

CULTURE CASE STUDY

FAST FACTS:

- + \$1.5–3M annual revenue
- + 4.6 FTE DVMs (7 DVMs)
- + Multi-location practice in the South West
- + Open 6 days a week
- + Specializes in small animals, avian and exotics

CASE BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGES:

Culture, long overlooked in the veterinary field, is one of the cornerstones to a successful hospital. Practices that ignore culture will have substantially higher turnover, lower average transactions and higher client attrition.

This specific practice underestimated the importance of having a warm, friendly and cooperative culture, and employees did not have a clear understanding of what their mission or core behaviors were. Turnover was high, which led to frustration since the hospital was constantly short-staffed. There was little staff engagement, and accountability suffered greatly due to certain people running things their own way.

Morale was low, and I dreaded coming into work, especially when the weekend was over. After the practice owner and I talked to the HR and training staff at iVET360, they suggested we really analyze our culture and environment. Over time, and with staff cooperation we were able to eventually create a team-oriented, respectful and helpful atmosphere that reminded us of why we were all here in the first place—to work together to help heal animals.

CULTURE

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ANALYSIS:

Cultural improvement is an intense process and must be taken on with attention to consistency. If culture is not rolled out appropriately, it can be even harder to try to improve in the future, as the team will not see it as important to the leadership.

ACTION:

The management team at this hospital was in constant communication with our HR and training staff at iVET360, who pointed them to the Introduction to Culture course on LearningVet.com as an additional supplement. Through rigorous and helpful conversations, our HR and Training department really helped this hospital realize that they did not have a clearly defined mission statement that kept all employees aligned and working together. The practice later emphasized how much it helped having experts with an outside perspective work with their staff to review and revamp their mission statement and help them choose 5-7 core behaviors which they focused on individually during staff meetings. Management later began coaching the team in alignment with the culture on a more consistent basis.

RESULTS:

Along with reintegrating culture into daily practice life, the management team also focused on team-building throughout the process and successfully merged company culture with joy and fun. This ultimately created a cooperative, team-oriented and client-focused atmosphere that was both challenging and rewarding.

Eventually the management team were able to identify individuals who were not in alignment with the hospital's culture, and they were either coached out or self-selected out. The hospital was no longer stressed when they lost someone because they could clearly see how that individual did not align themselves with their newfound core behaviors.

Culture became a strong factor in their hiring process and training, which significantly helped tone down turnover. In fact, one of their newest DVMs chose to work at this practice because the mission statement on the website really spoke to her. Disciplinary conversations lessened as accountability improved and team engagement blossomed—their most recent annual picnic and holiday party had their highest turnout in the history of the practice.