

Veterinary Hospital Managers Association, Inc's. Job Descriptions

The Veterinary Hospital Managers Association was formed in 1981. Since its inception, the VHMA has strived to support and advance the profession of veterinary hospital management. The phenomenal growth this association has experienced in such a short time attests to its viability as the leader in veterinary practice management and its definite need by practice managers. The VHMA's commitment to the field of practice management has led it to develop general descriptions of the various levels of management within a veterinary hospital. No two individuals are the same and no two veterinary practices are the same; therefore, it follows that these are very general descriptions and are proposed only as guidelines to assist in identifying the level of knowledge needed by veterinary practices or desired by those pursuing this career.

It is extremely difficult to separate each specific level of management from the others because each level builds upon the knowledge and skills of others. Therefore, we will look at three differing levels simultaneously:

- 1) Veterinary Hospital Office Manager

- 2) Veterinary Practice Manager

- 3) Veterinary Hospital Administrator

Veterinary Hospital Office Manager

The veterinary hospital office manager is responsible for seeing that administrative policies and decisions are accomplished. An office manager's realm of authority and decision-making may be very broad or very limited depending on the administrative needs and criteria established.

Generally, the office manager may be responsible for the daily accounting transactions with clients, banks, suppliers, and personnel. Office managers may coordinate scheduling, training, purchasing, and bookkeeping for a veterinary practice. Some office managers may be the liaison between the administrator and support staff personnel.

A typical Veterinary Hospital Office Manager may be responsible for the following:

Personnel

- The supervision of receptionists and/or front office support staff.
- The office manager may be responsible for the initial reviewing of receptionists' applications, receptionists' interviews, their training, and may perform their employment reviews.

Production

- The office manager functions as the liaison with clients concerning complaints or problems the client is experiencing with the hospital.
- The office manager may direct the front office support staff through structuring, scheduling, motivation, and education to produce the highest level of client satisfaction possible from the services the reception staff provides.

Accounting

- Daily bank deposit preparation and performance.
- Accounts receivable statements, collections, and policies.

Veterinary Practice Manager

A veterinary practice manager is charged with the responsibilities of managing the business activities of a veterinary hospital. A practice manager may have extremely different responsibilities and authority depending upon the size of the hospital and the ownership or administrator's delegation. Practice managers will have knowledge of all the responsibilities of a veterinary office manager and have the ability to further the management of a veterinary hospital by having direct authority and decision-making responsibilities over all business aspects of the veterinary practice.

A typical veterinary practice manager may have the following responsibilities:

Personnel

- Plans for optimal staffing to assure maximum productivity and service.
- Directly recruits, interviews, and hires support staff personnel.
- Supervises support staff personnel and acts as the direct authority regarding disciplinary procedures, discharging, and all the legal responsibilities of employment.
- Schedules personnel and is responsible for support staff personnel employment benefits.
- Assures that personnel are properly trained for their position.
- Maintains a thorough set of employment policies and employee manual.
- Mediates all personnel problems, maintains employee motivation, and structures continuing education for support staff personnel.

Patient/Client Production

- The veterinary hospital manager is responsible for seeing that success is achieved with each client interaction with the veterinary hospital staff.
- The hospital manager will use the tools of education, motivation, structuring, scheduling, coordinating, evaluation, and analysis to achieve optimal client satisfaction from the veterinary hospital services and staff.
- Developing and accomplishing a hospital marketing program.
- Oversees the building and equipment maintenance and housekeeping standards.

Accounting

- Either directly prepares or supervises preparation of all business accounting reports and transactions. Audit both the preparer and hospital personnel performance to assure that proper methods and techniques are being used.
- Review and/or prepare all accounts payable and receivables to confirm that each is handled correctly and timely.
- Periodically reviews fee schedule for services, products, and increases or changes as necessary.
- Establishes hospital budgets and projections for growth.
- Reviews and/or purchases supplies and equipment assuring that a periodic review is made to assure that optimal prices are obtained.

Veterinary Hospital Administrator

The function of a veterinary hospital administrator is unique from all other positions in a veterinary hospital because the administrator has complete authority over the operation of the business and practice in concert with the practice owner(s) or board of directors.

The administrator will be the coordinator and final authority of all business functions and the supervising agent of all hospital services and personnel.

A veterinary hospital administrator will be responsible for all of the functions described for office and hospital managers with the additions of being responsible for professional staffing and supervision. While the administrator may not have the knowledge of a veterinarian regarding medicine, the administrator should have a general knowledge of quality assurance and performance in veterinary medicine and may act in an advisory role in helping establish and supervise medical protocols of the practice.

A typical veterinary hospital administrator's responsibilities will include all of those listed for the office manager and practice manager with the addition of a fourth area of responsibility:

Administration

- Either directly or in conjunction with the business owner(s) or board of directors: recruits, interviews, and hires professional staff. Mediates professional staff personnel problems, maintains their employment policies and contracts, and may act to help maintain and supervise a medical protocol.
- The purpose of a hospital administrator is to serve the owner(s) or board of directors of the practice in establishing and reaching the goals and policies they desire. The administrator combines the elements of business and veterinary medicine to succeed in maintaining excellence and quality of care to clients and their pets.

There are obviously degrees of veterinary practice management requiring increasingly higher levels of knowledge, skill, and expertise. Most veterinary practices employing a full-time person appointed to manage the business affairs of the practice can expect that administrator to have general knowledge and skills in four very general areas. Each practice will customize the hospital administrator's role to meet their individual needs and requirements.

Personnel

- The veterinary hospital administrator uses their skills and authority to accomplish optimal staffing to assure maximum productivity and service.

Production

- The veterinary hospital administrator uses the tools of education, motivation, coordination, evaluation, and analysis to achieve optimal client satisfaction from the veterinary practice services and staff.

Financial:

- The veterinary hospital administrator directly or through supervision performs financial functions of the business ranging from fee structuring and application to tax preparation and debt/asset management. The common goal of all veterinary hospital administrators is their desire to achieve the best financial success possible for their businesses.

Administrative

- The veterinary hospital administrator may be charged with a range of administrative responsibilities from daily directing the business affairs of the practice to establishing the short and long term direction, goals, budgets, and protocols of the business and practice.