



# 2022 PRACTICE MANAGER



REPORT

iVET360° / DATA STORIES

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# PRACTICE MANAGERS

*Everything to Everyone All At Once*

The Practice Manager (PM) is the main source of all day-to-day operational knowledge when it comes to understanding the status of the veterinary industry. They also happen to be some of the busiest people on the planet.

How busy? PMs are involved in nearly every area of daily service and patient care—but given the ongoing labor-strapped status of the veterinary world right now, these MVPs are spread thinner than ever. In fact, judging from the responses we've received, things are starting to fray a little.

Regardless of location or size, it appears that PMs as well as some Practice Owners (PO) are wearing even more hats on their weary heads.

In quite a few smaller practices, the PM is also the only technician or assistant to handling the daily clerical, staff management, and financial operations of the practice.

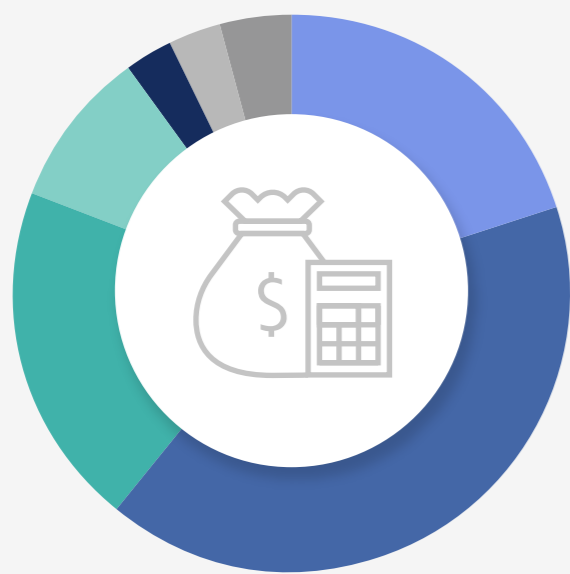
This situation makes for a key performer who is overwhelmed much of the time, and so we are extremely grateful to the individuals who took the time to give us their valuable insights into daily practice life. We know it's small comfort, but trust us—**you are not alone** in the need for more reliable help, more hours in the day, and more caffeine.

But this report isn't just about accurately identifying the challenges and their causes. Our main motivation in producing it is to **aid the industry in finding solutions**. After all, our ultimate mission is the same as yours: to help more pets.

# WHO WE SURVEYED

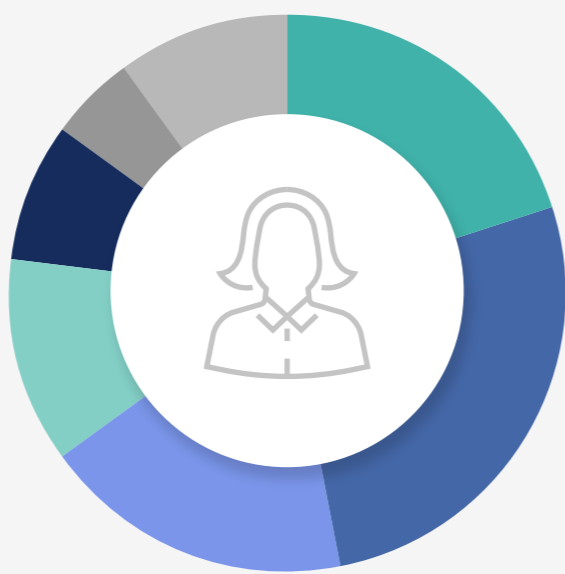
763 Total Respondents | 48 States | Privately Owned & Corporate Practices

## Hospital Revenue



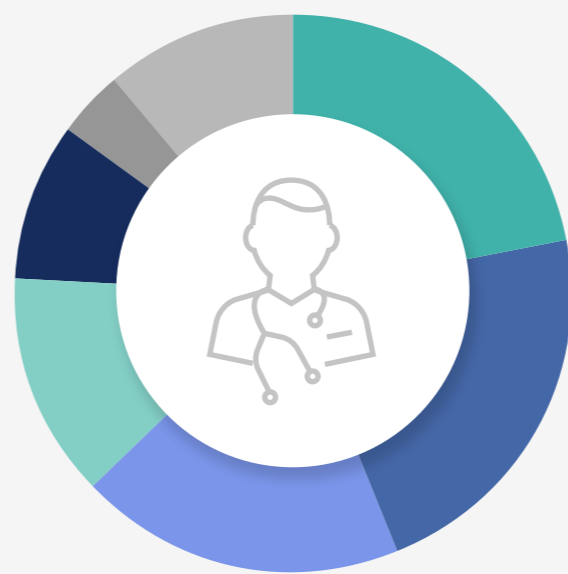
< \$1 Million	20%
\$1-2M	41%
\$2-3M	20%
\$3-4M	9%
\$4-5M	3%
\$5-6M	3%
> \$6M	4%

## Full-Time Employees



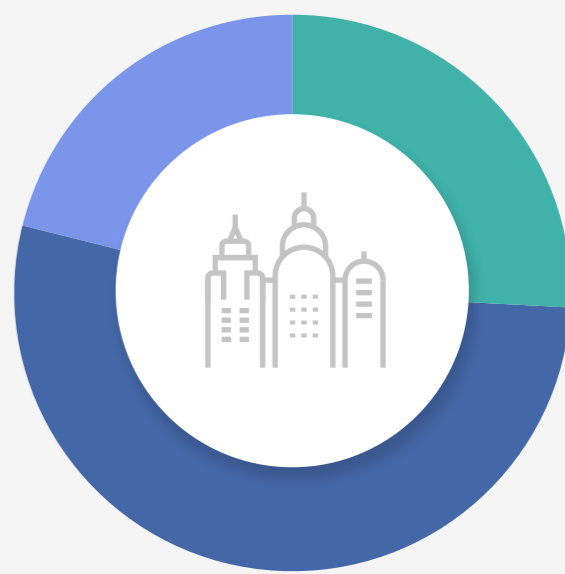
0-5	20%
6-10	27%
11-15	18%
16-20	12%
21-25	8%
26-30	5%
30+	10%

## Number of DVMs



1	22%
2	22%
3	19%
4	13%
5	9%
6	4%
7+	11%

## Type of Hospital



Rural	26%
Suburban	53%
Urban	21%
Primarily Dogs & Cats	74%
Dogs, Cats & Exotics/Pocket Pets	13%
Dogs, Cats & Large Animals	7%
Other (Cats Only, Equine, Etc)	6%

# WHAT SURPRISED US

iVET360 Insights



Recruiting and hiring is still a monster, but what surprised us is the fact that most hospitals regardless of revenue or region still **do not have a standard recruitment plan or process in place.**



**PMs are spending a larger amount of time than ever working the floor,** even though they don't consider this one of their top 3 responsibilities. Obviously staff shortages are the culprit here, and we'll dive into this more later in the report.



There's been a big shift in the benefits practice managers say they want from their employers. **Profit sharing** and **bonus programs** now top the list.

# YOUR ROLE

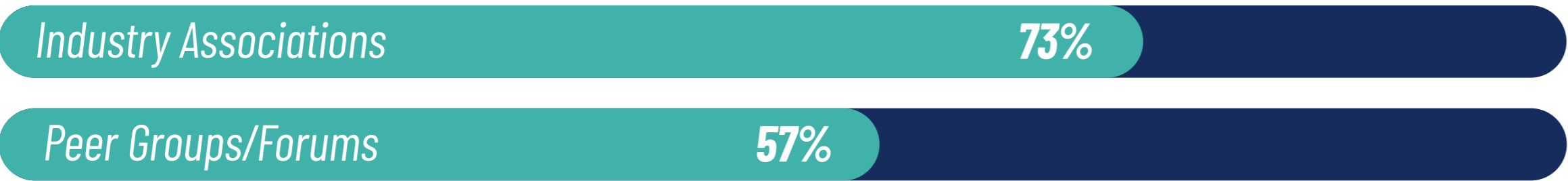
## Practice Manager Challenges

### The #1 Challenge Facing Practice Managers Across the Country Is...



Recruiting	58%	Capacity	15%
Staff Retention	21%	Angry Clients	12%
Scheduling	21%	Staff Morale	10%
Client Load	20%	Efficiency	6%
COVID Issues	16%	Financial Mgmt	4%

### Where do PMs go for support in managing those challenges?



### From The Source

*"Some days I feel like the staff is oblivious as to what I do and how **hard and isolating** it actually is.*

*I find this job to be thankless, **some days I feel invisible**, and I hate having to be the bad guy when the other supervisors aren't holding the staff accountable."*



# YOUR ROLE

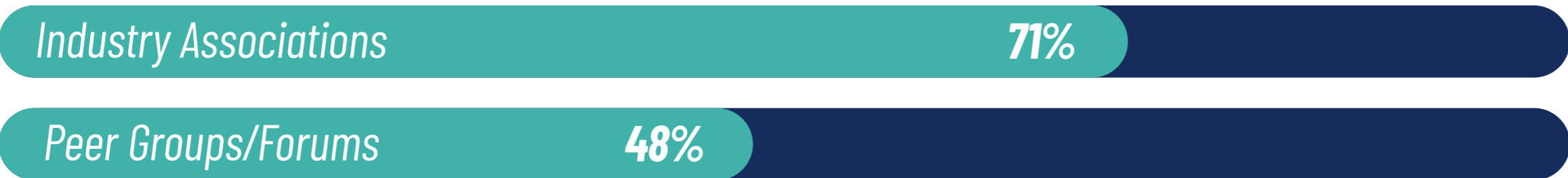
## Practice Owner Challenges

### The #1 Challenge Facing Practice Owners Across the Country Is...



Recruiting	54%	Capacity	15%
Scheduling	32%	Efficiency	10%
Client Load	23%	Angry Clients	9%
Staff Retention	22%	Financial Mgmt	7%
Covid Issues	19%	Staff Morale	7%

### Where do POs go for support in managing those challenges?



### Max Capacity

Practice owners (who are usually DVMs) feel the **Client Load** and **Capacity** issues acutely as they often have patients—both new and established—that they would like to help and cannot.

# YOUR ROLE

iVET360 Insights



Recruiting has been exacerbated greatly by the ongoing inability to retain staff. Last year, only 7% of PMs found retention to be a major issue; this year it's up to 22%, making it a top tier problem. It's one step up, two steps back—**people are leaving faster than a practice can replace them.**

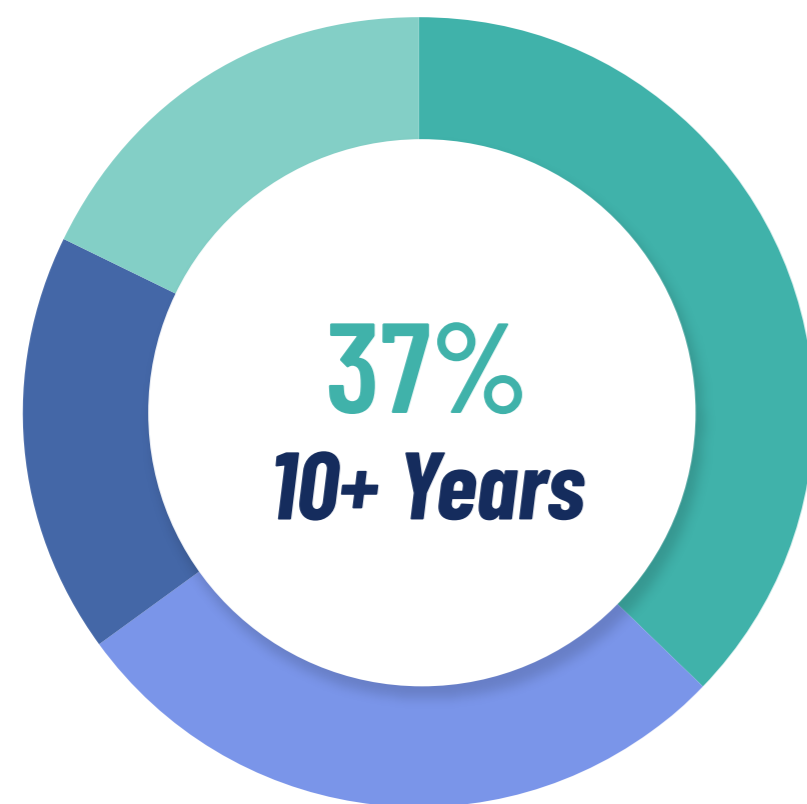


Client load and capacity are prongs on the same horn. **Demand is increasing** while at the same time practices have **less available staff** to meet that demand, and it's only getting worse. Last year, just 8% of PMs put those challenges at the top of their list, but this year that number rose to 26%.

# YOUR ROLE

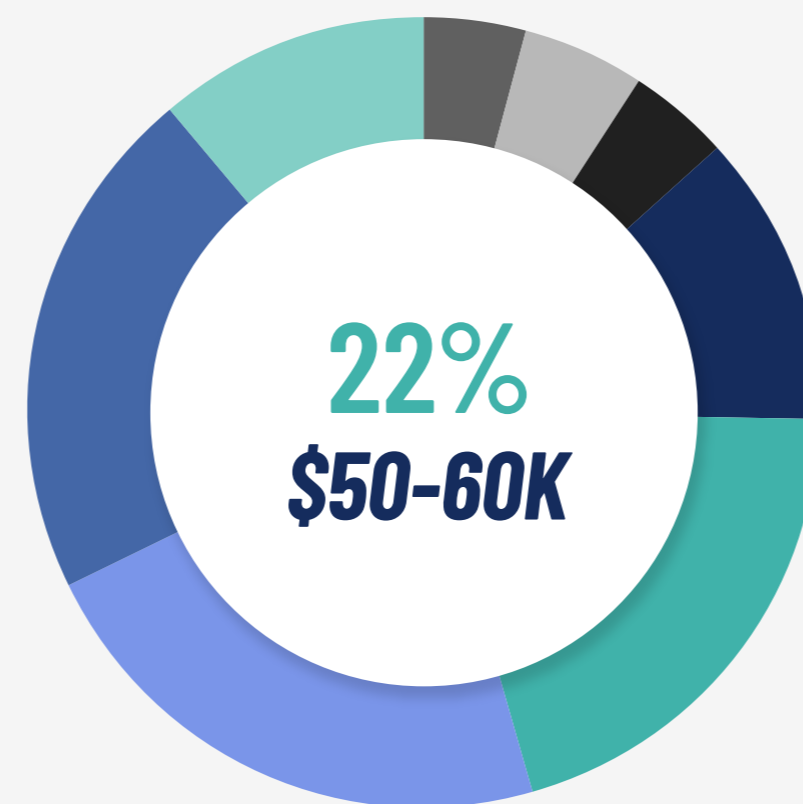
*Education, Compensation, & Experience*

## How Long Have You Been in the Practice Manager Position?



0-2 years	18%
2-5 years	28%
5-10 years	17%
10+ years	37%

## What Is Your Annual Salary Range As A Practice Manager?



< \$40K	11%	\$70-80K	12%
\$40-50K	21%	\$80-90K	4%
\$50-60K	22%	\$90-100K	5%
\$60-70K	20%	> \$100K	4%

## Practice Managers Have Widely-Variied Experience

**60%**

*of respondents attend CE courses/events/webinars*

**52%**

*of respondents have 10+ years of on-the-job training*

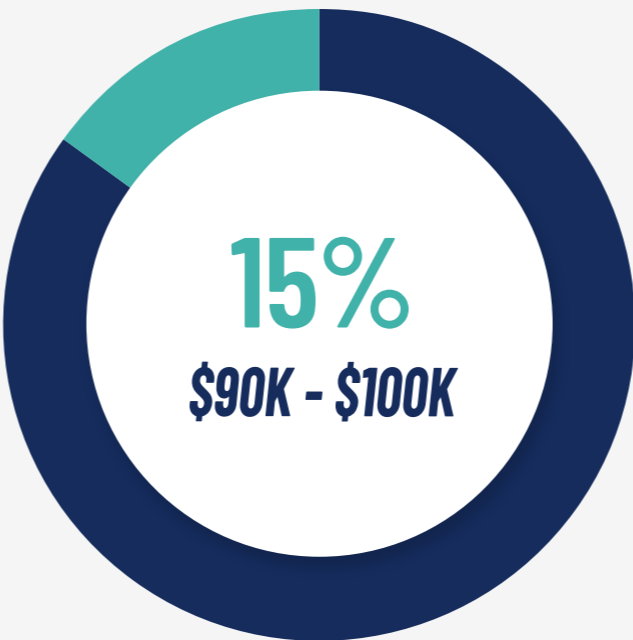
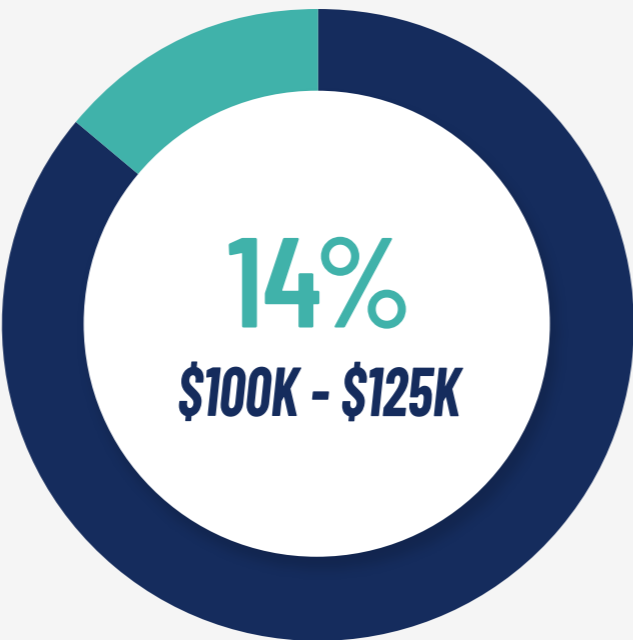
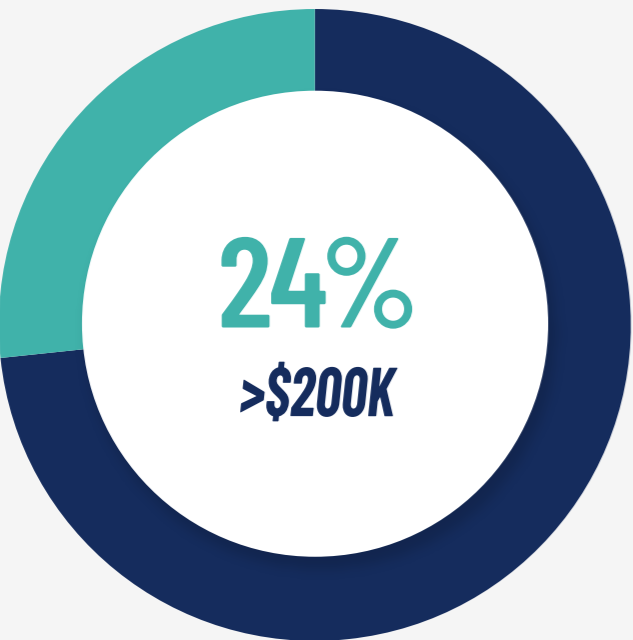
**33%**

*of respondents have management experience in a different industry*

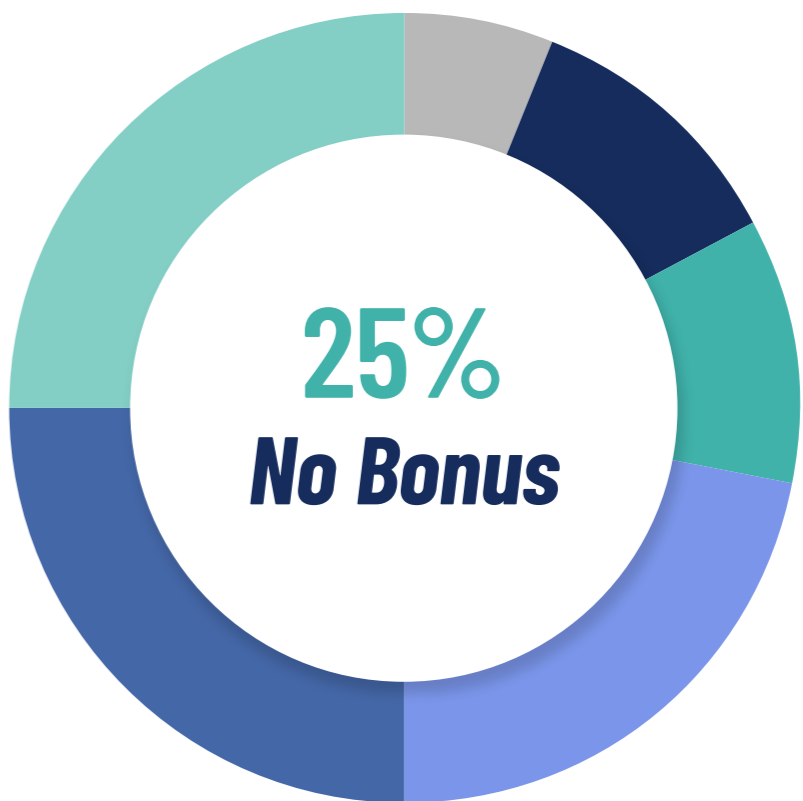
# YOUR ROLE

Education, Compensation, & Experience

## What Is Your Annual Salary Range & Bonus As A Practice Owner?



<\$40K	1%	\$90K - \$100K	15%
\$40K - \$50K	2%	\$100K - \$125K	14%
\$50K - \$60K	1%	\$125K - \$150K	8%
\$60K - \$70K	5%	\$150K - \$175K	8%
\$70K - \$80K	7%	\$175K - \$200K	6%
\$80K - \$90K	8%	>\$200K	24%



No Bonus	25%
Variable	25%
Annually	22%
Quarterly	11%
Monthly	11%
Performance-based	6%

# YOUR ROLE

iVET360 Insights



One BIG insight here that ties into many others issues the industry is facing, including retention and burnout: While the pay rate varies with size of practice and state to state, we couldn't help but notice that **many PMs are terribly underpaid for the amount of responsibility they shoulder.**

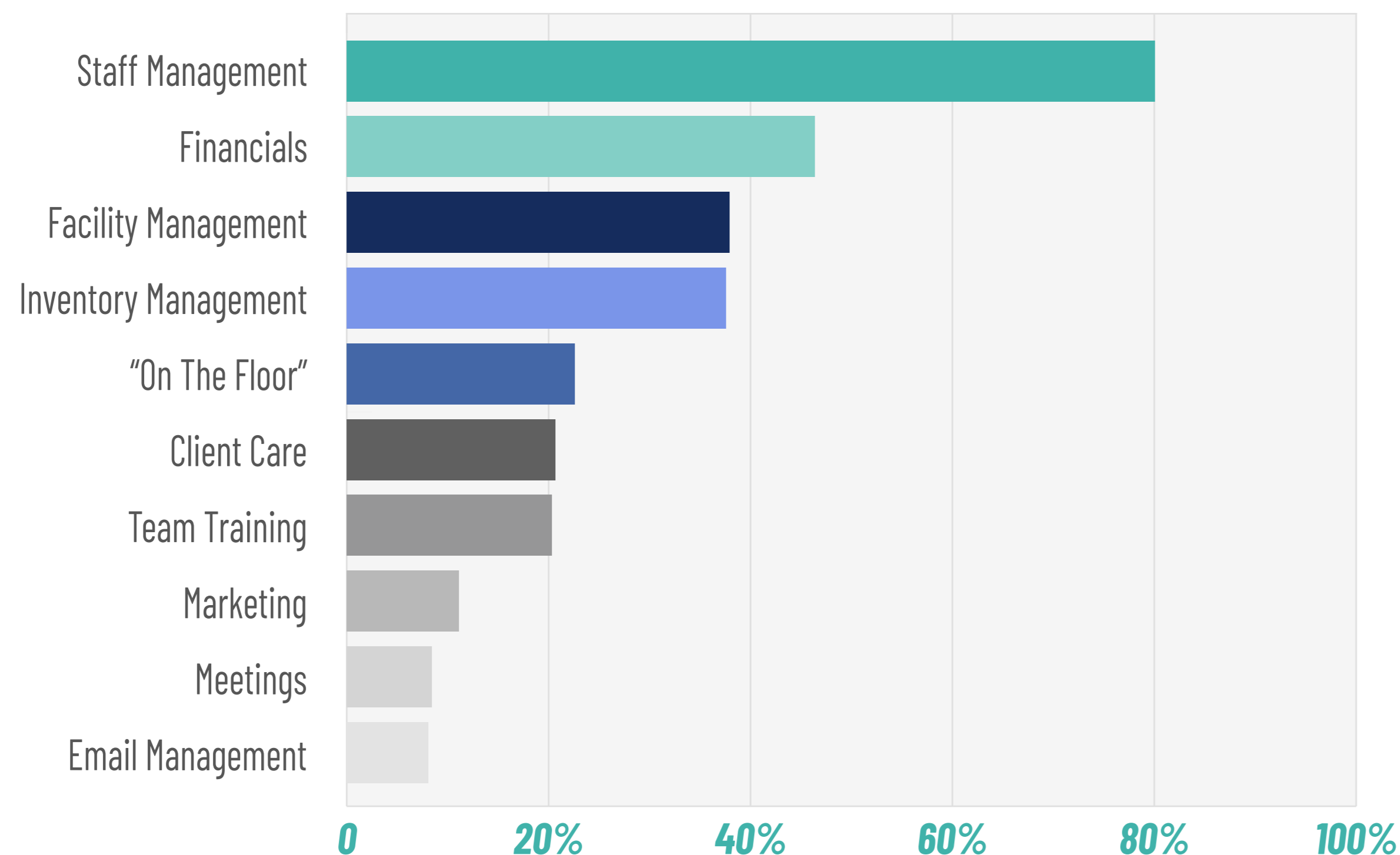


The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the annual median pay for a manager at a human medical practice is \$101,340. Meanwhile, the annual median pay for a veterinary practice manager is \$60,000; for a veterinary Hospital Administrator the median is \$75,000. Meanwhile, the **cost of living in the U.S. has risen 5.9%** in the last year, and it's unlikely most veterinary PMs have seen a commensurate raise in compensation.

# YOUR ROLE

## Duties & Job Support

### What Are Your Primary Areas of Responsibility?



### iVET360 Insights

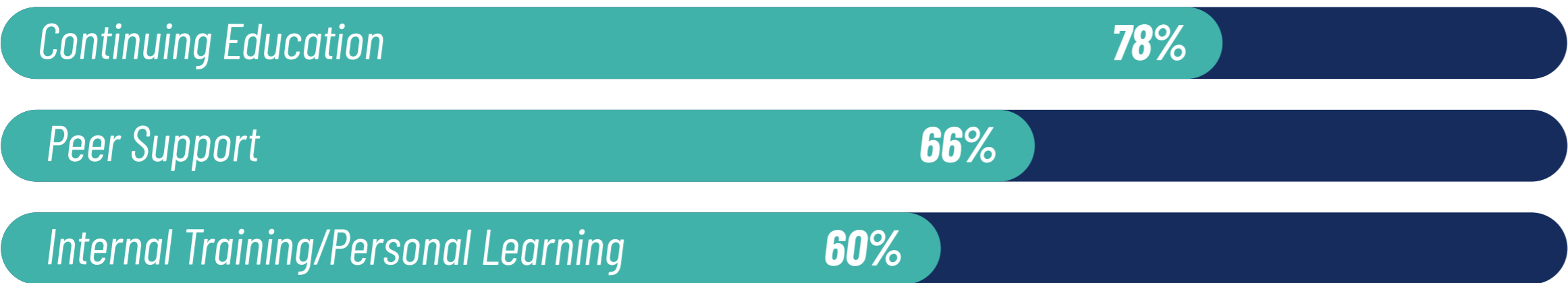
- ✓ PMs are spending a significant part of their day on the floor, and yet, they rank this fairly low on their list of primary responsibilities. **Here's where the COVID fallout really shows up: Practices are routinely short-handed because the pandemic has changed the way we respond to illness.** Employees are much more likely to stay home when sick, rather than just "working through it" as they did in the past. This results in chronic staff shortages for teams that are already stretched thin.

# YOUR ROLE

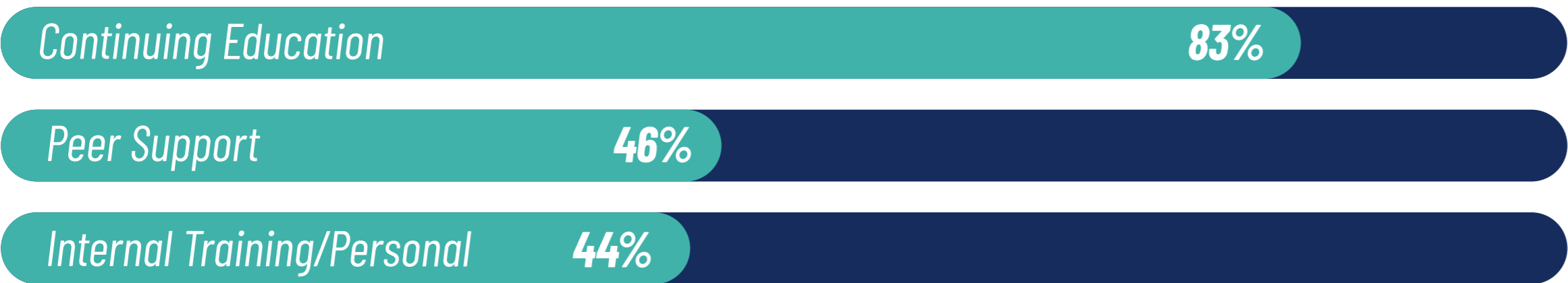
Duties & Job Support

## What Support Resources Do You Rely On For Your Own Growth and Development? *(Respondents could choose more than one)*

### Practice Managers



### Practice Owners






## How Is Your Relationship with the Practice Owner?



Excellent	53%
Above Average	33%
Average	9%
Below Average or Poor	3%

# YOUR ROLE

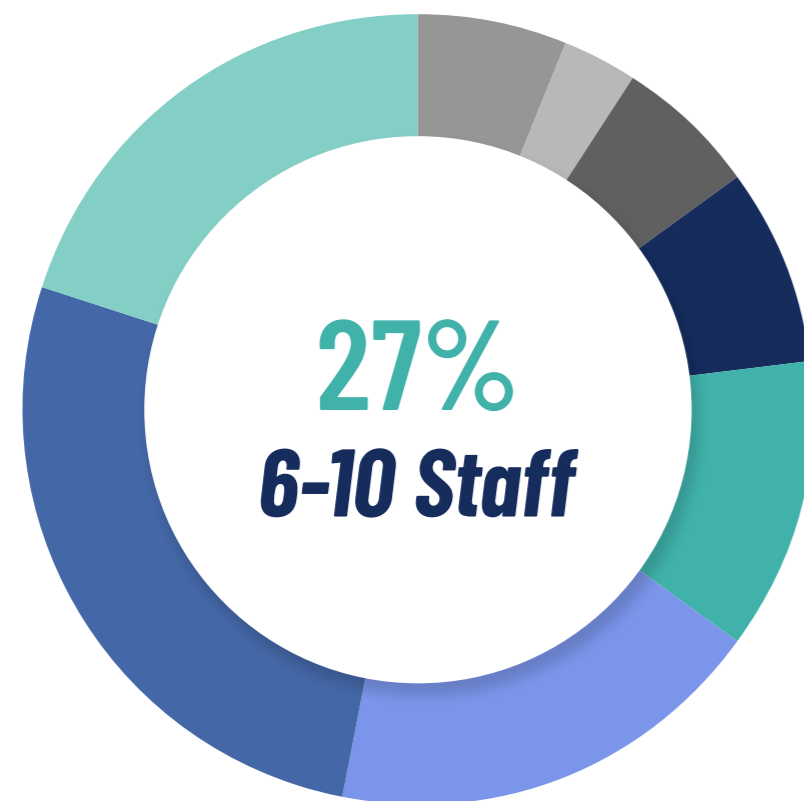
iVET360 Insights

-  **Suburban PMs rank being on the floor as their #1 time commitment**, while rural and urban PMs are giving more time to financials and inventory. That's consistent with last year's findings.
-  Interestingly, there's a strong correlation between larger revenue hospitals (\$3M+) and the PM having a positive relationship with the practice owner. While "correlation isn't causation" as they say, our guess is that it may be as simple as the fact that PMs in larger hospitals tend to have more experience and know how to work with an owner better.
-  When it comes to supporting their professional growth and development, **over half of all PMs say training provided by vendors is also an important resource**. Of those vendors, IDEXX and Zoetis were far and away the most popular (62% and 59% respectively).

# YOUR STAFF

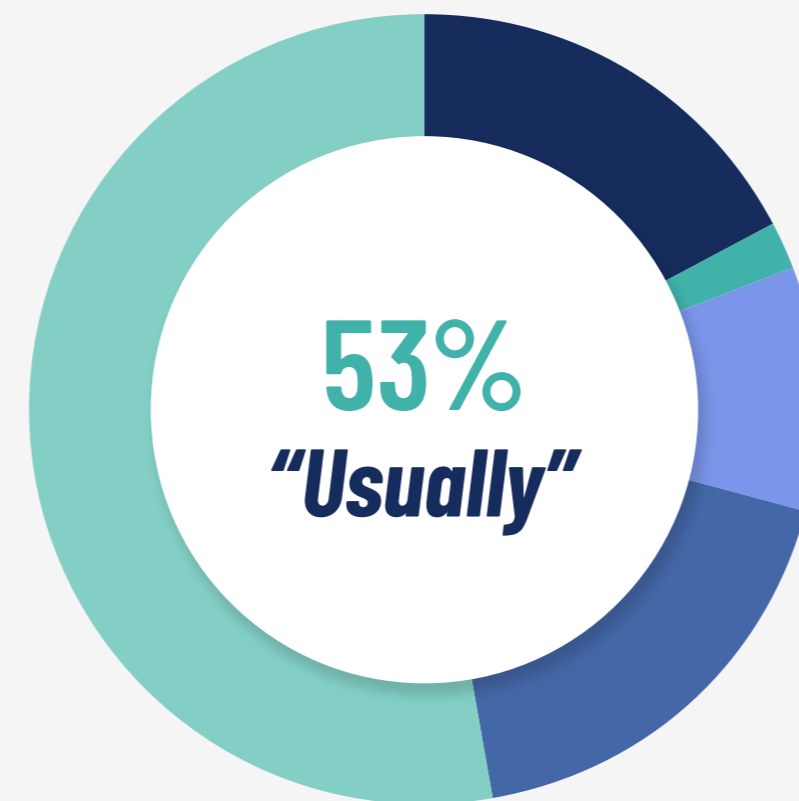
*The People You Supervise*

## How Many Full-Time Team Members Work at Your Practice?



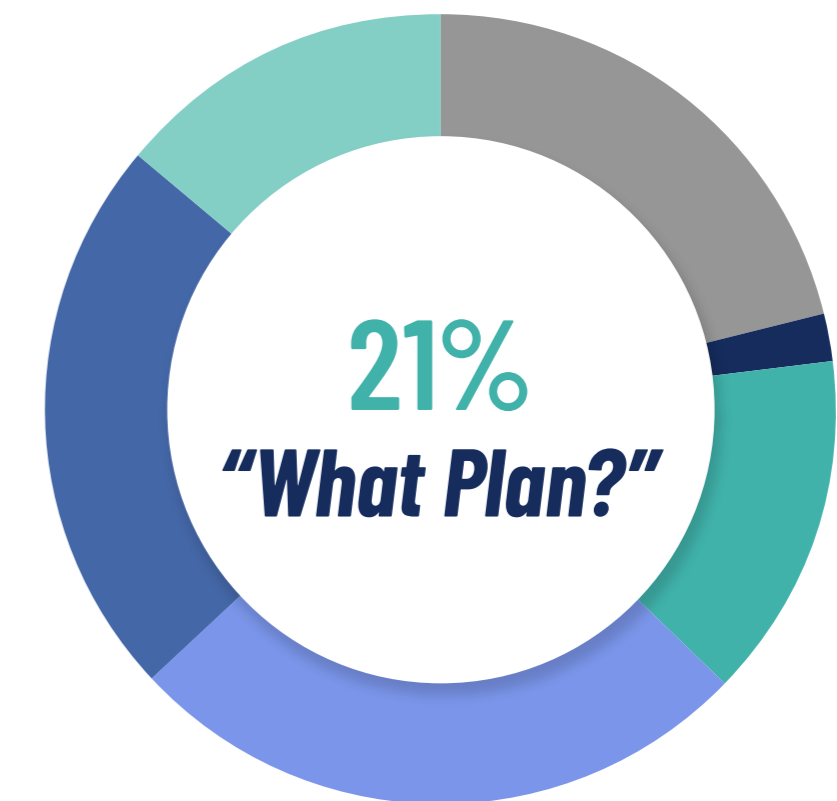
0-5	20%	21-25	8%
6-10	27%	26-30	6%
11-15	18%	31-35	3%
16-20	12%	36-40	6%

## How Often Do You Use A Formalized Onboarding Process?



Usually	53%	17% do not have a structured onboarding process/program
Sometimes	18%	
Rarely	10%	
Never	2%	

## How Often Do You Use Your Staff Development & Training Plan?

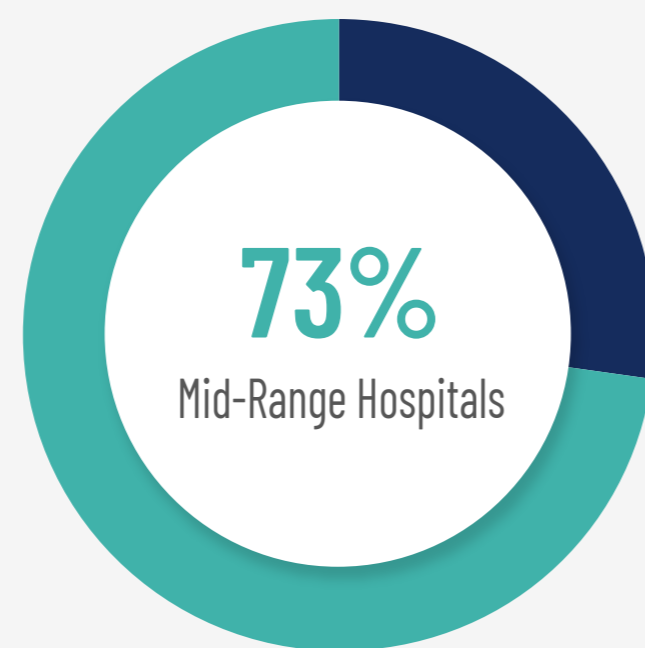
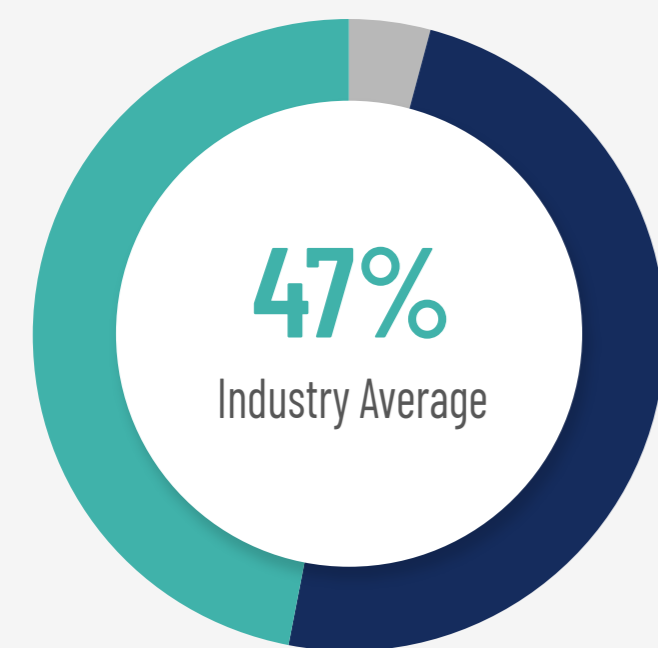


Always	14%	Never	2%
Usually	23%	What Plan?	21%
Sometimes	26%		
Rarely	14%		

# YOUR STAFF

## The People You Supervise

### Do you have a standard recruitment plan and process for all positions?



- ✓ While the number of hospitals that report having a standard recruitment plan in place has increased from last year (47%), that leaves over half without one. According to the Harvard Business Review, **80% of turnover can be attributed to bad hiring decisions**—something that happens when there's not a consistent procedure to follow. It's a vicious cycle: Lack of staff is likely the reason that practice leaders can't spend time developing the tools that would help them with their chronic... lack of staff.




### From The Source

"I'm good at [hiring] but **it is so cumbersome**. It detracts from the time I could be spending doing tasks that are more meaningful to me. No matter how much I screen, you actually don't know whether or not someone will work out and that waste of time is extremely frustrating for me."



# YOUR STAFF

iVET360 Insights

-  **Mid-range hospitals (\$3-\$4 million in revenue)** once again had the highest number of hospitals with a recruitment plan in place at 73%.
-  By demographic region, **63% of urban practices, 49% of suburban hospitals, and 34% of rural hospitals** had such a plan in place, so the numbers are up somewhat across the country.
-  Just over half of all hospitals say they regularly use a formal onboarding process for their employees (53%), and about 37% have a staff training and development program. When it comes to the issue of staff retention, this is an area that needs investment from practices. **Lack of proper training, clear goals and position objectives are primary frustrations** for veterinary employees.

# YOUR HOSPITAL

## Benefits

### What Benefits Does Your Hospital Provide?\*

Pet Care Discounts	91%
Paid Time Off	89%
Paid Holidays	77%
Retirement Savings Plan	72%
Health Care	71%
Continuing Education (stipend/tuition reimbursement)	69%
Paid Sick Time	59%
Dental Care	51%
Vision Care	44%
Life Insurance	28%
Short-Term Disability Insurance	25%
Bonus Program	23%

### What Benefits Would You Like To See Added?\*

Profit Sharing	24%
Bonus Program	22%
Gym Membership/Discount	19%
Dental Care	17%
Health Care	13%
Childcare Benefits	13%
Pet Insurance	13%
Tuition Reimbursement	12%
Wellness Programs	12%
Life Insurance	11%
Paid Parental Leave	11%
School Loan Repayment	11%

- ✓ When it comes to compensation and benefits, ***inflation may be starting to have an effect on what employees say they want—and what you need to offer—in order to attract and retain them.*** In a shift from last year, the #1 benefit that PMs say they would like to see added to their compensation is profit sharing.
- ✓ The Midwest and Northeast were ***the least likely*** to offer their employees health care.

*\*Only displaying top 12 categories. Additional benefits were included in the survey questions and responses.*

# YOUR HOSPITAL

## Performance

### How Often Do Practice Managers Assess Hospital Performance?



# YOUR HOSPITAL

## Performance

### How Often Do Practice Owners Assess Hospital Performance?



# YOUR HOSPITAL

iVET360 Insights



**Pet care discounts are the most common benefit offered** (91%), followed by paid time off (89%) and paid holidays (77%). Health care and retirement savings were the next most common benefits offered on the list, but still offered by only 38% of the smallest hospitals (under \$1 million in revenue).



Just shy of **70% of PMs say they don't create a financial plan for their hospitals**, which likely points to a lack of not only time but the experience and skills needed to produce this kind of long-range accounting. Practice owners were more likely to say they have created a financial plan for their business, but that number is still below 40%. Annual financial plans are essential for any practice. If you'll pardon the humble-brag, [iVET360's Business Analytics](#) team actually enjoys doing that kind of thing, and they're really good at it. Let them help you get started!

# HOW WE GOT HERE

*...And How Do We Make It Better?*

By now we all have a good idea of how we got here—and while the shortage of vets and vet techs is dire, it's also old tea that's been brewing for a while.

The U.S. is a demographically “geriatric” country by global standards, and it will take over 18,000 additional companion animal veterinarians just to cover the number of doctors expected to retire by 2030. Shortages of credentialed and non-credentialed support staff such as technicians, nurses, and assistants is estimated to continue to be in the tens of thousands as well.




At the same time, demand for veterinary care is skyrocketing. Unless we start building more veterinary educational institutions, the problem of a shallow candidate pool isn't going away. But there's little any individual practice can do about that, and really, it's only one reason why the veterinary industry is struggling with staffing and recruitment.

***The other big issue is retention***, which has only worsened since last year. How do we keep the people we have, who are dropping out in droves?



# CONSIDER THIS

## iVET360 Insights

-  Wages and benefits in our field are substantially lower than in other comparable industries. Part of our job is to help practices be as profitable as possible, so we're not knocking making money—but there must be a balance. Right now, **many hospitals pay their support people less than they can make working in fast food.**
-  Today's veterinarians prefer to work fewer hours compared to doctors back in the day who typically worked 50+ hours a week. They also expect more flexibility in their schedule, which is why so many are **opting to hire out as relief vets**, making as much as \$100 per hour working when they want.
-  Burnout is cited as a primary reason for lack of retention. In fact, the **average burnout rate for techs** has gone from five years to about two.

# MAKING IT BETTER




## *The Challenge*

One of the unique challenges we have as an industry is the misguided idea that people working in this field shouldn't be interested in making money. While it's not good for that to be the sole motivator, our question is this: Why can't people make money AND do what they love? It's basic common sense [backed by research](#) that staff members who are not stressed about finances are going to be more productive and likely to stay.

***So the question is: How can a practice afford be as generous as possible with the compensation and benefits needed to attract and retain staff? Here are some answers:***

# MAKING IT BETTER

## *First & Foremost*

-  Focus on fees, growth in revenue, and yes, even if you think you don't have the capacity for them, new clients. This will help you expand your ability to provide better compensation while still maintaining a healthy margin. Competitive compensation does not need to compromise the health of your business!
-  Put real effort into training your new hires properly and giving your current staff opportunities to learn and grow.
-  Make team wellness and happiness a priority by providing breaks for stress relief, additional paid days off when possible, and perks to make the workday easier.

# MAKING IT BETTER

## *Our Other Suggestions*

**Trust your people and DELEGATE.** PMs don't need to "own" the whole recruiting process, which can cause hiring delays. Identify a leader on your team and give that person the easier recruiting tasks, such as weeding through the first group of applicants and coaching them to do phone screening.

**Move into the 21st century.** Automate everything you can. Typing up medical records is time-consuming, so invest in scribe software. Embrace telemedicine and use it for rechecks or when the visit is going to mostly consist of having a conversation with the pet parent.

One of the major causes of burnout is angry clients, and not feeling supported by the hospital when a confrontation happens. **Institute a "one chance" rule with difficult pet owners**, giving them a warning after the first infraction, and their invitation to find another vet after the second. Many iVET360 clients have adopted such a policy.

**Call on us.** We are here to help. Our survey showed that both practice managers and practice owners say recruiting, efficiency, staff morale and personnel management are the top four areas where they would most like help.

For the first issue, we've created the super-helpful (and totally FREE) [iVET360 Recruiting Kit](#), which contains an easy, time-saving job ad writing tool as well as in-depth hiring info, interview processes and questions and more. For more complex human resources support, our [HR & Training](#) team is second to none.

If you have questions about this report, or if our iVET360 team can help you with any of your challenges as a practice manager or owner, don't hesitate to reach out. We want to make life better for you, your staff, and the pets you serve.