

# Clear your plate. What practice owners can outsource

Christine Staten, DVM, MBA

Tucson, AZ 85749

## Abstract

If you're a practice owner or a practice manager, you're probably working too much. You need to find ways to be more purposeful and less busy, increasing your time, sanity and cash flow. Outsourcing can be a valuable tool to help you scale your business and focus on your core competencies. There are things that only you can do as a practice owner or a manager, but there are so many other things that you are doing that can be outsourced. You can outsource things externally, internally or to your family and friends. Outsourcing a task takes planning and time so do it before you need to, or it will be difficult to onboard the new person well.

**Key words:** outsourcing, practice management, practice owner, veterinary practice, management

## Why should you outsource?

Your job and life will be easier by having internal or external individuals or companies perform tasks that are normally done by you. Outsourcing can reduce labor costs, increase efficiency and provide access to specialized skills. It allows companies, managers, and practice owners to focus on core functions and scale more easily. When you take something off your plate and have someone else do it, your return is either in time, money or sanity. In most cases, it's all 3.

## What should you outsource?

It helps to start by reflecting on the answers to these questions. What are your core competencies? What do you love doing for your business? What do you despise doing? What takes up a lot of your time? What are you bad at? Are there people around you that can do something you do better than you do it? Are you putting yourself at risk, legally, by doing things that professionals should be doing? The answers to these questions should give you a starting point for several tasks to pass off right away.

## Who should you outsource to?

You can outsource to an external team, your internal team or your personal team. Your external team are people that do not work for your company. You hire them as independent contractors or a company. They are likely to do things differently than you do but they are likely to do it better than you can. Some examples would be a CPA, a travel agent, a landscaper or a software company to run your website.

Your internal team consists of people who work for your company. They are either already on your team or you hire them into your team. They can work in your practice or remotely, and they can have other responsibilities within the practice. Some examples of internal team outsourcing would be a practice manager, a benefit coordinator, a cleaning crew or a party committee.

It's important not to forget about your personal team. The people in your life who cheer for you and help you make your dream happen. For most people, their family and friends are advisers, and they lend a hand when asked. Don't forget them as resources to help you delegate tasks and responsibilities when needed.

No matter who you are outsourcing to, you must make sure that the individual understands and aligns with your vision, mission and core values. Do your research. Check references. Interview them. And give them a trial period.

When thinking about delegating tasks to internal team members, the process starts at the very first interview. Are they self-motivated? Do they like learning and growing? Do they want to take on additional responsibilities? Do they understand and buy into the vision, mission and values of the practice? If no one on your current team wants to take on additional responsibilities, you need to change how you hire people.

## When should you outsource?

The best time to outsource is before you need help. If you are overloaded, you cannot onboard someone well. To successfully pass something on to someone else takes time. Careful planning and communication are key to successful outsourcing.

## How should you outsource?

Set aside time to outsource a task or project properly and completely. Develop a specific, step-by-step, written protocol of the task. Demonstrate how to perform the task. Watch them perform the task. Then have them do it without you while you are double checking until they are proficient. If the role requires multiple responsibilities, develop a roadmap of dates to pass the individual components off.

Yes, you are still responsible for your business, but you can have a support team that gives you time and freedom and helps your business thrive.

