

Interview Questions for Potential Employees

Adapted from Veterinary Growth Partners' online course, "Hiring Winners." Use as is or adapt for your needs.

Phone Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me about your pets and experience with animals.

Tell me about your current/last job.

What did you enjoy most about your last job?

How could you have improved your performance in your last job?

What didn't you like about your last job?

Why did you leave that job?

What do you think is your greatest strength?

What do you think is your greatest weakness?

What are you doing to overcome this weakness?

How do you deal with co-worker conflict?

How do you react when co-workers—not necessarily supervisors—criticize you or give you direction during the training process?

How do you handle or resolve a difficult situation?

What are your future professional goals?

How would your colleagues and supervisors describe you?

What can you offer us that others don't?

What about this job is attractive to you?

How would you describe an ideal working environment?

What would cause you to turn down a job offer if we were to make one?

Do you have any questions?

Face-to-Face Interview Questions

What interests you about this job?

Why do you want to work for this practice?

Why are you the best person for the job?

What do you like about being a (technician/receptionist/veterinarian/manager)?

What you be doing if you weren't a (technician/receptionist/veterinarian/manager)?

What is the hardest part of veterinary medicine?

What do you know about this company?

What can you contribute to this company?

What are your goals for the next five years? Ten years?

How do you plan to achieve those goals?

What motivates you to do your best on the job? What specific work environment did you most enjoy working in? What did you most like about it?

What were your previous supervisor's strengths and shortcomings?

How would you describe the place where you work now?

How would you describe your relationship with people at your current or previous job? What kind of people do you enjoy working with?

How do you establish a working relationship with new people?

If there was a way to change things that you did not like about your previous job, what would you change? How would you change it?

Do you see yourself as a leader or a follower? Why?

Do you have a reliable form of transportation?

What kind of schedule do you expect? How do you feel about working overtime? Nights? Weekends? Holidays? Do you have any vacations planned?

Are you able to lift 30 pounds or more?

When are you able to start?

We conduct drug testing prior to hiring. Will that be a problem?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself that we haven't already talked about?

Do you have any questions?

Behavior-Based Questions

Give an example of a time when you used logic to solve a problem.

Give an example of a goal you reached, and tell me how you achieved it.

Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.

Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?

What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you've handled it in the past.

Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?

Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker.

Tell me about how you have worked effectively under pressure in the past.

Describe a time when you disagreed with a supervisor's decision. How did you handle the situation?

Describe a situation in which you worked as part of a team. What role did you take on? What went well and what didn't go well?

Tell me about a suggestion you have made to improve the workplace.

Tell me about a mistake on the job you have made in the past and what you learned from it.

Describe a time when you had to deal with conflicting demands. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome?

Describe a time when you were involved in gossip in the workplace. How do you feel about gossip? What tools do you use to handle gossip?

Veterinarian Interview Questions

These questions help you understand the candidate's perception of his or her own communication skills and the approach he or she takes to specific situations involving clients and staff.

Thinking back over the past six to eight months, identify a specific client type that you feel is easy to communicate with. Why do you think so?

Thinking back over the past six to eight months, identify a specific client type that you feel presents a challenge to either yourself or your colleagues. What makes those clients challenging? What is your most effective method of dealing with them?

Identify an interaction with a client that you feel went better because of what you did or said. In other words, explain what it is that you did that day that got that client through the specific situation.

Identify an interaction with a client that you feel you would do over in a heartbeat, given a second chance. Why do you think it went bad and what would you change the second time around?

List some easily identifiable client types. One example is the skeptical client. (Others are financially challenged, angry, the one who runs away, grieving.) Let's talk about the ones you've identified and review the approach you take with each type. (Circle skills mentioned for each type; give examples of each client type to make them come alive if necessary.)

The Skeptical Client

- Acknowledge
- Ask questions
- Allow silence
- Alleviate pressure
- Discuss benefits/importance
- Discuss likely outcome for alternatives
- EMPATHIZE

The Financially Challenged Client

- Acknowledge
- Ask questions
- Allow silence
- Alleviate pressure

- Discuss benefits/importance
- Discuss likely outcome for alternatives
- EMPATHIZE

The Angry Client

- Allow venting
- Apologize
- Avoid defensiveness
- Seek the source
- Seek solutions
- Give client control
- Build rapport by stating common goals
- EMPATHIZE

The Runaway Client

- Diplomatically maintain control
- Summarize
- Use sign posting
- Remind of time constraints
- Seek underlying issues
- Offer peace of mind
- Help client feel in control
- EMPATHIZE

The Grieving Client

- Give warning shot
- Share information as needed
- Allow time to process

- Focus on quality of life
- Seek support (friends, family)
- VALIDATE decisions
- EMPATHIZE

Let's switch gears to staff communications. What has been the biggest challenge you've encountered with staff in your current position? What have you done to overcome it?

Have you encountered a situation where a technician has told you that he or she is unavailable to help, and you really needed the assistance? If so, how did you overcome it?

How many receptionists currently work with you? What are their names?

How many technicians currently work with you? What are their names?

If I called one of them, what would they tell me they liked most about you?

If I called one of them, what would they tell me they liked least about you?

Please give me your initial reaction/response to the following scenarios with clients:

- Bailey has been going downhill for the past six months. It's hard for her to even get up in the morning. I don't want her to suffer.
- I know her teeth are bad, but I'm uncomfortable putting her under anesthesia at her age.
- I usually see Dr. Smith. Why am I seeing you today?
- (After 20 minutes on the phone) I think I understand what you want me to do with Clancy. Will you just explain it to my husband? He is right here.
- Money is really tight right now.
- So, if I spend all this money on Max, will his knee definitely be fixed?
- Are you single?
- So, I was on the web and found this information about what's going on with Chance.
- I lost my husband six months ago. Now I'm going to lose Tiger as well due to this kidney failure.
- If I had gotten treatment sooner, would she have made it?

Practice Manager Interview Questions

Please tell me about your long-term career goals as a veterinary practice manager.

How would you describe yourself in your role as a veterinary practice manager?

How do you think others would describe you in that role?

Are there any hours or day restrictions or are you flexible with your schedule? Are you able to work late, nights, weekends, and holidays if needed?

What do you feel are the key tasks for a veterinary practice manager?

If you knew a partner or owner is 100% wrong about something how would you handle it?

What are your strengths as a veterinary practice manager? Weaknesses?

What was the most difficult management decision you've ever had to make?

What have you learned from your previous jobs as a veterinary practice manager?

Please tell me your experience and duties that as a veterinary practice manager.

Which term best describes you as a manager—a micromanager or a macromanager? Why does this approach work best for you?

How do you handle employee conflict?

Tell me about a time when you have handled an upset client.

What is your required salary?

Will relocation be an issue?