections x9: $54.00

Clients tend to respond far better to the second estimate even though the total cost is $95.05 greater. Using a set of estimates similar to the previous example, the author asked 40 veterinary clients from 3 veterinary hospitals of various demographic areas in Southern California which estimate they would rather be given. 36 of the 40 chose the estimate that was higher but contained itemization. **The point that should be clear is that an estimate of the second style provides clients with a greater feeling of value and satisfaction.** This system will allow for higher prices to be charged while improving estimate acceptance thus increasing per-client charge significantly. Additionally, clients will leave your facility with greater satisfaction thus improving client loyalty and referrals.

### Reference