

Equine Practice Core Values and Mission Statement Toolkit

A Guide for Defining Your Practice's
Core Values and Mission Statement





Introduction

The task of developing or updating your practice's Mission Statement & Core Values is an important one!

The Why: It helps you and your team align.

Practice leaders engage the hearts and minds of our team members, ensuring collective ownership for desired positive workplace outcomes.

Core Values are the principles that guide the actions, decisions, and culture of a practice. They are the foundation of culture and the behaviors expected of its employees. The values allow everyone to be aligned around the guiding philosophy to serve employees, clients, and the broader community.

A **Mission Statement** defines a practice's purpose and primary objectives. It communicates what the practice does, who it serves, and how it aims to achieve its goals to employees and clients.

Clear definition of the Mission of a practice helps attract and retain employees who share the the practice's values and commitments. It provides a focal point of daily effort and helps employees see the meaning and purpose of their work.

Public sharing of your Mission and Values can attract clients to your practice through an understanding of shared beliefs and commitments for the care of their horses.

Should your practice already have a Mission Statement & Core Values, feel free to use any portion of this toolkit that you find helpful. If your Core Values were established over five years ago, it might be time to review these with your team.

Developing Core Values

- Your practice's Core Values are essential to your Mission process and will be used to create your Mission. Core Values are the clearly stated principles that guide all of a practice's actions; they serve as its cultural cornerstones.
- To get started, facilitate a 1.5-hour long meeting with your entire staff (inclusive of DVMs) with the intent to include their feedback and gather ideas. This meeting will ultimately drive alignment and engagement and create a sense of shared ownership across your team.
- In this first meeting, start by introducing the meaning of Core Values and the why behind them. Then, have your staff produce words describing what is important to them in treating your patients, clients, and one another. Place all the responses on a whiteboard or flip chart. Make sure everyone contributes and use these thought starters (not an exhaustive list):

Honesty	Competent	Fair	Friendly	Dedicated	Passionate	Compassionate
Empathetic	Trustworthy	Dependable	Helpful	Respectful	Outstanding	Consistent
Loyal	Knowledgeable	Experts	Service Excellence	Committed	Energetic	Professional
Accountable	Integrity	Teamwork	Supportive	Principled	Responsive	Productive
Collaborative	Sincere	Positive	Sensitive	Creative	Community Oriented	Enthusiastic

- Your list may include 20+ values. Once created, merge/group similar values to *ideally end up with 6-8 Core Values*.
- Below is an example of organizing many values under a few, encompassing values.

Quality: *Commitment, Diligence, Ethics, Excellence, Integrity, Justice, Reliability, Self-discipline, Simplicity, Time*

Independence: *Creativity, Freedom, Resourcefulness, Risk-taking, Self-expression, Success, Uniqueness*

Knowledge: *Ambition, Creativity, Growth, Intuition, Learning, Perseverance, Time, Wisdom*

Vulnerability: *Authenticity, Fairness, Humor, Leadership, Reliability, Trust, Understanding, Wholeheartedness*

Developing a Mission Statement

A Mission Statement is a statement of your practice's "Why." It defines the purpose or reason for being and guides your day-to-day operations while communicating to stakeholders (clients and practice team) the core services your practice provides. Your Mission should motivate your team toward a common goal and focus on what is most important to the practice.

- To get started, facilitate a 1.5-hour long meeting with your entire staff (inclusive of DVMs) with the intent to include their feedback and gather ideas for your Mission. You can combine this with the Core Values meeting or have it as a separate event. This will ultimately drive alignment and engagement and create a sense of shared ownership across your team.
- Start by sharing the rationale for developing the Mission Statement.
- Collect ideas from the group for the Mission Statement either verbally in person or via written questionnaire. Place each of the staff's responses on a whiteboard or easel pad; assign a notetaker. Active participation of all participants is key for success.
- Below are some sample questions to help get started:

What do we do here?

How do we do it?

Why do we do it?

Who do we serve?

*What impact do we
want to have?*

*What does a
healthy practice look like?*



Finalizing & Implementing Your Mission Statement & Core Values

With the collective feedback from the group, draft a few versions of the Mission Statement. You can even consider putting your ideas into an AI tool for help crafting your statement in a creative way.

- As you craft your thoughts, remember that your Mission conveys your practice's "why." What problem do you solve? First, the most important thing is to generate the raw material; you can hone and edit from there.
- Next, you can get a little more granular and explain what service your practice provides, focusing on how your service offers value for your customers and community. This explanation should touch on your broader mission and how your practice differs from others like yours, either explicitly or implicitly. Again, keep this short, concise and specific.
- Revise and condense your Mission Statement to reflect your purpose and goals. Think of this as the elevator pitch version of a more comprehensive Mission Statement.
- Finally, get your team onboard. Run your Mission Statement by them to gauge their opinion to ensure your message accurately portrays your practice and reflects your long-term goals. Finalizing your Mission & Values may take 2-3 meetings with your staff. It is important to have consensus and buy-in. This means open discussions about what it means to live by the Core Values.

To implement your finalized Core Values and Mission Statement, share both with your team. Consider having a copy neatly framed and displayed in your practice for clients and your team to see. Broadcast your Mission and Values on your website and anywhere that seems appropriate so staff and clients see it regularly. This will inspire aligned, consistent action and accountability to the standards you created as a team.

Mission Statement Examples for Inspiration

WISCONSIN EQUINE: *It's all about the horse... We strive to maximize the quality of life for our equine patients by providing compassionate care with the utmost attention to the individual needs of the horse and the clients we serve.*

PIONEER EQUINE: *Pioneer Equine Hospital is committed to maximizing horse care and performance utilizing the most advanced diagnostics and specialty services, through industry leading veterinarians, specialists, and staff while maintaining a friendly and ethical environment.*

FAIRFIELD EQUINE: *To provide excellence in the health care of the horse, deliver high quality customer care, and advance veterinary education.*

STARBUCKS: *With every cup, with every conversation, with every community - we nurture the limitless possibilities of human connection.*

GOOGLE: *To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.*

AAEP: *To improve the health and welfare of the horse, further the professional development of its members, and provide resources and leadership for the benefit of the equine industry*

Tips and Tricks

Assembling everyone as a group can have added benefits such as a sense of comradery, group buy-in to the shared goal, and a sense of working together to create something meaningful.

It can also be fun! Consider having snacks or lunch provided for the group to help fuel the ideas.

Short on time? No problem. Another option could be to have staff members respond to these questions outside of a meeting environment. Answers could be submitted via email, survey system, or note card. Whatever works for you!

If you choose to collect feedback outside of a meeting environment, be sure to be clear about an expected deadline to keep the momentum going.

The project of creating or updating your practice's Core Values and Mission Statement can feel daunting.

Doing it with intention and dedication is hard work.

Taking it step by step, with the help of your whole practice, will help lighten the load and create a product that resonates.

It is truly time well spent defining and cultivating the culture of your practice.



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