

## HR Value in Veterinary Practices

### Questions for each practice

1. Write out 6 things you do to reinforce the culture at your facility.
2. How do those items match up to goals of: (1) training development; (2) hire for culture; (3) proper administration; and (4) respectful resolution of disputes
3. Within the last 6 months, describe a creative HR practice you have implemented. Why is it considered innovative?
4. What is your “value” proposition that you offer to your new employees. How will your HR practices support them as employees? Is this written out anywhere, and reinforced through training?
5. Identify at least two instances where you have been able to do more with less resources, because of past investments in your staff?
6. How much money was distributed in 2007 as a direct result of a clearly communicated reward program?
7. How do you connect compensation and productivity in the workplace?
8. What percent of your staff has been recognized for performance above expectation last year?
9. Are you reviewed on your proficiency with HR matters each year (are there specific elements on your performance review document). How much of your compensation is at risk depending on your HR proficiency?
10. Do you track any specific HR measureables as a part of your regular P/L responsibility?
11. What specific methods do you use to improve cross cultural/generational communication?
12. Describe a recent incident when you took the harder road and were “the most honest” with an employee about a sensitive issue.
13. Identify at least one employee within the last year where you have successfully rehabilitated their performance?

### Specific Items for Increasing Value at your Practice

1. Team meeting to identify key terms for relationship, assemble list, publish and discuss.
2. Implement 360 feedback for DVMs
3. Introduce formal reward and recognition system, based on DVM productivity and factors for support staff (i.e. attendance, etc..)
4. Team meetings to discuss how things are working, suggestions for improvement (make it a regular event, not special)
5. Introduce HR Scorecard concepts and identify specific HR measureables, that are linked to practice\performance (i.e. turnover, length of service, training matrix, skills matrix and look for connection to profitability)
6. Cross train staff

7. Create code of conduct that everyone buys into because created with assistance of the staff.
8. Give people fun titles (i.e. director first impressions, etc..) to reinforce culture.
9. Communicate that employees are empowered to satisfy customers, and the scope of their abilities to fix a problem (could be provided after the employee has received training on common concerns, fixes)
10. Survey customers about service, and match to survey data from employees, compare connection, identify disconnects
11. Look at your surroundings and see how it matches your culture (old, new, comfortable, trendy – does it match your culture?)
12. Use a blog to communicate with employee information (especially for multi location practices) used for important employee events (birthdays, weddings, etc..) (careful, it should be monitored for appropriate material, and is limited to employee access only – changing passwords when people leave)
13. Mentoring relationships between staff and professionals. – fosters team building, same concept for front office/back office connections.
14. Team meeting to rate customers (who is the gold standard customer), characteristics and assess how your practice aligns with these characteristics – then self assess your progress.
15. Devote 30 minutes per week (placed on calendar) to develop and brainstorm (topics can be communications, turnover, customer service, consistency, compliance, staff development, teamwork, work ethics, motivating, rewards and personality conflicts).
16. Psychological testing of applicants for fit with the culture and organization.
17. Use behavioral testing to help team members better work together (i.e. DISC, Profiles etc..)
18. Patience in hiring, wait for good fit.
19. Multiple interviews for new applicants, involve staff in decision.
20. Use a working interview (for instance 2 hours) and see how they interact with staff and complete things.
21. Team project to identify why an applicant should select your practice, make bullet points and use it to create a marketing flyer (for when it is needed). Could also do the same, and what are the challenges of your practice.
22. Do not manufacture stress in the interview, no proof that it will make you better understand the applicants ability to respond to stress (better to ask questions, evaluate past work).
23. Zero balanced budgeting each year for HR expenses (does the items still align with your culture and goals)
24. Be aware that low cost conveniences that are taken away to save budget, may cost your culture (coffee service, certain perks)
25. Innovate regularly (perhaps ask employees help) but avoid flavor of the day, and things you will not sustain.
26. Repetition is key for initiatives, and do not get frustrated when communications need to be repeated.
27. Actions must match words, and other employees can not sabotage your efforts at culture (such as doctor that fails to follow rules, or owner).

28. Consider incentive reward system that ties staff actions with important HR related initiatives (such as “learning” – reward education, leadership on topical areas, leading training meetings etc., same as “customer service” and “innovative” as themes.
29. Make some employee investments that are long term focused, and support with tracking numbers for comparison to future year progress.
30. For safety incentive, give program a theme, identify required behavior and roll it out. Set a budget based on costs savings that are possible from lower work comp premiums or greater efficiency.
31. Spot awards are also popular because they are a surprise. One clinic surveyed employees and they trusted the management to deliver a fair spot award system. Used for when employees goes above and beyond their position.
32. Tell your practice owner that you want to be reviewed on several HR areas (hiring, staff development, safety and resolving conflict), and then put a % of your compensation at risk depending on the results (or additional comp if you achieve your goals).
33. Allow employees to rotate and lead meetings.
34. After sending an employee to a training or educational event, have the employee come back and brief the group at staff meeting and they become the informal topic expert.
35. Do not forget that recognition can be no money, congratulations. We can not forget to thank people for their efforts.
36. Get to know each of your employees and maybe create a card with their name and interests. It can be your motivation card, so you can know what they like (time off, recognition, more responsibility, etc..)
37. Acknowledge staff at meeting, or put picture of excellent staff performance on the bulletin board for others to see.
38. Be the champion for your staff with ownership. Fight some battles publicly so that you can build credibility with staff, and can obtain concessions when necessary.
39. Be the most honest with staff, especially those that need to be redirected and driven to improve performance or attitude. Always focus on the fact that their misaligned behavior is distracting from their other qualities, and work at building them up to achieve greater results.
40. Take a personal mission that you will not terminate someone from the practice unless you are 100% certain the person had an opportunity to succeed, and that you did not do anything to impair their ability to be a good team member.
41. Try to implement flexibility to your practice, especially in areas that might be important to employee (such as schedules, staffing, duty divisions, etc...) Once you have a standard of performance, we need to expect the same level from all.
42. Consider a team member code of conduct (creed) affirming the commitments that each person makes to the practice, but more importantly to all other co-workers.