


HOW TO HAVE **GREAT TEAM MEETINGS**


In Your Veterinary Practice





WAYS WE INADVERTENTLY MAKE MEETINGS LESS VALUABLE


Are your team meetings directly contributing to the growth of your organization? Many supervisors and employees alike find meetings unproductive or even a waste of time. Let's examine what causes meetings to feel less valuable, and note the necessary steps to have successful collaboration instead!

-  **We use them mostly for updates and housekeeping**

Meetings shouldn't be solely for disseminating information. They may be a place to create clarity, but for minor updates there are more efficient ways to convey information.
-  **We focus primarily on what is wrong or broken**

Sometimes we need to acknowledge things that aren't working. Instead of dwelling on the problem, focus on the next steps needed to improve and give everyone an opportunity to be a part of the discussion.
-  **We spend time covering the same topics over and over**

Even worse than focusing on what is broken is doing so repetitively, which can cause people to disengage. Instead, create an environment where your team feels ready to contribute ideas to help your practice move forward.
-  **We don't prioritize well**

We may think of many changes that could make our practice better, but it's important to prioritize and focus on one or two items. Doing this causes people to see change as achievable.
-  **We just don't have them**

If your culture is such that everyone groans when a meeting is scheduled, it can be easy to put them off. When you don't have successful meetings you miss the chance to grow and collaborate as a team.

THE KEYS TO HAVING SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

The path to having successful meetings in your practice doesn't necessarily mean having fewer meetings. It means focusing on doing them well and creating collaboration.



Plan ahead

Your meetings can get derailed when you don't have a clear idea of what should be covered. Prepare for a successful meeting by making notes and an outline, and use them as a guide to keep you on track.



Use your meetings for collaboration

When you have alignment on what good looks like for your practice you're much more likely to get there. Create an environment in which team members are free to speak up and share their thoughts and ideas.



Focus on improvement

After addressing a problem, use the situation as an opportunity to pivot toward a discussion of what good can look like and how to get there.



Have them consistently

When you have regular meetings - and use them for defining success in your practice - you help create good habits through repetition. When your team knows what to expect, they will become comfortable sharing instead of just listening.



Be specific about next steps - together

As you identify the next couple of steps your team can take to move the practice in a positive direction, gain details and clarification by requesting everyone's input. Soliciting opinions gives your team a sense of ownership in the process.



Support larger meetings with smaller meetings

Use brief team huddles between meetings to help support your team's execution and address any concerns.

IDEAS TO MAKE YOUR MEETINGS GREAT

As you shift the structure and focus of your team meetings, there are things you can do in advance, during, and after to help make them great.



Prepare with questions, plan for involvement

Making notes or a meeting outline in advance is a good idea, but be sure you leave space and time for discussion. Remember, meetings are unlikely to be rewarding if people aren't able to get involved.



Break into teams for easier conversations, especially early on

As you begin to shift the way meetings happen in your practice, it can be helpful to break into smaller groups. Doing so can make team members feel more comfortable speaking up and sharing ideas.



Focus on only one or two priorities when working on changes

If you have too many things on the whiteboard at the end of your meeting your team can feel overwhelmed or not know where to start. Picking one or two items to focus on helps people feel like progress is possible.



Capture actions to practice based on the discussion

Role-playing can add fun and value to your team meetings. When you observe someone do something positive, use your meetings to reenact it. This helps people see and practice for themselves.



Use huddles to follow up and stay on track

Your team and your meetings may benefit from five-minute huddles where people can give brief updates. These can be something your team looks forward to daily or a couple of times a week to stay on course.



Limit housekeeping and one-way communication to 10-15 minutes

When you must address housekeeping items, do so efficiently. The more time your team has to contribute, the better your meetings will be.

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