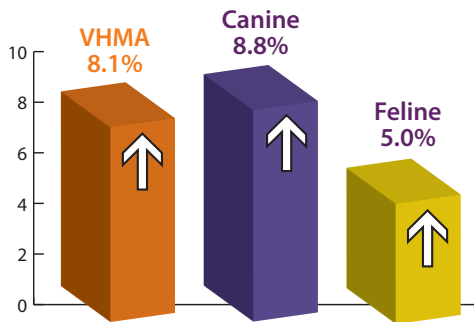


The Insider's Insight Benchmark Report is a publication provided by the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA). The report tracks key economic indicators to determine how VHMA member practices are performing, as well as results from VHMA surveys on issues impacting the profession. There are over 600 VHMA member practices who contribute to the data for the key economic indicators. Data is representative of companion animal practices only.

## October, 2017 vs. October, 2016

### Revenue Growth

October, 2017 compared to October, 2016

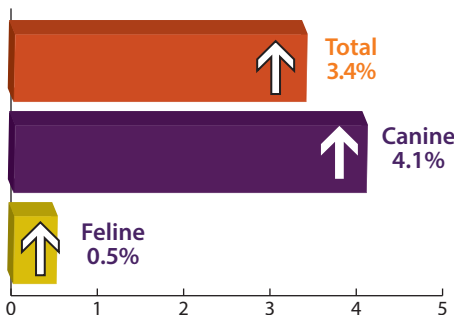


### Revenue Growth

Companion animal practice revenue for the 620 VHMA practices included in this month's study showed very strong growth of 8.1% from October, 2016 to October, 2017 with the number of workdays in October of each year being the same. Canine growth was 8.8% and feline revenue growth 5.0%. Year to date growth for 2017 is 5.5% compared to total 2016 growth of 5.9%. Revenue growth was essentially the same in 2015 and 2016 but is lower in 2017. This growth is much stronger than the overall growth seen in the U.S. economy.

### Patient Visits

October, 2017 compared to October, 2016

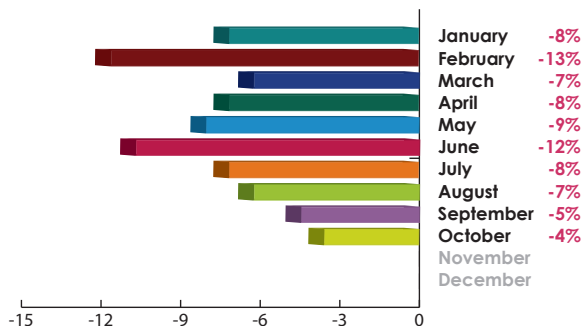


### Patient Visits

Total unique patient visits for the same period, October, 2017 compared to October, 2016 increased by 3.4% with canine visits up 4.1% and feline visits up by 0.5%. Visit growth is up 1.7% year to date for 2017 compared to a 2.6% growth for the total year 2016. Visit growth also appears to be less than that seen in 2015. (Note that the term "visits" is defined as unique purchases of either products or services for an individual pet.)

### New Client Growth

October, 2017 compared to October, 2016



### New Client Growth

New client numbers in October, 2017 compared to October, 2016 declined by 4%; the 2017 year to date decline is 8.1% compared to a 6.9% decline in 2016.

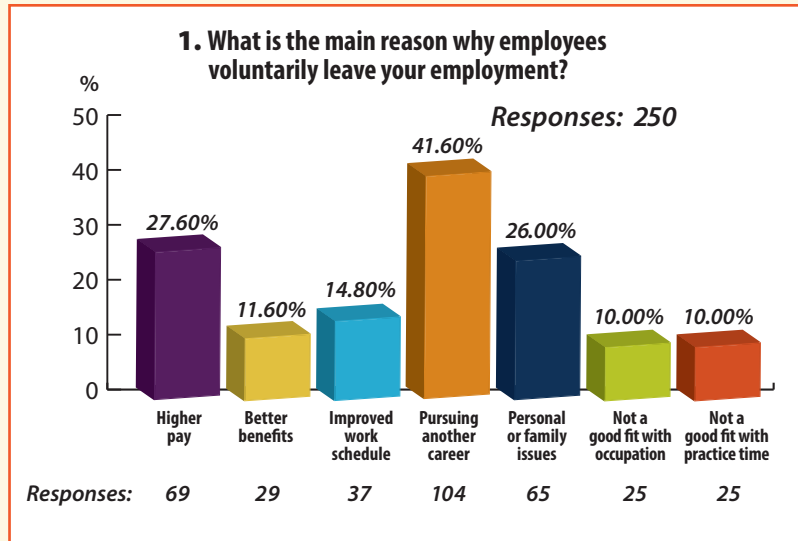
Remember that the above figures represent averages across all the practices in the study; in order to understand what is going on in YOUR practice, you need to look not only at what your revenue growth was during these months (and going forward) but also at the drivers of growth in YOUR practice such as changes in invoices, visits, ATC, fee increases, new clients and client retention. This will give you the information to make intelligent decisions about where to focus your time and efforts to increase growth.

## Why Employees Leave and the Use of Exit Interviews

Finding and keeping the right employees is one of the most difficult and time consuming tasks for most practices. The first step is interviewing properly. One study published in "Why New Hires Fail" ([www.LeadershipIQ.com](http://www.LeadershipIQ.com)) said that 82% of managers, in hindsight, felt there were clues during the interviews of employees who failed that indicated potential trouble. Reviewing the interview process is thus one way of learning from hiring mistakes; another is the exit interview. An exit interview is a very valuable tool for identifying or expanding on the reasons why an employment situation didn't work out. Sometimes, there isn't anything you could do to keep the employee from leaving; for example the employee is moving out of the area. But oftentimes, there are things the practice could have done differently that would have retained an employee and knowing this (and making appropriate changes as well) might prevent others from leaving as well.

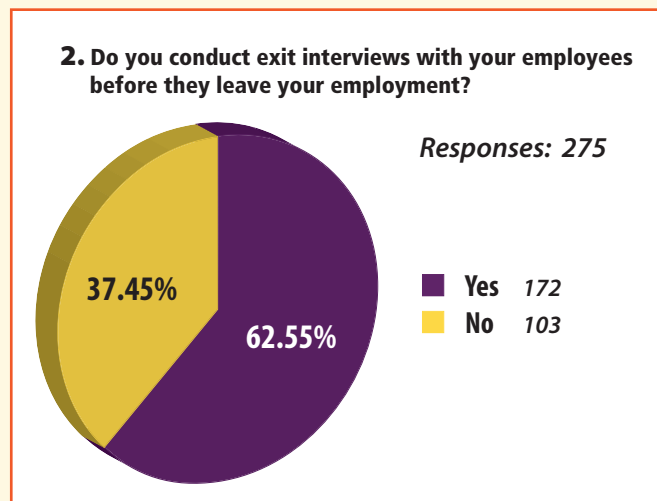
The first question asked **"What is the main reason why employees voluntarily leave your employment?"** Respondents could select multiple answers. (Remember that these answers are the practice's perception of why employees leave; employees aren't always straightforward about their motives for resigning, particularly if they perceive difficult problems in the practice.)

It is discouraging to note that the most frequently selected reason is to pursue another career. Personal or family issues and higher pay were the next most frequently cited reasons why employees leave a practice. A number of respondents selected "other;" the most common of these replies were as follows:



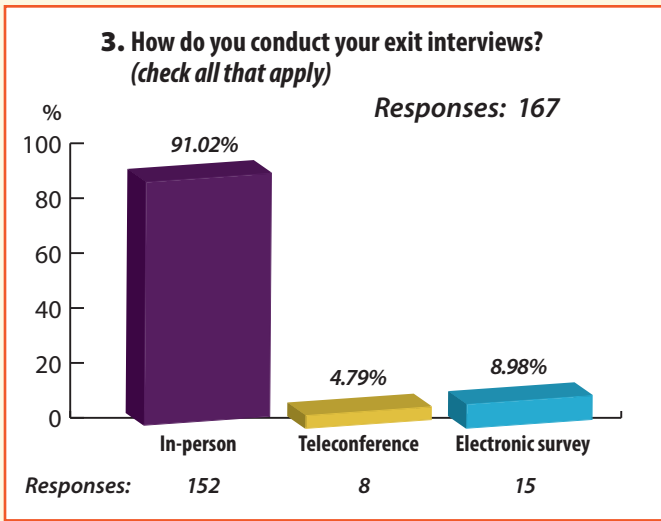
- Stress
- Employee moved out of the area
- Owner conflicts
- Night/weekend hours required
- Lack of advancement opportunities
- Compassion fatigue/burnout

The next question asked **"Do you conduct exit interviews with your employees before they leave your employment?"** Most respondents said "yes."



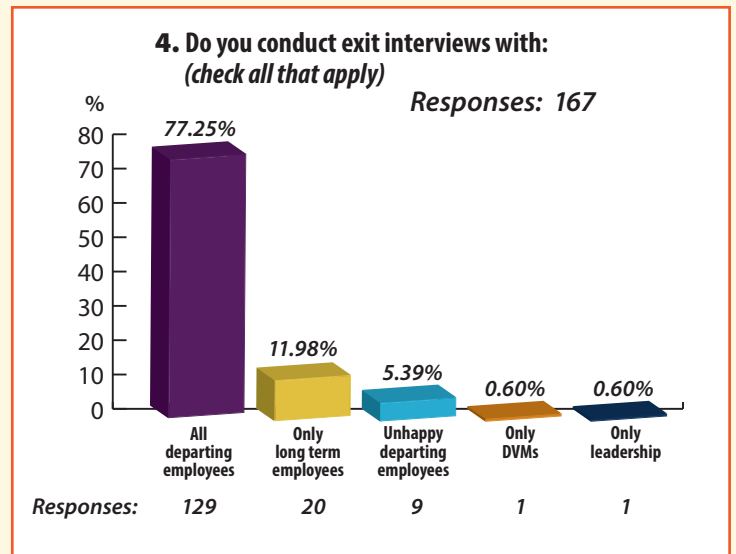
## Why Employees Leave and the Use of Exit Interviews

The next few questions were about “how” the interviews were conducted.

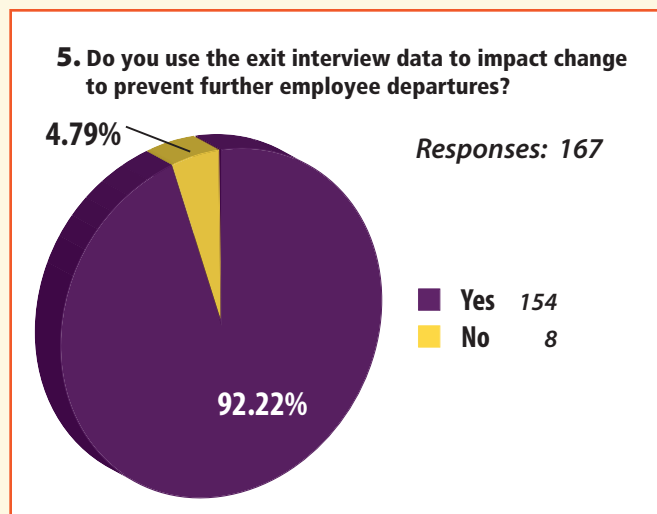


The vast majority of these interviews are done in-person. Most of the comments in the “other” section noted that their practices conducted these interviews via a paper survey.

About ¾ of the respondents conduct these interviews with all departing employees and an additional 12% only talk with long-term employees. A number of respondents noted in the “other” section that not all employees agree to an exit interview even if they try to interview all those leaving. One practice doesn’t conduct interviews with people who are leaving to relocate out of the area.



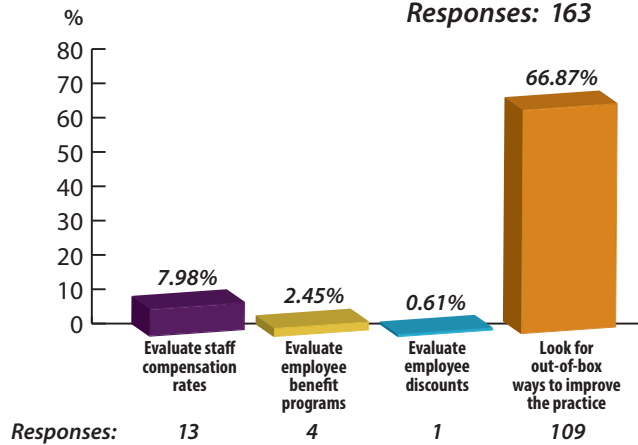
The last group of questions has to do with how the interview results are used. 92% of the respondents said they use the exit interview data to impact change to prevent further employee departures.



## Why Employees Leave and the Use of Exit Interviews

### 6. Tell us how you use the exit interview data?

Responses: 163



About 2/3 of the respondents use the information to look for out-of-the-box ways to improve the practice. Comments in the "other" section included the following areas respondents ask about in the interview and try to make change in the practice:

- Specific ways to address common/repeated employee issues
- Ways to increase team morale and the practice culture
- Employee bullying and harassment issues
- Evaluate training programs, leadership and practice culture through the employee's eyes
- Identify trends and issues the practice wasn't aware of
- Identify things the practice could have done to retain the employee (assuming this is a person they wanted to keep!)

The last question asked:

**"Who has access to the exit interview results?"**

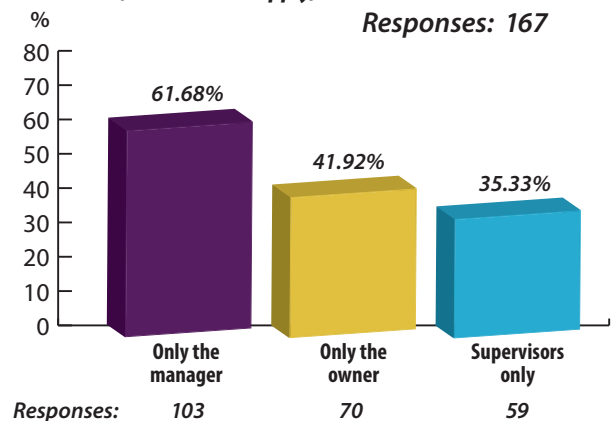
Generally, this information is limited to management team members one way or another but a couple of respondents said in the other section that information might be shared with others if it would be helpful.

Exit interviews can be very helpful in obtaining information needed to improve the practice and retain valuable employees but they need to be conducted effectively for this to happen. Tips for effective exit interviews include:

- Schedule the meeting very close to the employee's last day; explain to the employee why you are doing this.
- Conduct the meeting in private.
- Conduct the meeting in person if at all possible; this gives you the opportunity to probe a little deeper about their concerns and to thank them for their input and time.
- Have someone other than the employee's immediate supervisor conduct the meeting.
- Stay on topic—the point of this meeting is to gather information about the employee's experience with the company.
- Do not make comments about other employees or company issues.
- Look for trends in the information given by multiple employees.

### 7. Who has access to the exit interview results? (check all that apply)

Responses: 167



- Common questions include:
  - Why are you leaving?
  - How do you feel you were treated by the practice? The owners, the doctors, your supervisor and your co-workers?
  - Do you feel you were given the time, training and other resources to do your job well?
  - Do you believe your work was recognized and appreciated?
  - What things do you think the practice does well? What could be improved?
  - What could be done to make this practice a better place to work?