



The success of a veterinary practice, or the ability to stand out from the competition, starts with the engagement of the team. There's no doubt about it: employees are the most trusted spokespersons when it comes to the customers, while acting as precious ambassadors and outreach agents for the practice.

If you have hired qualified staff, and you've clearly defined the practice's vision and expectations, that's an excellent start! Now it's time to move on to the next step: the performance management process.

Why manage team performance?

A clearly defined, effectively communicated and consistently applied performance management process allows you to:

- Facilitate the achievement of shared objectives by ensuring that the team is working on the right things at the right time.
- Identify the skills that need to be developed to help employees excel in their work and stay motivated.
- Support the employee's advancement within the company (in other words, a properly implemented process helps reduce turnover while maximizing employee commitment!).

A performance management process that is rigorously implemented is always a strategic asset, provided that listening and communication are placed front and centre.

Implementing the process: It's easier than you think!

1. Set the goals you want to achieve as a team. These goals must be measurable and aligned with the practice's objectives (e.g., acquisition of X% of new customers within one year, or launch of a new service before date X). Define how each team member can contribute to this objective.

2. Confirm the roles and responsibilities of each team member.
3. List the behavioural competencies (attitudes, life skills and abilities) required for each position.
4. Plan annual or biannual (preferably) meetings with each team member to discuss objectives, their progress and the challenges they face. These meetings are intended as a dialogue (rather than a monologue) on the employee's achievement of objectives and professional development (how can the employee further hone his/her skills in order to create a high-performance team).

Use these meetings as an opportunity to learn more about the level of commitment of employees: their sources of motivation, their concerns and other key aspects of well-being in the workplace.

Fact: Employees want to help make a difference. While this is particularly true of the younger generations of workers entering the labour force, it is also true of any individual who wants to feel valued, appreciated, supported and listened to, regardless of their age.

Tips for measuring employee happiness

Before a team meeting, take a few minutes to ask questions that will help stimulate discussion. You can even write the questions down and put them in a jar and have people take turns picking one. Sample questions:

- What are the strengths of our team?
- What compliment about your work makes you the happiest?
- Complete this sentence using humour: I become instantly happy at work when...
- What habit could we adopt to spread good news within the clinic?

For more communication tips, contact your CDMV Strategic Advisor. (www.cdmv.com)