How to Be the Most Wanted Veterinary Employer
So You Can Attract the Best Associate Doctors

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1. Introduction
You have finally decided to hire a new associate. Whether business has increased, you lost a previous associate, or you are just simply ready for more time away from the office, the decision is made. That is the easy part. The tough part is finding an associate who is the right fit for your practice.

Traditionally, the search for an associate was simply a matter of talking to a few peers or putting an advertisement in a few key locations. But, as you will find out in your search for your next associate, today’s job market is different. The difference lies in the demographic makeup of the pool of available veterinarians. Gone are the days when you talked to an applicant, called a few references, and told them to start on Monday. No longer can you expect the new member of your team to work endless hours and not worry about a day off until they have been there for a few years.

Welcome to an era where there is strong competition for the highly qualified associate. The cost of labor is still your highest expense, so you want the best. Younger veterinarians have different expectations of the veterinary profession, and they look at their next job with a critical eye. To be competitive and satisfy their expectations, evaluate these areas of your business environment before you start your search: work-life balance, practice culture, leadership, and compensation.

2. Discussion
Your search for the perfect associate will undoubtedly collide with their search for the perfect clinic. As a business owner, not only will you have to expand your search to a variety of outlets including social media, but the best applicants will be looking for certain practice qualities before they agree to come on board.

Younger veterinarians are diligent, motivated, and independent, but, typically, they are not patient. They want to work; but they do not want to wait around for you to get your practice in order. The current work force also has a very diverse background; your next associate will probably have had five or more jobs and may have had a career change. They are informed, observant, and will usually know within the first week whether they will be working in your practice very long.

This means the best candidates will expect a clinic to be run like a business. This starts with the practice leadership. Employees want a secure feeling in the workplace. They are drawn toward a practice that has strong, competent guidance with clear expectations and respectful leadership.
The best candidates have a tremendous skill set, yet they want to continue to learn and are drawn toward the practice that encourages continuous learning. This is just one component they look for in the practice culture. The most wanted practice will have employees who work as a team, with a purpose, and are also happy to be at work. Potential associates may also want to know if there is an employee handbook and job descriptions for the support staff and the associate veterinarians.

These organizational components lead an applicant to understand how a practice considers a work-life balance. Associate veterinarians want to work hard, but they also want to enjoy their life. For them, time off is just as important as work time. The practice that has established work hours and defined time off will attract the best employees.

Finally you must consider compensation. Before you decide to hire a veterinarian, you have already considered the effect on your revenue and expenses. As a practice owner, salary may seem like the most important component when hiring an associate. However, benefits are also critical to entice a great veterinarian, and the benefits do not have to be financial. They can encompass flexible hours, the opportunity to volunteer, or simply more time off. Once again, if a potential associate sees a strong business with strong leadership and a great practice culture, then the salary and benefits are less important. When you hire the right associate, the effective result will be an increase in profitability.

3. Summary

Hiring an associate may be one of the most important decisions you make. Why not increase your chance for success and create a desirable business environment? Evaluate key components of your practice and get your business in order before you begin your search. Become the most wanted veterinary practice, and the best associates will come looking for you. Finding that perfect employee may be easier than you think, and the next veterinarian you hire might be a perfect fit.