

Selection Process

We are here, trying to build a team, but it is easier said than done. It is like a puzzle in which each piece has its specific job and it is not good to have two of the same sort, because there will be a gap somewhere else.

The process of selecting people needs to be divided in two, we attract people to the job and then we select the right one. Let's go step by step:

1. I have a vacancy: think about this before you advertise. You may have been busy, but, is there a way to change the rota so I fill the gap, is it just a temporary thing... There is nothing worse than getting a new assistant and find that you have not enough workload for him or her and ends up totally demotivated.
2. Job description: think about what is the person going to do, how, what are the objectives, responsibilities,...
3. Candidate characteristics: best way is to create a table:

Candidate	Abilities	Attributes
Essentials		
Desirables		

Think that if you want a receptionist, you are looking for somebody kind and with good appearance, but you may not need them for lab technician.

4. Recruiting phase:
Once you have done this, you can use your people (I have a college nurse that I want to keep) or you can get a new one from outside through advertising or recruitment agencies.
5. How to attract the talent:
Remember that it is not just to put an advert on the Vet Record saying that the local amenities are great and expect loads of replies. You need to put for example, your web address as the space is limited, so the candidate can check out your services, clients reviews... You can also talk to your employees, if you are looking a vet, who better to know that your own assistants to let you know somebody that may be looking for a job and it could fit in the clinic... you can even offer a bonus to whoever does that.
6. Studying of CV: We look for them and I phone the interesting ones or I don't. Remember that if we decided not to call somebody, we need to let them know in a

polite way.

Once we have done this, we get to the crucial moment, the personal interview.

The job interview is still key on choosing the right person, but it is very difficult to apply the same standards to everybody. We have to find the right balance between a third degree or an informal chat. We use the CV to make a pre selection of the candidates, as it gives a brief idea that we will pursue during the interview.

As a rule of thumb, an interview should follow these steps:

- Greet the candidate and make him or her to feel comfortable (this is not just offer a cup of tea and then sit down in a room with a table in between, for example)
- Make a few general questions about the job description
- Make the specific questions regarding each candidate, relating to the CV
- Give the opportunity to ask doubts or wants to comment something

You should not allow more than 2 minutes to the initial greetings and no more than 5 minutes for the candidate questions. The rest of the allocated time should be divided on two equal parts for the rest of the questions.

When making the interview, you need to have near you some documents;

- Job description (or at least a few notes of what you think you are missing in the company, a surgical assistant, a receptionist with IT knowledge...)
- Requirements of the candidate
- CV with notes about specific questions
- The list of questions or guidelines to make to everybody

Let's talk about the questions a bit, to prepare them may be a nuisance and it is clearly not among your priorities (maybe getting a consultant to do it was not such a bad idea then...).

We will prepare two sets of questions:

1. General questions for all the candidates
2. A series of questions on relation to the CV

If the questions are well formulated, you will not need to do many. It is perfectly fine to engage on a conversation and make questions outside the list.

General questions:

Here you will ask to the candidates regarding the job description and the

requirements. You need to know about experience, professional history, company changes and things like client care, use of IT or surgical abilities.

For example, in relation to the client care you can ask things like:

- From your point of view, what aspects are key to good customer service?
- What is your experience on treating with clients?
- How do you react when feeling under pressure?

You do not need to ask more than half a dozen questions, with the possibility of improvising more, but it is important to stick to them, so you can compare the different candidates.

Specific questions:

There is no need to prepare a long list, just write up some notes on the CV. Among the things to ask about do not forget:

1. Unemployment period
2. Change of career
3. Reasons to leave the last job
4. An overqualified candidate
5. Special knowledges
6. Some hobbies; if somebody like skiing is more likely to be a person that works better alone than if he plays for his local rugby team.

Let's remember that this are just clues, but it is as important to focus on the good than on the bad, and be prepared writing the question before hand not to make mistakes about it.

Once that we have the questions, a good candidate will ask you things, so be prepare to answer them. So take with you a copy of the job conditions and remember than this questions will come out:

- Salary
- Working hours
- Holidays
- CPD's
- Professional forecast
- How and when will they know if they got the job
- If there will be another interview

- Any other thing related to the company or the job

When are selecting people, we can also choose among a series of tests:

- Psycho techniques: involve an investment
- Professionals: if somebody is needed for certain position and there is no references, like with a newly graduated
- Group techniques: how somebody will interact with the rest of the team

Let's recapitulate about all this as I believe it is important to do a good job interview, so we get the right candidate.

Questions need to be open, so allows the other person to feel comfortable and gives room for developing the conversation. Try to avoid probing questions unless necessary and use them only to probe a fact, you could use reflective questions instead or even hypothetical.

You should never use multiple questions, as the candidate will end up only answering the last one and avoid to lead in the answers.

As the interviewer, you should talk around 20%, so be prepare to listen the rest of the time. Remember that you are not selling anything and want to get information about the other person. Try to encourage your "future" assistant by making good eye contact, sitting properly and using encouraging comments. You can take notes, but make sure that the other person knows this in advance so it does not get nervous about it.

To listen actively it is one of the most demanding exercises you could do, that is why the interview should not be too long. It is a great to temptation to be there listening to some newly graduated babbling about her experience in the donkey sanctuary and drift into your shopping list at the precise moment she mentions the fact that she cried when the vet shouted at her for making a mistake, which would indicate her ability to deal under pressure.

Finally, but not for it less important. The body language. We have all develop our on tricks in the consult so the clients do believe that we are paying attention, when in reality we already know the problem and we are calculating the dose mentally...

In reality, mostly of the information is non verbal and there are loads of books that have explained about it at length, I will not get into it, but just mention a few common errors from interviews I have assisted to.

- Be careful with your hands, if you put your hands behind your head, you will come

across as an arrogant twat, for example.

- If somebody constantly stares to the floor, may be nervous or may be lying, try to repeat the question in slightly different way and see if the answer is the same
- Respect personal space, but bear in mind the background, gender...
- Prepare the interview place in a non aggressive way, same type of chairs, next to each other in 90 degree positioning. This gives a sensation of equals.
- If you sit with your legs or arms closed over your chest, you will give the impression of not listening or not interested
- ...

These are only a few tips for it, to read into body language it is something that we all do everyday, specially in the consult. How many of you have seen a client being ask about how long the condition is been going on, just to be told yesterday, while the client, stares at the floor, or taps it nervously with the foot. From that moment we know that is lying. Just take some time and read a book about it, they are usually very easy reading and mostly of the things are common sense. It will also help you in your personal life...

Once we have found the right candidate, we have not finished yet, we have to get our new assistant as comfortable as possible in the new job:

- Integrate: there are unwritten rules in every group and sometimes you need to assign the new person somebody to help to integrate
- Inform: everybody have questions so it is important to inform about
 - the company
 - job description
 - placement and use of any services
 - social services
 - health and safety (it is important not just to give the manual, but go through it with the assistant, if not you, a reliable member of staff)

Remember that how they do integrate at the beginning will affect their performance in the future!!!

And now that we have him or her integrated we need to focus on the next step... how to the retain the talent.

We have to know that it is about motivation. When a motive is fulfilled, this will

produce an impact on the behaviour of the individual as long as the satisfaction.

We need to understand too this four basic principles about people:

1. Each person is an individual with his own characteristics
2. Every behaviour has a reason
3. And it is orientated to a goal
4. Motivation is the need or impulse that modulates human behaviour

Once we understand this, we should know that there are mainly two sets of factors to consider about motivation:

- Dependence / Interdependence

If you think your employees are not motivated and treat them like kids, telling them all the time what to do, they will become use to it and always expect you to do it.

It is a very serious matter, as assistants will not only react intellectually when doing something, but also and mostly, emotionally. You need to find the right person that is not going to collapsed under pressure, specially in a job like the vet one.

- Satisfaction / Un-satisfaction

Like the "Rolling" said, I can get no satisfaction... Satisfaction and motivation at work are not together, so somebody might not be satisfied by his job, but be properly motivated. Let's think that people has different reasons to do a job. One of your assistants may be married and with kids and is working to pay her bills, but her main satisfaction are going to be the kids, so we will need to motivate her at work. While a newly grad, will be motivated by the learning process and might not be satisfied with his job because wants to do more...

The objectives and goals of each person will dictate for themselves when performing a duty, will influence the effort and dedication when doing it.