



The Morale-o-Meter: Does your team need a boost?

Retaining and growing your staff through practice culture and morale.

By caring for your team members—right from the start—you can fill your practice roster, provide high-quality medicine, deliver a consistent client experience, and scale your business.



When the going gets tough

Maintaining veterinary team morale

Although relying on the hiring of additional team members to resolve staffing issues can be tempting, successfully weathering a talent drought requires a continuous and multidirectional strategy. In addition to looking outside your practice's walls to fill vacant positions, owners and managers should also focus on, support, and invest in their current team.

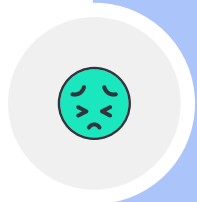
Upgrade your veterinary software

Today's [veterinary software](#) automates repetitive and mundane tasks, streamlines daily workflows, enhances internal and external communications (i.e., reducing conflict and confusion), and frees your team to perform the rewarding and meaningful work for which they trained.



 **Care for your team**

Free lunches aren't the only way to express gratitude and support for your team members. Go beyond superficial gestures and invest in your team's well-being by taking these simple but powerful actions that speak louder than words—or free pizza:



Implement a zero-tolerance bullying policy

Staffing shortages and increased wait times can increase tension among team members and from frustrated clients. Enforce a zero-tolerance bullying directive to ensure your team members feel protected and valued.



Conduct regular check-ins

Annual reviews aren't enough. Schedule informal one-to-one chats every month or quarter to find out how your team is coping.



Seek input

No one understands practice workflows better than the team members who carry them out every day. Ask your team what's working—and what isn't—and how to improve a situation.



Ask what team members need

While employees always appreciate pay raises, employees also value nonmonetary benefits such as recognition, respect, autonomy, or increased responsibility.



Communicate your gratitude

Tell your team that you recognize and appreciate their effort, talent, and commitment. Never underestimate the power of gratitude.

 ***Play to your strengths***

Whenever possible, enable your team to utilize their special skills and explore niche interests. By doing so, you help build team members' confidence, skill development, and job satisfaction in addition to maximizing productivity and potentially creating new revenue streams.



“The person born with a talent they are meant to use will find their greatest happiness in using it.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German Poet

Morale-o-meter

Does your team need a boost?

Low morale can be an underlying threat to employee satisfaction and veterinary staff retention. Workplace dissatisfaction often begins with a single team member, and the disillusionment spreads rapidly. Therefore, early intervention is the best way to stop the resentment in its tracks and preserve—perhaps enhance—your practice culture. To determine whether your team needs a morale boost, answer *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

Yes	No	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Team members are increasingly absent or habitually clocking out early.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	One or more previously engaged team members have gone quiet and are no longer sharing ideas or concerns with managers.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Simple mistakes (e.g., missed charges, charting errors, forgotten tasks, inaccurate charges) are increasing.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Negative talk about clients or patients is increasingly common.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Team members refuse to take scheduled breaks or vacations, despite encouragement
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Productivity or work quality has declined.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Team members are impatient with small inconveniences. Outbursts are common.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Normal communication patterns have become disrupted. Many team members complain that they are unaware of important practice protocols.

If you answered yes to one or more of these statements, your team may be struggling with burnout related to a staffing shortage. Acknowledge these initial signs and act now before attrition occurs. Check in personally with each employee and critically assess how your practice is supporting, recognizing, and caring for all team members. Once you determine where the weaknesses exist, make the necessary enhancements to ensure you can attract, hire, support, and preserve your practice's best veterinary talent.

Feels like home

Retaining your team for the long haul

Employee departures can compound existing staffing issues and seismically shift the workplace dynamic—potentially resulting in an attrition chain reaction. Create a workplace culture that prioritizes sustainable practices, collaboration, professional growth and development, and a healthy work-life balance by following these tips:

Offer growth opportunities

Advancement opportunities help employees envision a future with your practice. Create a pathway to promotion by offering in-house mentorship and tiered skill development programs. Reward motivated team members with appropriate wage or benefit increases, responsibility upgrades, and leadership appointments.

Host team-building events

Invest in your practice culture by providing annual or quarterly team events or outings. These informal gatherings can be stress busters and help employees get to know one another beyond their workplace roles.

Provide mental health resources

Veterinary professionals are resilient and selfless, but they often do not know how to ask for help. Ensure your team has—and knows how to access—mental health services. If your health care plan doesn't include behavioral health, consider a company membership to an online mental wellness program.

Offer investment opportunities

Recognize team member dedication by providing opportunities to invest in the practice. In addition to traditional financial stakes such as partnership, shareholding, or profit sharing, consider making nonmonetary investments in employee education that can lead your practice to offer ancillary services (e.g., pet training and behavior, physical rehabilitation, grooming) for staff members who have specialized interests.



Promote mental and physical well-being

A work-life balance cannot be maintained on a continuum because the personal and professional ebb and flow continuously. The key to creating a positive workplace culture is to avoid focusing on either aspect too heavily or for too long a period. Encourage your team to enjoy a more restorative and rewarding relationship between time spent at the veterinary hospital and home rather than zeroing in on constantly maintaining a work-life balance, which is unattainable.

Ensure your team members do the following:



Take mandatory breaks

Prioritize lunches and breaks so your staff can step away, rest, and refuel. Make a break room or private space available so that team members can physically leave the treatment area.



Maintain flexible scheduling

Honor team members' outside commitments and responsibilities, such as for family or school responsibilities, by providing flexible shifts.



Provide vacation and sick days, and floating holidays

Life happens. Make room for unexpected events by providing vacation and sick days, and floating holidays. Encourage employees to use all paid time off within the calendar year.



Offer decompression time

Give your team the option to tag out during emotionally challenging situations and to take a short break after difficult appointments (e.g., euthanasias, emergencies). Host team debriefings after stressful events, such as CPR codes, a patient's unexpected death, or other significant events.

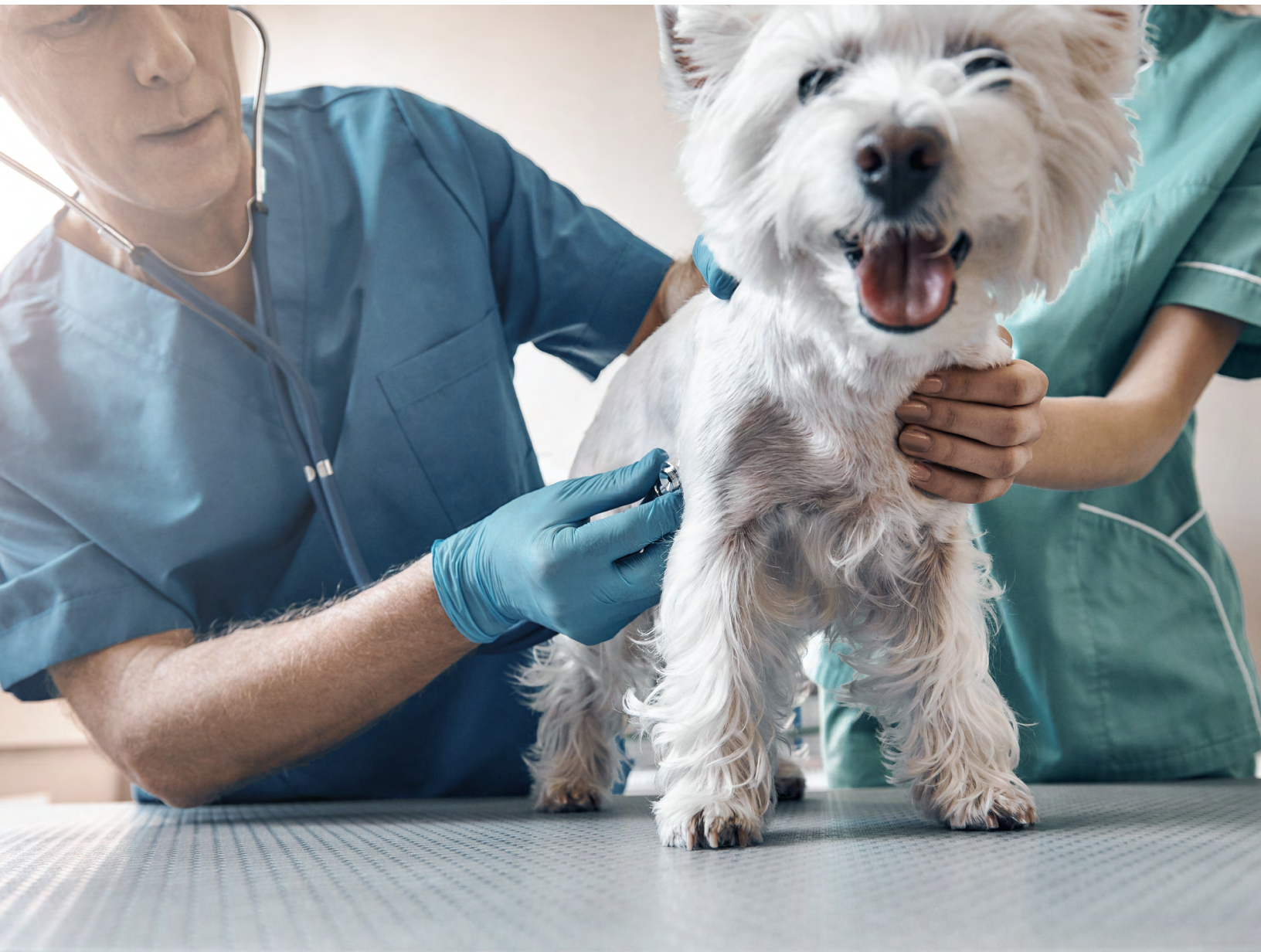
Ensuring your team has adequate time away from work is the best way to build loyalty, express appreciation, increase productivity, and safeguard team members' health.

We're (all) hiring!

Sourcing veterinary talent in a competitive market

Today's job boards are overflowing with ads that promise competitive salaries, irresistible benefits, and unique experiences of which most applicants have only dreamed. Recruiters flock to conferences, playing a competitive game to fill open positions in the practices they serve.

Making the hiring process more challenging, job seekers are—rightly—leveraging their sought-after status to help lock in better offers, raise the benefits bar, and stretch the traditional work schedule to achieve a healthier work-life balance.



Whether you're hiring vet techs, assistants, client service representatives (CSRs), or associate veterinarians, ensure you can reach and attract the most suitable candidates. Follow this thoughtful, strategic approach:

01 Write an eye-catching ad

Your job listing is your elevator pitch. Make this first impression count by presenting an attention-grabbing headline and a description that centers on the candidate—not your practice. Talk about what it's like to work at your veterinary hospital—emphasizing core values and culture—then include boilerplate information (e.g., job description, responsibilities) and always highlight the benefits.

02 Broaden your horizons by posting on job boards

Cast a wide net by posting your candidate search ads across multiple states or the entire country. To ensure maximum visibility, post on general job sites (e.g., [Indeed](#), [GlassDoor](#)) and veterinary-specific directories (e.g., [AVMA Career Center](#), [NAVC Retriever](#), [AAHA Veterinary Jobs](#)). To increase your exposure while still targeting the veterinary niche, Facebook Groups is another good option and costs you nothing.

03 Create a pipeline for future talent

By establishing a relationship with nearby schools, you gain the advantage of recruiting veterinarians and veterinary technicians who have recently graduated. In addition, you should host students for out-rotations and externships, attend school job fairs, and offer hiring incentives such as covering exam fees and licensing costs.

04 Re-evaluate your benefits package

Compare the wages your practice pays and the nonmonetary benefits you provide with those of other area practices. If you legitimately cannot raise team members' starting salary consider offering other benefits that will set you apart from competitors. In addition to standard incentives, such as health insurance and vacation days, consider providing flexible scheduling, covering license renewal fees, or offering pet care discounts.

Many veterinary professionals are interested in practice-sponsored continuing education (CE) trips or quarterly team retreats. In addition, potential team members want to work for veterinary hospitals that have internal structures in place that allow associates to move up the ladder or invest in the practice.

Peruse job listings for your area's comparable practices, as well as those of larger competitors, to discover new ways to stand out from the crowd. Consider looking at other industries' ads for out-of-the-box inspiration.

The vetting process

Best practices for hiring your ideal candidate

The hiring process is more than resumes, interviews, and contracts. The manner in which you and your team interact with potential hires can make a difference between a long and mutually satisfying professional relationship and an awkward and regrettable waste of time. Maximize your hiring potential by prioritizing communication, personalization, and respect. In doing so, you'll convey a strong message about your practice's style, culture, and team member appreciation.

Communicate with applicants

Frequent and detailed communication by phone or email helps applicants feel seen, appreciated, and cared for. When a potential team member knows what to expect of your practice's culture, they feel comfortable, presenting their most authentic selves. Communication begins as soon as you receive the application and continues until the candidate declines your offer notice or arrives for their first workday. Key contact points include:



Application receipt email

A simple email informing applicants that their forms have been received—and when you'll be in touch—can calm their nerves and minimize duplicate applications and follow-up correspondence questioning whether your team has received their inquiry.



Interview confirmation

Once you've scheduled phone or in-person interviews with applicants, send a personalized email confirming the date, time, and any pertinent details (e.g., preview questions, estimated interview time length, dress code, additional documents to bring).



Interview follow-up

After an interview, send a thank-you email that outlines the next steps and an approximate timeline for further communication. Invite interviewees to contact you with additional questions or to decline further consideration.



Decisions and offers

Follow up verbal offers with an email that details the offer, position, and benefits. After the candidate accepts the job, provide pertinent information about first-day expectations. Notify other applicants that you've made a final decision and, if appropriate, ask to keep their application on file for future consideration. How you communicate with rejected candidates reflects your practice's professionalism and is as important as the manner in which you care for a new hire.



Elevate professionalism with a personal approach

Set your interview protocol apart by taking a personalized, applicant-centered approach. Rather than going the standard question-and-answer route, get to know your interviewee through a relaxed and informal conversation. Learn about their motivations and aspirations for working in veterinary medicine—where they’ve been and their ultimate goals—inquire about their preferred learning and working styles, and ask them to describe their favorite academic or professional victories.



Respect the applicant’s interest and time

Although a veterinary hospital’s scheduling can be unpredictable, your interviewee should never feel like they are inconveniencing your practice’s appointed interviewer. Schedule and remain punctual regarding phone and in-person interviews, ensuring sufficient time is devoted to the applicant. If you plan to conduct a long working interview, let the applicant know they’ll be compensated for their time.

Provide in-person applicants with a packet or folder of printed materials to take home and include the job description, company values, policies, insurance plans, and benefits. Although email is a convenient alternative, providing a potential hire with tangible documents is a great way to convey interest and appreciation.



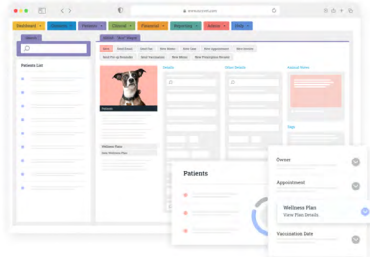
In addition to providing insights about how an applicant may fit with your current team, an interviewee’s answers can guide you in creating a personalized working interview and positive first-day experience. Following this strategy helps new team members feel welcome, confident, and comfortable in your practice.

How updating your veterinary software can support team morale.

Your veterinary team is invaluable—during a staffing crisis and every day. These dedicated, compassionate, and ambitious professionals go the extra mile to ensure every pet receives high-quality care, every client is informed, and every responsibility is fulfilled. However, without adequate support and oversight, these wonderful team members can experience burnout, resign, and potentially leave the profession altogether. Protecting and supporting your team—from initial application to annual performance review—can create long-lasting workplace cohesion, collaboration, and satisfaction, and your veterinary practice’s success.

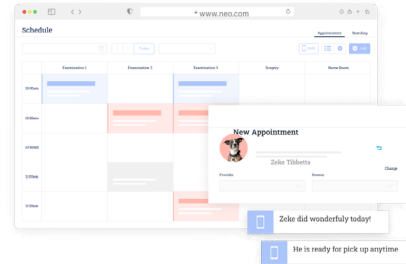
When your team has access to the most up-to-date technology to work smarter not harder, they’ll enjoy greater job satisfaction, provide exceptional care for additional patients and clients, and generate higher practice revenue, which can and should result in a corresponding pay increase. Now that’s a morale boost!

[CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE](#)



The practice management software that does it all.

ezyVet is jam-packed with tools and features to help you save time, grow your business, and deliver excellence in all aspects of veterinary care.



Even the brightest minds need easy-to-use software.

Neo features a brilliantly simple interface with built-in training tools and streamlined functionality, helping you complete tasks up to 5X faster and reserve brainpower for where it’s needed most.

[Visit: software.idexx.com](https://software.idexx.com)

