

## Veterinary Team Career Possibilities

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There is NO Glass Ceiling, unless you create it!

I know that is a pretty harsh statement, and I believe it!

There is NO Glass Ceiling for your veterinary team members even WITHIN YOUR VETERINARY HOSPITAL, unless you have created it as the leader and manager of your business.

Consider ALL the ways your team can continue to grow and prosper in your veterinary hospital! You will find a few examples and then it is up to you to **offer at least one more example** for your team members in your veterinary hospital.

### Kennel Assistants

Yes, your kennel assistants can learn, grow and find their duties rewarding in caring for your patients and boarders.

During training (team phase training is encouraged for kennel assistants) your patient care attendants (or aides) have an important job in keeping patients and boarders comfortable, clean and tended to. They are equally responsible for communicating patient observations to technicians and doctors. Consider the training that can be provided and expectations around cage sanitation and properly cleaning all 6 sides of a cage (yes, six sides!), as one example in training. Your kennel assistants need to be aware of disease transfer, proper disinfectants, safety in restraining, and responsibility in walking pets. Make sure their job description is up-to-date.

I recall having a woman that recently retired from her office job in sanitation and wanted a part-time job tending to the boarding animals. Upon the completion of her phase training, we immediately began finding ways for her to stay engaged and motivated. Her goals included finding enrichment activities for the boarders. She offered ways to build a “playground” for the dogs (completed in 3 months’ time) and helped to design a “sun room” for the boarding cats (a long-term goal included in the facility remodel).

Opportunities in career development for the **Kennel Aide** may include:

- 1) Oversight, supplying, and distribution of puppy, kitten, adolescent dog and cat, senior dog and cat kits.
- 2) Creation of “puppy socialization-puppy party time.”
- 3) Identify a Kennel Aide coordinator.
- 4) Maintain “Kennel Care Corner” bulletin board.
- 5) Design and oversight of “Kennel Care Report Card.” I remember taking my dog, Jema, to a boarding facility and she was given a “Report Card.” Her “Jema is polite and fun-loving” card was on the refrigerator for months!

What ways can you support and encourage your Kennel Aides in growing their career, improving patient care, client experience and team development?

### **Veterinary Assistants**

Regardless of the title, technician assistant, veterinary aide, veterinary assistant, be sure their job description is up to date and appropriate for the level of education and oversight needed. In-hospital, team phase training may include sanitation, sterilization, client education, patient care, and laboratory procedures. States vary regarding duties, please understand limitations.

Opportunities in career development for the **Veterinary Assistant** may include:

- 1) Responsible for surgery room cleanliness, stocking, and sterilization.
- 2) Oversight of patient care in recovery after extubation.
- 3) Inventory assistant in restocking, rotating, cleaning, and organization.
- 4) Reception area and exam room educational materials to include brochure updates and bulletin boards
- 5) Collaborate with veterinarians and technicians in the design of in-hospital training and reviewing of cases.

What ways can you support and encourage your Veterinary Assistants in growing their career, improving patient care, client experience and team development?

### **Veterinary Technicians**

Your credentialed veterinary technicians have received two or four years of formal training. Newly graduated veterinary technicians are to be considered entry level candidates and should be trained in your hospital’s protocols and procedures. Technicians with advanced training and experience can take on higher level procedures, oversight in training, and client education.

There are currently 14 options for your credentialed technicians to become a Veterinary Technician Specialist! You will find a complete listing on the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) website under the Specialties Tab.

Opportunities in career development for the **Veterinary Technician** may include:

- 1) Oversight of Inventory Management.
- 2) Design training programs and oversight, Team Trainer.
- 3) Outpatient and Inpatient Coordinator/Supervisor.
- 4) Community outreach and engagement with local animal welfare groups.
- 5) Responsible for updating, annually, client educational materials, treatment plans and consent forms.

What ways can you support and encourage your Veterinary Technicians in growing their career, improving patient care, client experience and team development?

### **Receptionists/Client Service Representatives**

Of all your team members, your receptionists may have the greatest diversity in backgrounds and life experiences. I recall my front office team at one practice consisted of a retired kindergarten teacher, a roller-derby enthusiast, a young gentleman working towards his degree in social services, and yet another team member recently graduated from high school unsure of her life's direction. Who is on your team? The point is, capitalize on the varied backgrounds and interests!

Opportunities in career development for the **Receptionist** may include:

- 1) Social Media Guru! Create policies and procedures for social networking and identify two team members to take charge.
- 2) Valuable reminders procedures and follow through.
- 3) Community outreach, attending Rotary Club, Toastmasters, high school classes and college classes focusing on veterinary medicine, recruiting new hires.
- 4) Responsible for annually reviewing receptionist training and client service protocols
- 5) Oversight in organizing team socials, meetings and outings.

What ways can you support and encourage your Receptionists in growing their career, improving patient care, client experience and team development?

### **Hospital Managers**

Within your hospital you may have different levels of management and responsibilities. Make sure job descriptions are up to date, appropriately outlining responsibilities and duties. Titles may include office manager, lead technician, practice manager, or hospital administrator. Each

title has different duties. You may find a list of duties on the Veterinary Hospital Manager Association (VHMA) website.

Opportunities in career development for **Managers** may include:

- 1) Attending, and coordinating team members to visit the Veterinary State Board regulatory meetings.
- 2) Become a Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM) or Professional in Human Resources (PHR)
- 3) Oversight of website, social media, Blog and write for local newspaper column.
- 4) Coordinate team and department meetings.
- 5) Offer monthly financial updates and reports.

What ways can you support and encourage your managers in growing their career, improving patient care, client experience, and team development?

## **Veterinarians**

Your veterinarians, often times by default, are seen as leaders, whether they want to lead or not. Helping them grow in leadership skills will benefit everyone on your team and your clients. Other opportunities in advanced patient care, pain management and medical acumen allow for career development.

Opportunities in career development for **Veterinarians** may include:

- 1) Courses in leadership, communication, and volunteering in local, state, and national veterinary medical organizations.
- 2) There are currently 21 opportunities for veterinarians to become a Diplomate (Specialist). You may find more information on the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) website.
- 3) Oversight of in-hospital advanced training for medical team members.
- 4) Community outreach with animal welfare groups, local colleges, extension agents and businesses.
- 5) Oversight of medical record audits.

What ways can you support and encourage your Veterinarians in growing their career, improving patient care, client experience and team development?

Thank you for taking the time and energy to be genuinely engaged and supporting your team in their career development!

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