

# CHANGING THE CULTURE

In Your Veterinary Practice



# TRUTHS AND MYTHS ABOUT CULTURE

When you consider the culture in your practice and how you can start to change it, it is important to understand what's true and what isn't, and why culture matters.

## Truths

- Culture matters more than any policy or handbook.
- It tells every new employee how to behave.
- It is a critical driver of happiness, engagement, and productivity.

## Myths

- Culture can be enforced using authority.
- It can only be created by the person in charge.
- It can't be changed.

# TEAMS WITH A GREAT CULTURE

- **Are fully accountable.**

People are solution-oriented more than problem-oriented and thinking about the future more than the past.

- **Solve interpersonal problems directly.**

If there's an issue with someone on the team, a one-on-one conversation is started with them, instead of allowing the problem to fester.

- **Eliminate gossip.**

Team members talk to each other instead of about each other.

- **Assume positive intent.**

Conflict comes from assumptions that have been made about others. When someone makes a mistake, it's not assumed that the person isn't capable, but only that a mistake was made and something can be learned from it.

- **Focus on progress more than mistakes.**

It's not about what was done wrong. It's about what's done next.

- **Have consistent communication processes.**

It's not about more meetings, but about having a vehicle to talk to people about things that are important to our improvement.

# TOWARD MATTERS MOST

We may want to move away from things, like a toxic culture in our practice. But, running away from things is not sustainable. It's important that we define what we are moving toward.

Our opportunity as leaders is to think about how you can get your team thinking differently and moving toward something better.

## Create Your Collaborative Vision

Find inspiration in these real-life examples:

*"We are accountable for how we show up each day and how we impact others around us. We focus on solutions and opportunities, not problems and blame. We work to set a good example with the choices that we make, the work we do, and the interaction we have."*

*"We are dedicated to creating a positive, enthusiastic culture where each of us can grow and where all of us together can create an extraordinary place to work."*

*"We put the needs of the pets, the clients, and the team above our individual wants. We focus on actions, conversations, and a level of commitment that helps us solve problems, support each other, and work together more effectively."*

# HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CULTURE

## ● Define the culture you want, together.

We don't have to think about our entire culture right away. Instead, we can start with small things, like how we want to show up to start our day. Having discussions with our team about doing something small will get us all pointed toward progress.

## ● Align around behaviors that will make progress.

If we say we want to show up and have a good morning, we now need to decide what we do to make that happen.

## ● Practice those behaviors to build habits.

If we practice these behaviors we've collectively decided to align around, good habits begin to form.

## ● Support each other as a team through the change.

Culture change is a set of human behavior changes, and those are hard. If we focus and call out positive things we see our team doing, we are supporting change.

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