



You Can BYOD to the Practice, but Can You Use It?

The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon is revolutionizing procedures in many workplaces today, according to information technology (IT) experts who advise a variety of businesses.

“While browsing email and social networking sites are still the primary uses for personal devices—85% and 46%, respectively—core mission-critical enterprise applications are now finding their way onto employee-owned devices,” according to a November 2011 survey of 605 C-level executives commissioned by Avanade, a multinational business technology solutions and managed services provider based in Seattle.¹

“Some employers have strict policies that prevent employees from using personal devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops at work. Others allow limited usage under guided policies—and some feel there’s no point trying to stop the flood of devices, and do nothing,” The Armada Group, a Silicon Valley, California-based On-

Demand Talent Solutions firm specializing in software engineering and IT, wrote in a 2014 online article.² “The use of personal devices is spreading faster than any technology before, and there are already more smartphones than people in the United States.”²

“Staff can check email as long as there is nothing else going on. They are requested not to access the internet or personal social media while at work. Our staff is quite small, so the policy is verbal.”



—Lynne E. Johnson-Harris, LVT, RVT
practice manager,
Hinckley Animal Hospital,
Hinckley, Ohio

“Our current policy regarding personal technology usage is written in our employee handbook, which all new employees are required to read and acknowledge in writing. Our position is that cell phones and other personal devices are to be silenced and properly stored during work hours. We do make exceptions for managers and DVMs for business use. The consequences for violation, as stated in the handbook, are that the employee is subject to corrective action, up to and including termination. We ultimately allow the manager to exercise discretion in enforcing this policy and do not extend the policy to break times or off-clock periods.”



—Paul Kline, DVM
chief operating officer,
CityVet Companies,
Dallas, Texas

Benefits, Challenges, & Risks

Benefits of BYOD in the workplace²:

- Faster communication and more efficient mobile team members
- Increased consumer relationship building and the ability to shape customer perceptions of the company with consumer tools, especially social networking
- HR tool: Younger team members rely on their smartphones and other mobile devices, so refusing to allow BYOD will

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“I allow it to an extent. ... Our policy says cell phones need to be used in moderation unless [team members] have prior authorization from management, or it is an emergency. ... It is in our employee handbook: *Cell phone usage has to be in moderation.* If cell phone use becomes so frequent that every time I walk by somebody’s on the phone, I have to act. ... Taking personal calls or texting before greeting a client is forbidden, and personal use of work computers for social media or email is not allowed. In a case of repeated violations of policy, I would write them up. If it were repeated even then, I would send them home.”



—Jimmy Hayley
practice manager,
Custer McDermott Animal Hospital,
Plano, Texas

make it difficult to attract and retain fresh talent.

Challenges²:

- Managing security with multiple team members using multiple devices, and the risk of sensitive data on those devices falling into the wrong hands
- Monitoring use of personal devices at work, even with policies in place
- The possibility of reduced performance and productivity
- The risk of former team members leaving the company with sensitive data on their devices.

Patients & Clients Come First

In veterinary practices, using personal technology on the job must serve—or at least not interfere with—the needs of patients and clients.

Ken Coldwell, medical director of VCA Veterinary Medical Center #632 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, said personal technology merges with business

"We don't have a very strict policy in place. ... It's an oral policy. ... As long as it's not interfering with the work, I understand email checking and Facebook checking. ... If people are getting their work done, I don't worry too much about it. If I see things that need to be done around the hospital, like cleaning or checking inventory ... I tell them to put [the device] away and say, 'If this continues, I'm going to take your cell phone.' [Personal technology] is just one more thing to work around."



—Stephanie Bradley, DVM
practice manager,
Heritage Veterinary Hospital,
Tulsa, Oklahoma

software at his practice: "We actually utilize people's personal technology. We have a web-based text system to contact clients, a proprietary app that employees can download on their personal cell phones."

VCA's policy does limit personal cell phone use to lunch and other breaks. "If they abuse it, they get written up. If they have 2 write-ups, then they would be terminated," Coldwell said. The policy is included in the practice handbook, he said, and team members sign to indicate that they have read it and will abide by it; it is also reiterated in team meetings.

References

1. **Global survey: Dispelling six myths of consumerization of IT.** Avanade (2012); <http://www.avanade.com/~media/documents/resources/consumerization-of-it-executive-summary.pdf>; accessed Apr 2015.
2. **The pros and cons of allowing personal devices in the workplace.** The Armada Group (2014); <http://www.theamadagroup.com/it-infrastructure/the-pros-and-cons-of-allowing-personal-devices-in-the-workplace>; accessed Apr 2015.

"Although I understand the anxiety and stress that may come from team members not being able to regularly check their cell phones at work for such things as social media updates and text messages, I do not believe practices should 'give in' to the current social norms. As leaders and practice owners, we set an example for our team members to work with intention, with no distraction from our mission and goals."



—Tracy Dowdy, CVPM
founder & managing director,
Management Resource Group,
San Diego

Dowdy also provided an example of a "use of cell phone policy:"

At work, team members are expected to exercise the same discretion using personal cell phones as company phones. Excessive personal calls, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with productivity and distract other team members.

Team members should restrict all personal calls during work time whenever possible and should instruct friends and family members about this practice policy. Personal cell phones should be used only during scheduled breaks or lunch periods in non-working areas. The practice is not liable for the loss of personal cell phones brought to the workplace.

"I find it incredibly rude if a client even sees you looking at your phone. ... We do not have a written rule. ... Fortunately, we're such a small practice that we've never had an issue. We're very lucky—we have a great team. We let them have their cell phones on them. When they're not with a client, they can use them. ... They can use the internet on their break time, or can ask if they need to look something up."



—Shannon Newton
practice manager,
Southpark Veterinary Hospital,
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma