

Practice Morale Is Low & Turnover Is High

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THE PROBLEM

Veterinary practices experience a mean staff turnover rate of 21 percent.¹ A National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America 2016 survey cited low pay, burnout, and lack of recognition and career advancement as contributing factors to the profession's turnover problem.² Here are 3 ways management can help prevent turnover.

THE SOLUTIONS

1 **Develop outstanding training programs.** Every new team member should receive a formal and robust orientation. New hires should feel welcomed, valued, and prepared for what lies ahead. New team members should never be thrown into their positions with little or no training.

Every practice team member, whether new or old, should receive ongoing training and have access to these essentials³:

- Job description
- Organizational chart
- Training guide with timelines and a checklist
- Team member policies
- Written standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Weekly communication from management

2 **Survey team members regularly and anonymously.** Free or low-cost surveys (eg, survey-monkey.com, jotform.com) can easily be created online. Ask questions like, *What do you wish you could change about your job?* and *How do you feel about the new policy on XYZ?*

3 **Empower team members and encourage professional growth.** Supervision is not the process of directing people; rather, supervision is the process of helping people become self-directed. Challenge team members and encourage them to welcome responsibility. Develop and implement SOPs to help delegate tasks, help the team understand how tasks should be accomplished, and trust those tasks will be completed according to the SOPs.

THE IMPACT

When management ensures all team members receive ongoing training, truly understands how team members feel, and empowers individuals to take on more responsibilities and grow professionally, everyone—from practice owners to support team members—will experience increased levels of job satisfaction and happiness. Now that is a win-win. ■

References

1. *Compensation and Benefits*. 8th ed. American Animal Hospital Association. Lakewood, CO: AAHA Press; 2016:15.
2. Larkin M. Technician shortage may be a problem of turnover instead. *JAVMAnews*. <https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMAnews/Pages/161015r.aspx?PF=1>. Published October 15, 2016. Accessed March 2018.
3. Dowdy T. The Course. Relationship Centered Practice Academy. <http://tracydowdy.com/the-course>.



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