



# NEW TEAM MEMBER ORIENTATION PLAN

To ensure that new hires get off to a positive start, it is wise to conduct an effective employee orientation program. Employees who are properly trained, mentored and correctly introduced to the hospital early feel better about their choice of employer, feel as though they fit in, and become productive more quickly. This is a win-win situation for both the company and the employee.

This plan has been created for you by Debbie Boone- 2 Manage Vets Consulting, a veterinary practice management consultant and communication expert. Following the outline with your new team members will help reduce the anxiety of “first-day jitters” and will aid your new employees to relax and begin returning your investment.

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## After Hiring and Before Start Date

### Keep in Touch: If Employee has to Move to your area

1. **Assist new hire with information about the area.** You may send articles of interest from the local news—especially if clients are mentioned. This will give the new employee a grounding in the local market.
2. **Refer the employee to a local realtor**—preferably a client --to assist in housing procurement.
3. **Provide a list** of good schools, areas of town to avoid, good restaurants (both dine-in and delivery), reputable auto repair shops, and the location of local grocery stores
4. **Discover their hobbies.** Assist them in locating suppliers or locations to pursue them—for example—a runner needs a safe running track to use.
5. **Do they have children?** Can you recommend safe daycare or babysitters?

### For everyone hired:

1. **Send a list of staff member names, staff positions and experience levels** so on “day one” the new employee can recognize at least some of the names. This will make your new employee feel as if they know someone other than their interviewer, and shows your staff that they are important as team members. Adding photographs is even better.
2. **Have uniforms or lab coats ordered and ready** for “day one”. Have business cards and name tags ready if appropriate.
3. **Email a copy of the job description** to allow it to be read thoroughly and learned before the first day on the job.
4. **Email a copy of the floor plan** (especially if a larger facility) so the new team member may orient themselves to the building.
5. **Have a workspace prepared**—example: if the new employee needs a desk have it ready and in place before they come to work.
6. **Choose a mentor** and discuss their duties in training the new employee. Make sure this is a person you would like your new employee to emulate and that the mentor has both the interest and the social skills to do the job.
7. **“Pre-sell” your new employee to the clients and the staff.** This is especially important for new veterinarians who often have problems getting established clients to work with them. Tout their skills, education, special interests, and experience to all that will listen. Share information and pictures of them and their pets, hobbies, or any unique things they have done - especially charity-type work- on social media. Get your clients familiar with them before they come into the practice.



## First Day:

1. **Day one should be a celebration.** Invite family of the new employee to visit and meet coworkers.
2. **Place a banner** in the lobby or outside introducing and welcoming your new hire.
3. **Introduce them to their mentor**
4. **Have the mentor free to greet** the new employee and introduce them to all the staff.
5. **Give the employee an orientation** tour of the hospital—show them their work area, office, or desk.
6. **Allow time to fill out all standard tax forms**, give them a copy of the employee manual, and have them sign that they received it. Have them sign all internal policies and store them in their employee file. Verify and record identification information. Complete all paperwork pertaining to benefits. Confirm their understanding of important policies, benefits, payroll information, vacation policy, etc.
7. **Have the mentor explain** the history of the practice, any partnerships or sister practices if appropriate, and the dynamic of the group.
8. **Give the employee the list** of common questions and answers provided by 2 Manage Vets.
9. **Explain the traffic pattern of the flow of work.** Example: how does a patient admitted for feline spay progress through the hospital from check-in to check out.
10. **Review goals for the day.** Example: the new doctor will review all drugs in the pharmacy to familiarize herself with resources. The new technician will shadow an experienced technician to learn exam room procedures for vaccination visits.
11. **Show location of safety equipment**—fire extinguishers, eyewash stations, protective clothing, etc.
12. **Set goals for the week.** Example: new office manager will interview all employees and discuss job descriptions.
13. **Plan time at the end of week one to review things** to confirm that goals were met, and to confirm with the new employee that the mentor is providing them with education and feedback in a constructive manner.



# PHASE 3:

1. **Set longer-term goals for new employees.** Weekly and then monthly.
2. **Plan time to review goals and results with the employee** offering suggestions for improvement or encouragement for progress.
3. **Create an action plan** for advanced training with timelines and reviews.
4. **Reiterate the goals of the practice** and confirm that the new hire understands the hospital goals.
5. **Ask for feedback from the employee on company protocols.** Remember a fresh set of eyes often reveals areas needing improvement. Encourage progressive thinking.



# COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is my schedule?
2. Who is my supervisor?
3. What do I wear?
4. Where do I park?
5. Where is the restroom?
6. Where is the break room?
7. Where are the office supplies? and who do I ask if I need something?
8. Who orders medical supplies?
9. Who orders office supplies?
10. Where do soiled towels go?
11. Where are fresh towels and blankets stored?
12. What is the internet policy?
13. What is my email address?
14. What is the mailing address of the hospital?
15. What are the telephone numbers? Fax number?
16. How does the intercom work?
17. How does the phone system work?
18. How do I retrieve voice mail messages?
19. What diets do we recommend?
20. What parasite preventatives do we recommend?
21. What are our vaccination protocols?
22. What are our requirements for pre-anesthetic lab work?
23. Where do we send “outside” lab samples?
24. What is our computer software system and how can I learn the program?
25. Who handles “upset” clients?
26. When will I get my first paycheck?
27. Who do I speak to if I have a problem with a fellow worker?
28. How do I get continuing education?



# COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

29. When do we have meetings? And are they mandatory?
30. What is the procedure for bringing my pet to be treated?
31. What is the payment policy for employee animals?
32. When am I allowed breaks?
33. When am I allowed to make personal phone calls?
34. What is the employee warning and discharge policy?
35. Where are the required Department of Labor posters posted?
36. Who do I call if I am sick?
37. How do I request time off?
38. How do I record my time?
39. What do I do if I make a mistake on my timecard?
40. What do I do if I break or spill a controlled drug?
41. Where do I record controlled drugs?
42. Who do I tell if equipment is broken?
43. Who do I tell if I witness an employee stealing?
44. What do I do if I see my supervisor or the owner make a mistake?
45. What do I do if a patient “has an accident” on the floor?
46. What do I do if I suspect a patient is contagious?
47. What do I do if there is an aggressive animal in the lobby?
48. Who do I tell if there is a problem with the physical plant? Example—a stopped up toilet
49. What is the procedure for an emergency? Example: a dog hit by a car
50. What is the procedure for a fire in the building?
51. What is the procedure for a weather emergency like tornados, blizzards or floods?
52. What is the protocol for a sick animal and the client has no funds?
53. What is our credit policy and what types of payment do we accept?
54. Who repairs computer problems?
55. What is our procedure for patient euthanasia?



# COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

56. What are our requirements for medication refills?
57. Who will review my job performance and when will my 1st review be given?
58. What are common medical problems specific to our area?
59. What unique services do we offer our patients?
60. What unique services do our competitors offer their patients that we don't?
61. What medical problems do we refer to specialty hospitals?
62. Do any members of our staff have special skills that can be marketed to clients?
63. What products do we sell for dental care?
64. Who are our "A" list clients?
65. What species of animals do we treat?
66. How many times do we walk boarding dogs per day?
67. What do we feed boarding animals?
68. Do any employees have "issues, medical challenges, allergies, problems" that I should be aware of? (do not disclose medical history—but you don't want the new hire to accidentally make an inappropriate remark because they don't know something every- one else does)
69. Does any staff member have preferred pronouns other than their biological gender?

This list is certainly not every question a new team member will need to know. All practices are different and you are advised to add to the list for future use. Still, this list will certainly help new people orient themselves to the practice and help them avoid awkward and potentially embarrassing situations.



# HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR NEW ASSOCIATE TO TEAM AND CLIENTS:

A very understandable problem for new associates is the lack of a steady client base and the challenge of building one. Clients want to see their known and trusted doctor—not the new kid on the block. So how do you overcome this problem? After all you wouldn't have added the help if you didn't need it. Here are some helpful ideas to quickly build confidence in your new team member.

## 1. Introduction to the staff.

This would seem like an obvious thing but we are not just talking about the simple introduction, "Here is Dr. Jones he is our new vet"... We need to have the staff knowledgeable about the skills, background, special interests, and "unique selling points" of this new doctor. Certainly, if there weren't special capabilities you wouldn't have added them to your staff and trusted them with your patients. So make a list of the "cool" stuff about this person and perhaps even write a short professional "bio" that can be given to team members and clients showing the skills of your new doctor.

## 2. Community introduction:

If your local online paper has a business section that lists promotions and new professionals in the community, use the above bio and post it and a photo in the paper. Add this information to your website. Have the new doctor create a Facebook business page so they can generate a fan base. Digital word of mouth is the way of the present—not the future.

## 3. For the Reception Staff:

Make it a rule that all new clients see the new doctor. New clients have no established relationship with anyone, making them the perfect candidates to be added to the new doctor's client list.

## 4. Use them on Staff Pets:

Have the new doctor treat all the staff animals. First of all—your time is more in demand with clients and most staff work is discounted. They need the practice with your protocols—especially if a new grad. The staff is going to guide the new doctor in finding where all the supplies are, guide them in what your clinic's normal protocols are and make sure their pet gets good care. If they see a problem with any of these areas they can report it to you. I am sure they will have a good experience so they can then say to a client, "This doctor treats my pets!".





# HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR NEW ASSOCIATE TO TEAM AND CLIENTS:

## 5. Your Seal of Approval:

Finally and most important—personally introduce them to your current clients—especially the long-time “high maintenance ” ones. Bring the new veterinarian into the exam room with you and have them examine the pet so the client can see them handle their animal. Involve the doctor in challenging cases and let the clients know you are both caring for the pet. This creates an easier pass-off if you are off one day during a hospitalized case and the client calls in.

**Caution:** The goal of having a new associate is to help balance your workload and increase revenue. Sometimes it is difficult to stand back and let someone else do the work you have always rushed to do. Remember that it is the undertrained, underutilized new doctor that becomes discouraged and leaves. So although it is sometimes frustrating to watch them perform a 45-minute spay that you can do in 10—tough it out—it will be worth it!

Best of luck with your new doctor!