

STAY, PLEASE

A Challenge to the Veterinary Profession to Improve Employee Retention

The unabridged backstory, based on the results of *Stay, Please: Factors that Support Retention and Drive Attrition in the Veterinary Profession*, a new study from the American Animal Hospital Association.



STAY, PLEASE

WHO BENEFITS MOST FROM THIS PAPER?

The insights provided in this paper aim to give veterinary practice owners, managers, and decision-makers the necessary data to improve staff retention. Those in nonleadership roles can also gain valuable insights into the factors that drive attrition and retention. With this knowledge, relevant information and potential solutions to increase retention rates can be shared. Ultimately, the goal is to create a positive and sustainable work environment for all veterinary professionals.

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“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in.”

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu’s wisdom is instructive, encouraging us to solve the primary causes of societal obstacles and challenges, represented by “going upstream” and fixing what is at the root of a problem. Too often, government, organizations, and individuals focus on the tangible – or downstream – aftermath of complex issues, which only leads to endless and futile attempts of treating the symptoms – never truly curing what is broken at the source.

INTRODUCTION AND CHALLENGE

Today, many people vaguely label one of the most significant challenges in the veterinary profession as a workforce crisis. With such a broad, downstream label or definition, a variety of solutions have been or are being developed that, ultimately, are not targeted at the upstream cause of the effects we are experiencing. In addition, some of these solutions are not empathetically addressing the humans who support and provide animal care.

As a result, the profession continues to lose caring, passionate, brilliant people who either:

- move from one clinical practice to another in search of an environment that will fulfill their needs and desires, or
- leave clinical practice altogether for what they hope are greener pastures.

The turnover and potential loss numbers are staggering, contributing to both economic and human impacts.

THE NUMBERS

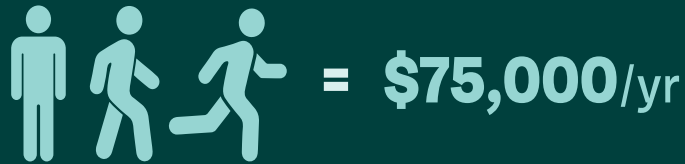
A new study from American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), *Stay, Please: Factors that Support Retention and Drive Attrition in the Veterinary Profession*, reveals that at any given moment 30% or more of veterinary practice team members are considering leaving their current clinical practice. One critical role, Doctors of Veterinary Medicine (DVMs), reports an alarming higher-than-average rate of intending to leave, at 34%.

These findings corroborate findings of many recent workplace studies from other organizations, including a 2022 study by Flourish Veterinary Consulting, Merck Animal Health’s Veterinarian Wellbeing Study III, and the 2021 AVMA Veterinarian and Practice Survey by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The results of these reports reveal comparable workforce dynamics and personnel challenges, including one study that estimates 44% of DVMs are considering leaving the field before retirement age.

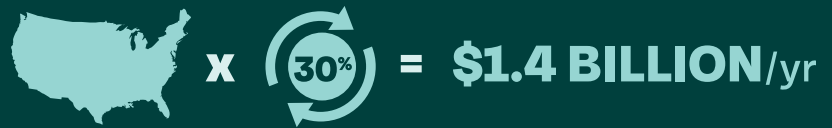
Estimated total expenses of losing one employee can equate to one-and-a-half to two times the employee's salary.



Minimal expense of a practice that loses three employees, each with \$50,000 annual salaries.



Estimated cost of annual turnover to the veterinary medicine profession with 30% attrition.



This rate of attrition critically intensifies the effects of current staffing shortages and will stifle future hopes and opportunities if ignored. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook projects a 20% increase in veterinary jobs between 2022–2032, classifying growth in the profession as “much faster than average.” It will be impossible to meet that growth demand with our current rate of personnel losses.

Further, retention challenges cannot be solved by replacing veterinarians with newly minted graduates, due to the length of time required for extensive education and training required for licensure.

AVMA reports nearly 78,000 veterinarians are working in clinical practice (2022). Thirty percent of this workforce equates to more than 23,000 individuals potentially leaving their roles—soon. The approximately 3,200 veterinary students graduating each year from US colleges of veterinary medicine (American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges) doesn't come close to closing current and future gaps—even with a handful of new schools due to open.

Turnover also represents a significant financial burden: the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) states that direct replacement costs can be as high as 50%–60% of an employee's annual salary and can escalate to 90%–200%.

Gallup offers similar estimates. The range of these costs take into account the following:

- required job skills; higher skill levels equate to larger replacement costs
- lost productivity and reduced output
- overtime pay to cover gaps
- ongoing recruitment expenses

Using a conservative replacement cost of \$25,000 (based on a blended \$50,000 annual salary), one practice with 10 employees that loses three team members in one year could experience a \$75,000 impact. In the worst-case scenario, the cost could eclipse \$300,000.

With approximately 189,000 DVMs and credentialed techs working in the US, the potential cost of a 30% turnover rate ranges from \$1.4 to \$5.6 billion, profession-wide, every year. Alone, these financial implications highlight the urgent need to invest in strategies that reduce attrition. But there's more.

THE HUMAN COST

While veterinary practice turnover and attrition costs reach into the billions annually, there's a more compelling reason to solve our challenge. With outsized attrition diminishing the capacity of veterinary teams across the country, pets can't get the care they need, team members lose friends and coworkers regularly, clients express frustrations, and the

nerves and psyches of our team members are raked by the negative emotions and burnout caused by chronic understaffing. The negative environment—from the practice to the ecosystem level—creates a vicious cycle, amplifying the downhill spiral of turnover and career abandonment.

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE.

We cannot graduate, promote, train, virtualize, or automate enough people and/or processes to replace the precious humans we've lost and are on the cusp of losing. These are applaudable exercises and activities happening downstream, around the periphery of the issue, and they appear to be where most of our efforts, resources, and debates are occurring. But they are not solutions targeted at the source, or the core, human-centered challenge.

Research, history, and years of proven application in the workplace tells us it's kinder, easier, and more cost-effective to keep staff in the first place. Some might argue that if this challenge is not collectively solved with a human-first approach, the animal healthcare profession will eventually be saddled with a stained reputation and future careerists will stop electing the once rich, meaningful, fulfilling career paths for which it has long been known.

AND SO...

The challenge should not be labeled or defined as a workforce crisis. It's also not a supply-and-demand challenge, nor is it entirely a wellness issue. Those are symptoms that erupt downstream from the original infection and, if used as a starting point, lead to ill-fitting solutions. That said, it's also not easily coined as a retention and attrition challenge. Those are outcomes, too.

Therefore, understanding and framing the challenge from the perspective of the humans who are leaving—or barely hanging on—is the best way for the profession to design and implement impactful solutions.

With that in mind, the veterinary profession is facing a significant challenge that's best framed as a human-centered question:

How might we better fulfill the needs and desires of the people who support and provide companion animal care?

To help answer this question, AAHA conducted an extensive study in the first half of 2023. The objective was to frame the challenge and understand, from the human perspective, why people leave veterinary medicine (attrition factors) and what makes them stay (retention factors). Core results of the survey, *Stay, Please: Factors That Support Retention and Drive Attrition in the Veterinary Profession*, are framed in this paper and are a starting point for the entire profession to work toward improved retention.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that the challenge is better defined, it's time for leaders and decision-makers to determine who's most at risk of leaving within their practice(s), then work to improve the factors most likely to impact those employees' decisions to stay or leave.

The *Stay, Please* study and analysis highlight the significance of integrating both attrition mitigation and retention solutions in the practice culture and across the entire veterinary team. By applying the research, veterinary practices can begin arming themselves with the concepts and tools needed to reach a sustainable level of turnover.

Further, the entire ecosystem should consider these findings. After all, it's not only individual practices that must commit to fulfilling the needs and wants of current and future veterinary team members. Working together to improve retention across the profession is the best way to answer the specific, clear, upstream, human-centered question:

How might we better fulfill the needs and desires of the people who support and provide companion animal care?

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Given the clearly defined worker fulfillment challenge of veterinary professionals, AAHA's goal was to understand the human side of retention and attrition with more specificity—to define the factors that cause attrition and improve retention, analyze their significance, prioritize their importance, and offer solutions to remedy the issues.

An online survey, inspired by retention research conducted by McKinsey & Company in 2021, targeted current and former veterinary professionals from March 10 to March 30, 2023. In all, more than 133,000 email invitations were sent, and the response was significant: 14,414 professionals completed the survey, providing a nearly 11% response rate.

Of this total, more than 12,000 respondents reported they are actively working in veterinary clinical practice, and the vast majority of the remaining 2,000 reported they left clinical practice within the past 10 years.

Confidence levels in the findings range from 95% +/- 2% to 95% +/- 5%.

Survey respondents represent a diverse range of roles within the veterinary profession, including:

- Credentialed (registered, certified, or licensed) veterinary technician
- Customer service representative
- Hospital administrator
- Medical director (owner and non-owner)
- Practice manager
- Practice owner (veterinarian and non-veterinarian)
- Veterinary assistant
- Veterinarian (practice and non-owner)
- Other titles or positions not listed

The survey delved into the intentions of current veterinary professionals by asking:

- **If you're in a clinical practice, do you plan to stay or leave—and why?**

- **If you have already left a clinical practice but are open to returning, what would make you consider returning? And if you would never consider returning, what motivated you to leave?**

Professionals who reported they wanted to stay in their current practice were asked about the top three factors that make them want to stay from the list of 15 factors below:

- Practicing modern medicine
- Work is meaningful
- Fair compensation
- Job location
- Staff work as a team
- Flexibility in scheduling and job duties
- Appreciation for my work
- Diversity is welcomed
- Caring leadership
- Resources to do my job
- Insurance/benefits
- Support for wellbeing
- Career development
- Achievable expectations

Those **planning to leave** their current practice were asked about their intended destination (e.g., a different practice, out of clinical practice but somewhere else in veterinary medicine, out of veterinary medicine altogether, and retirement). They were subsequently asked to identify the top three factors, from the same list, that would have to change for them to stay in their current practice.

Former veterinary clinical professionals were questioned about their reasons for leaving their veterinary clinical practice and the prerequisites for their potential return. This group revealed several common reasons for leaving their practices. These included long working hours, low pay, lack of opportunities for career advancement, high levels of stress and burnout, and poor work-life balance. Many respondents also cited issues with workplace culture and leadership as contributing factors to their departure.



133,259
SURVEYS SENT



14,414
RESPONDENTS



2 x TYPICAL RESPONSE
RATE OF 5%



678
ADDITIONAL
COMMENTS



INITIAL RESULTS

The results of the *Stay, Please* study shed light on realities that demand the attention of leaders, managers, and all members of the veterinary ecosystem. While some findings confirm what has been known to be true, the construct of the results provides new insights and instructive guidance on actions that can tackle challenges at the root cause.

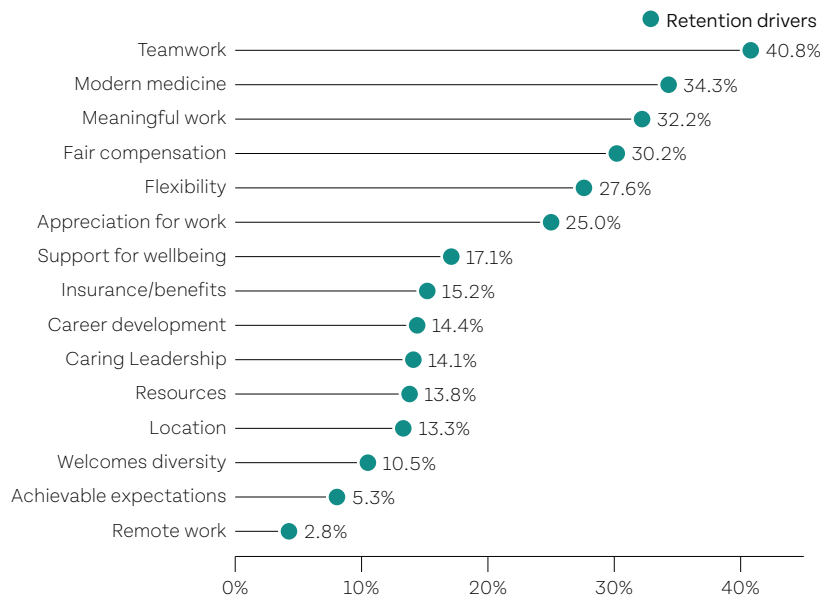
The study reaffirms the disquieting fact that a tremendous number of the profession's workforce is planning to leave their current position. Specifically, the study reveals:

- 30% of surveyed veterinary professionals, projected as nearly 74,000 individuals, currently in clinical practice plan to leave where they are within the next year

- Half of those planning to leave—37,500 (15%)—are planning to leave clinical practice altogether; and
- Nine out of 10 of the 15% leaving clinical practice (33,750) say they will never return once they leave (and that does not include planned retirements).

Taking into account the estimated 189,000 credentialed technicians and DVMs working in the field, this translates into over 25,500 veterinarian providers—or 13.5% of those in clinical roles—who are planning to exit the profession and never return. When you add nonclinical roles to that count, the number grows considerably.

Figure 1: What makes people want to stay



Nine out of 10 of the 15% leaving clinical practice (33,750) say they will never return once they leave. That does not include planned retirements.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE DECIDED TO STAY

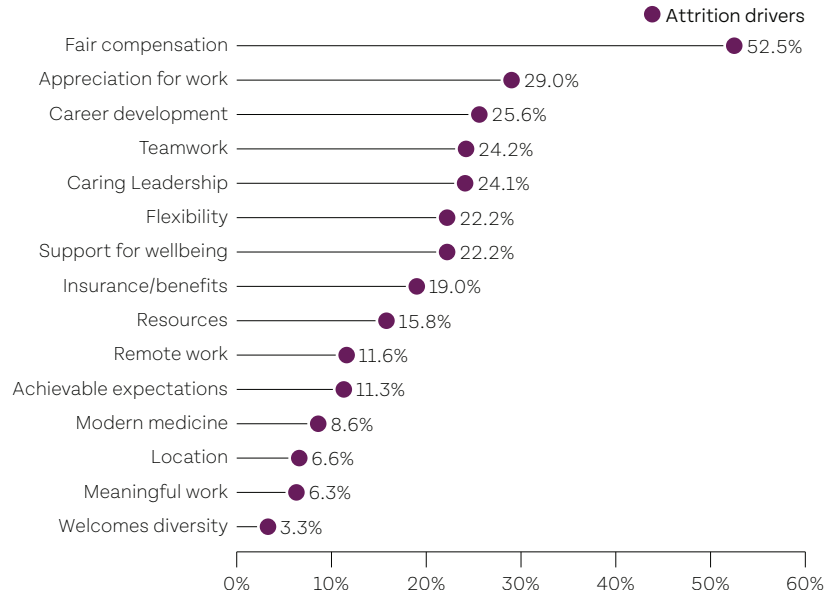
Teamwork, modern medicine, and meaningful work were rated highest, with fair compensation, job flexibility, and appreciation for work rounding out the top six (Figure 1). For employees planning to stay in their current clinical practice, specific factors that make them want to stay rise to the top.

Compared to the bottom nine factors, collectively, these top six factors positively and significantly impact retention—in other words, improve practice stickiness.

PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSIDERING LEAVING

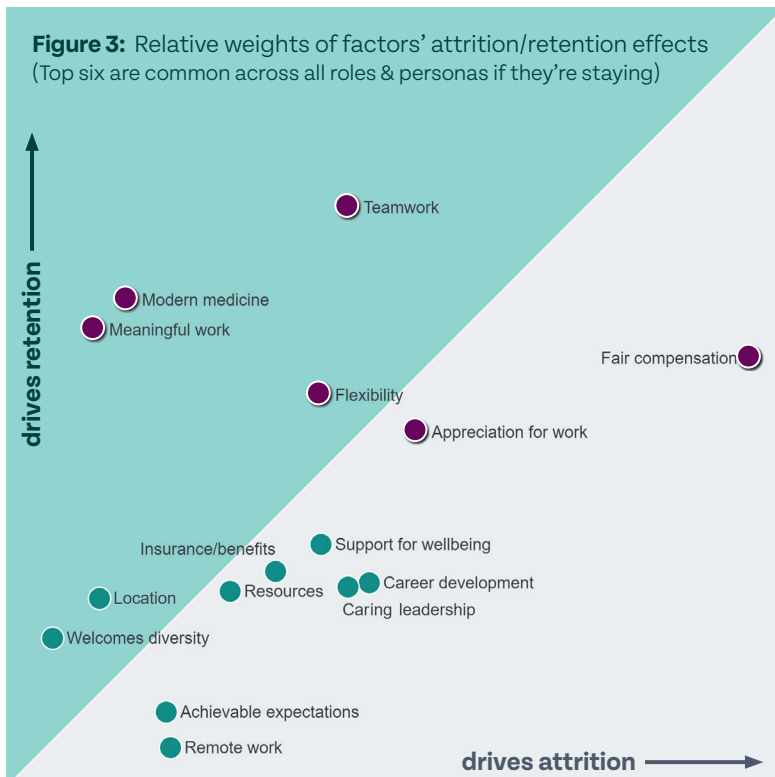
For employees planning to leave their current clinical practice for another practice, or somewhere else in—or completely out of—veterinary medicine, specific factors that must change for them become a higher priority (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: What must change for people to stay



The top three attrition-reducing factors were fair compensation, appreciation for work, and career development. Workplaces that ignore or handle these inappropriately will repel individuals from their hospitals.

Figure 3: Relative weights of factors' attrition/retention effects (Top six are common across all roles & personas if they're staying)



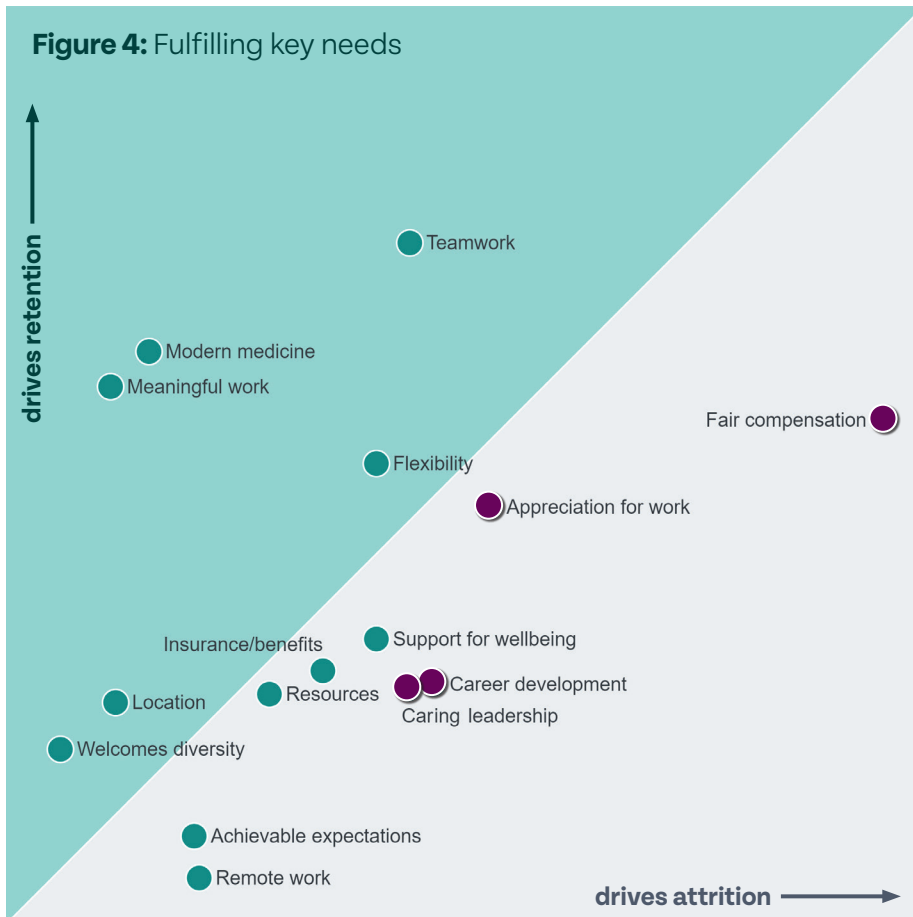
Recognizing each factor has some influence on attrition and retention, it's helpful to visualize them across an XY-axis where we can see their cumulative effects (Figure 3).

The nine factors grouped in the bottom left (green dots) are less impactful drivers of both attrition (x-axis) and retention (y-axis).

The top six factors, highlighted as purple dots in Figure 3, are also found to be relatively common across all roles and personas (discussed later in this paper).

Additional broad and role-specific results can be found at this interactive AAHA study data visualization beta site.

[SEE ALL INTERACTIVE CHARTS HERE.](#)



If basic needs are not met, people won't survive—or stay—in their current workplace.

APPLYING THE RESEARCH

This section presents two proposed strategies for practices trying to improve retention: a holistic approach and a role-based perspective.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

This application is a multi-step approach that considers a combination of both the practice's operations and fundamental needs of team members.

STEP 1: DON'T REPEL PEOPLE—FULFILL THEIR KEY NEEDS

Not surprisingly, the most-cited factor—by a very wide margin—that must change to prevent one's leaving or thinking about doing so is fair compensation. This is shown in Figure 4, above, where fair compensation is on the far right. (The farther to the right a factor, the greater impact it has on driving attrition, or influencing a person's decision to leave).

While no other factors come close to compensation, appreciation for work, career development, and caring leadership also matter significantly.

Taking a cue from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these attrition drivers are fundamental; if they are not met, people won't survive—in this case, stay—in their current workplace. See the first four levels of Figure 5 (next page). Addressing these basic human needs is a "first stop" for practices experiencing widespread retention challenges across their entire workforce or those wishing to fortify how they are meeting the fundamental needs of their staff. Either way, the base of the practice pyramid must be strong and purposefully designed, or some significant portion of staff will always be leaving or quiet-quitting.

Figure 5: Veterinary Hierarchy of Needs



Derived from Stay Please, Factors that Support Retention & Drive Attrition, AAHA 2023.

STEP 2: MAKE PEOPLE WANT TO STAY

Getting people to the place of truly **wanting to stay** (versus simply not wanting to leave) involves three additional factors that—when done right—develop “stickiness” in the practice.

Teamwork comes in at the top of this list; it’s the strongest retention factor overall. It’s also the fourth-highest attrition factor. Whether or not a staff functions as a team matters greatly. Flexibility in scheduling and job duties ranks fairly high for people planning to leave and stay, and respondents also consider support for wellbeing at this stage. (Figure 6)

With a robust approach to the factors in steps 1 and 2, a practice truly shows they value their staff. The base of the Veterinary Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 5) is almost solely about showing people they are valued—something we all need. Value is shown through appropriate pay, certainly, but also by investing in individual career development, demonstrating

fundamental appreciation for work contributions, and demonstrating that leaders care about staff.

But making people want to stay takes showing value to another level, literally (Figure 5 Veterinary Hierarchy of Needs) and figuratively.

The need for team members to juggle the demands of a complex life, while simultaneously seeking other forms of personal fulfillment, exists. Providing job flexibility demonstrates an employer recognizes that their people have lives outside of work. And most everyone at some point in time in their lives can use support for their wellbeing in some shape or form. While these factors may not have been evident in the workforce 20 or more years ago, times have changed. Supporting these factors attends to the mix of needs and desires that, when fulfilled, help demonstrate the significant value employers place on their teams.

As a critical component of Step 2, working with staff that functions as a team is at or near the very top of retention factors for every role and is a significant contributor to attrition, too. The Merck Animal Health Veterinarian Wellbeing Study III reported that one of the three most important actions an employer can do to support wellbeing in the workforce is to foster a work climate that has a strong sense of teamwork.

When one feels like an integral part of a team, their sense of belonging at work intensifies. As a byproduct, so does their attachment to work.

STEP 3: CREATE CHAMPIONS

The first two steps are about building both a solid practice and some momentum toward improved, sustainable retention. Once retention is on the upswing and plans are in place for the fundamental factors covered in Steps 1 and 2, a practice can then lean into improving the two factors at the top of their Veterinary Hierarchy of Needs: modern and effective medicine and ensuring team members feel their work is meaningful.

A practice lacking these two factors won't necessarily push employees away; however, people who plan to remain where they are value these factors highly. Again, using the [interactive tool](#) (still in beta) to explore individual role data reveals these two "stickiness" factors rank exceptionally high for credentialed technicians, associate DVMs, and medical directors.

Once the retention rate is improving, a focus on these factors will turn satisfied employees into loyal practice champions, corresponding to self-actualization or intrinsic professional fulfillment in the hierarchy of needs.

Moreover, these factors tie into pride and investment in one's work—and their workplace. When people plan to stay, they look for ways to elevate the work they do and the environment in which they do it. And while this finding was particularly significant for clinical staff, it was also shown to be important to non-medical team members who are motivated to contribute their best to a clinic where excellent medicine is practiced.



Value is shown through appropriate pay, certainly, but also by investing in individual career development, demonstrating appreciation for work contributions, and caring leadership.

ROLE-BASED APPROACH

The second approach focuses on individual roles. Here, consider specific factors influencing individuals' decisions, by role, to stay or leave. This approach is recommended for practices seeking to narrow their focus on the roles with the greatest statistical risk of attrition (as demonstrated with the Veterinary Profession Personas below) or those grappling with high turnover in specific positions.

Different roles can have wildly different objectives and perspectives. For instance, veterinarians likely entered the field for much different reasons than customer service representatives. The motivations influencing one team member's decision to stay likely are different from those of the person next to them, especially when considering the perspectives of owners versus employees.

Therefore, leaders facing the challenge of retaining specific roles, like credentialed technicians, are advised to take a role-based or persona approach.

After analyzing the data from the *Stay, Please* study, three personas were defined based on the statistical tendency of various roles to say they planned to:

- stay in their current job
- leave their current job but remain in veterinary medicine
- leave veterinary medicine entirely.

These personas are not based on the specific factors valued most by the roles that comprise them; they are solely related to how likely or unlikely a role is to remain in their job or in veterinary medicine.

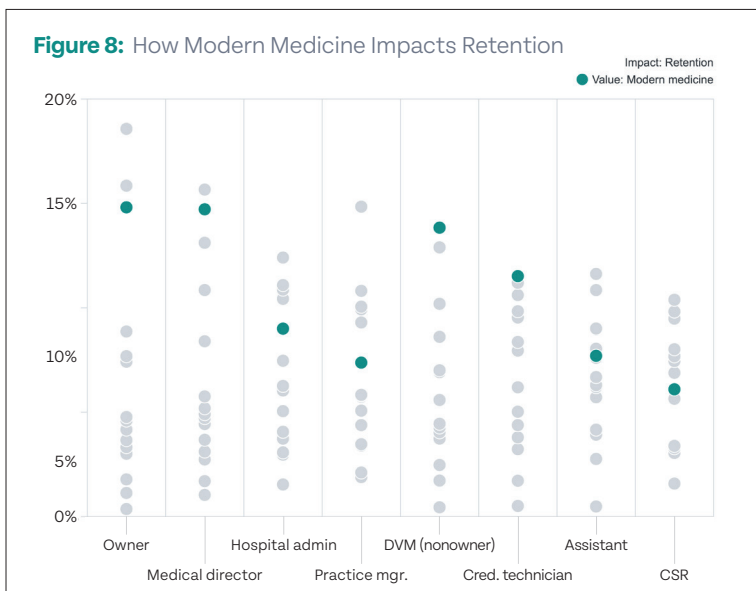
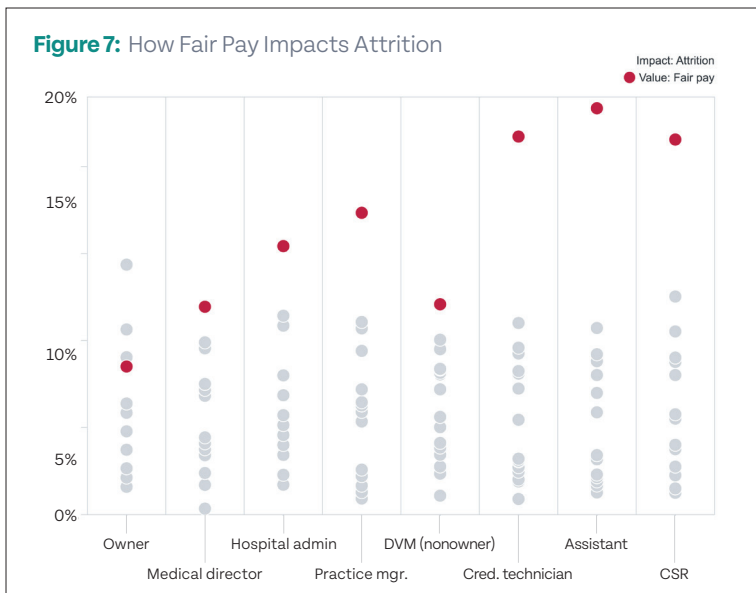
The results of the *Stay, Please* study can be further analyzed by specific roles and personas with the interactive tools found [here](#).

Using the interactive visualization tool (examples in Fig. 6 and Fig. 7) to understand what matters most to each role, organizations will be prepared to put customized plans into place

VETERINARY PROFESSION PERSONAS

Persona	Practice Loyalist All in, all the time	Vet Med for Life Dedicated to vet med	Open to Options See it as a job
Who is in the persona?	Managers, owners, practice managers, hospital admins	Associate DVMS, credentialed techs	Uncredentialed techs, veterinary assistants, CSRs
Behaviors, sentiments, and attributes of the persona	<p>87% of people in these roles are likely to stay in their current practice</p> <p>Dedicated to job and workplace; high levels of affinity</p> <p>Invested in practice success due to ownership or longevity</p> <p>Deep knowledge both of profession and practice</p>	<p>24% plan to change jobs but they are more likely to remain in vet med</p> <p>Lower likelihood of staying in current position</p> <p>Dedicated to vet med, but not necessarily to clinical practice or current job</p> <p>Most challenging to replace; up to one year or more to find new hire*</p>	<p>2x more likely to leave vet med entirely</p> <p>Transferable skills that make other industries appealing</p> <p>Potential to earn more outside of veterinary medicine profession</p> <p>May not have committed through education, training, like other roles</p>

*A special note about the Vet Med for Life persona: According to a 2022 staffing survey by AAHA, replacing specific roles such as full-time DVM, CVT, RVT, or LVT positions is a significant challenge. On average, it takes over a year to fill these positions. This finding suggests, therefore, focusing on this particular persona is a logical starting point for focused retention efforts.



Different roles can have wildly different objectives and perspectives. For instance, veterinarians likely entered the field for much different reasons than customer service representatives. The motivations influencing one team member's decision to stay likely are different from those of the person next to them, especially when considering the perspectives of owners versus employees.

that are most relevant, thereby having the greatest impact on specific members of the veterinary team.

For example, in Figure 7, a practice with high turnover of credentialed techs will note that fair pay, shown here in red, is a much stronger driver of attrition than any other factor. By clicking through to the interactive graphic, that practice can also see that career development, appreciation for work, and caring leadership are important factors to consider when aiming to reduce attrition in this role.

As retention in that role improves, practices can then look at the factors that increase stickiness for credentialed tech-

nicians (Figure 8). This shows that the ability to practice modern and/or sound medicine is a top retention factor for this role, with staff functioning as a team a close second, followed by fair compensation, meaningful work, and feeling like work is appreciated.

As crucial as these particular factors are to increasing retention in this role, they do not necessarily rank highly for other team members. Remember, this is an approach that's best used when focusing on a specific role, not as a holistic approach to improving practice-wide retention.

PLEASE STAY. YOU WERE MADE FOR THIS

CONCLUSION

Ensuring the wellbeing of those who selflessly devote themselves to veterinary medicine is of utmost importance. It is crucial, as a profession, to collectively support and prioritize their welfare while striving to minimize any personal sacrifices they make to be a part of veterinary medicine.

By understanding the factors driving attrition and retention and identifying how those can be improved to create a practice environment in which every member of the team can thrive, we can all work together to improve retention throughout the veterinary profession.

NEXT STEPS

The people of the profession have spoken. And here at AAHA, we've listened.

The dedicated professionals in veterinary medicine were **made for this** vital work. And they want the opportunity to continue pursuing their veterinary dreams; they just need to do so in an environment meets their needs and doesn't drive them away.

AAHA has zeroed in what veterinary professionals want and need to remain in the career they've loved since childhood. This information will form the foundation for a new veterinary employment paradigm.

We invite you to join AAHA in our commitment to the profession we service and to support a collaborative effort to turn observations into actionable steps. Together, we'll bring joy back to the professionals who were **made for this** and deliver the support and resources that remind them that they were **built to last**.

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS & RESOURCES

Fair Compensation

To ensure fair compensation, consider the job, the local market, and the individual in the role. Budget constraints should not overshadow the determination of fair pay. Reflecting on what it would take to retain an employee “needing” to leave due to pay issues, it remains paramount to weigh the cost of replacing them.

Teamwork

Team cohesion is crucial for success. People want to belong, and by making them feel that they do, not only are they happier at work, but they will advocate for the practice. Creating a collaborative team involves understanding and respecting each member’s contributions. Fostering a work climate that has a strong sense of teamwork and a high degree of trust can facilitate open communication and improve care outcomes.

Appreciation for Work

Ensuring employee satisfaction hinges on engaging work, and leaders demonstrating true appreciation for this work. External recognition and internal validation through meaningful tasks both play a crucial role in fostering a sense of purpose. Note that most veterinary professionals are drawn to this profession out of their deep love for animals.

Meaningful Work

Internal validation through meaningful tasks helps employees feel like the work they’re doing is part of something important. By helping employees connect their duties to the practice’s mission and/or a greater cause, leaders can provide employees with that sense of deep meaning.

Flexibility in Scheduling/Job Duties

To effectively address individual challenges, it is crucial to prioritize flexibility in both scheduling and job duties. Embracing innovative ideas and actively seeking input from team members on schedule and job design can greatly enhance the overall level of flexibility within an organization.

Career Development

A positive workplace culture thrives on caring leadership. Leaders who prioritize investing in career growth and opportunities in various ways, such as implementing mentorship programs, cultivate a sense of pride and loyalty among employees.

Caring or Inspiring Leadership

When leaders show employees that they care, it inspires a sense of value and belonging. Leaders can show this caring through acts of recognition, by providing opportunities for continued learning, by listening to the needs and desires of their team, and by leading by positive example in their practice.

Ability to Practice Modern and/or Sound Medicine

To deliver effective and cutting-edge medicine, it is imperative to stay updated with the latest advancements and wholeheartedly embrace technological progress. By doing so, high-quality care can be ensured, and unwavering loyalty among team members fostered.

WEB RESOURCES

The following resources may help you as you begin your retention journey. Additionally, AAHA will publish retention resources throughout the year to give you the tools you need to retain your team.

CLICKABLE RESOURCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
FAIR COMPENSATION		
Conducting a Compensation Analysis	Understanding what various roles are paid – in your area and beyond – will help you remain competitive.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Living Wage Calculator	Competition with other clinics may not matter if you don't pay a living wage to working professionals.	MIT
Using Baseline Practice Data to Become More Profitable	Practice data can help understand and solve problems like flat or declining revenue, low production, and more.	<i>Trends</i>
AAHA/VMG Chart of Accounts	This is the standard for classifying and aggregating revenue, expense, and balance sheet accounts in small-animal veterinary practice.	AAHA/VMG
TEAMWORK		
How to Create a Successful Veterinary Practice	Bringing everyone in on a shared, clear vision, building trusting relationships, and encouraging trust and support among team members goes a long way.	UC Davis Veterinary Medicine
How to Improve Teamwork and Collaboration in the Workplace	At its heart, teamwork is about collaboration.	Gallup
Why Leaders Must Foster a Climate With a Strong Sense of Teamwork	Fostering a work climate that has a strong sense of teamwork and a high degree of trust can facilitate open communication and improve care outcomes.	Merck Veterinary Wellbeing Study III
AAHA Technician Utilization Guidelines	Credentialed veterinary technicians (CrVTs) are a valuable resource for a veterinary practice, but their skills, education, and experience are often not being used to their full potential. Optimal utilization of credentialed veterinary technicians can benefit the entire veterinary team by supporting professional longevity, mutual trust and collaboration, improved patient care, and financial sustainability.	American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA)
APPRECIATION AND MEANINGFUL WORK		
The Business Case for Recognition at Work	Recognition celebrates individual work, bonds teams together, and connects personal achievement to organizational success—all of which makes work feel engaging.	<i>workhuman</i>
Generating Employee Engagement with Strategic Recognition	Recognition should be fulfilling, authentic, personalized, equitable, and embedded in company culture as part of the day-to-day.	<i>workhuman</i>
Simple Ways to Show Team Members Appreciation	From understanding one another's appreciation love languages to singing off-key, there are plenty of ways to show appreciation.	<i>NEWStat</i>
Building an Employee Recognition Program	Appreciation shouldn't only be top-down. This framework helps connect people to purpose, accomplishment, and each other.	<i>O.C. Tanner</i>

WEB RESOURCES

CLICKABLE RESOURCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
FLEXIBILITY IN SCHEDULING/JOB DUTIES		
The Virtual CSR	It may be possible to utilize remote team members for more than just paperwork.	<i>Trends</i>
Incorporating Connected Care	What can your practice accomplish via telehealth? Exploring the options in your state could open a pathway to increased flexibility.	2021 AAHA/AVMA Telehealth Guidelines
Starting With a Staff Survey	If you want to know what people need, give them a way to tell you. This practice used an anonymous staff survey to better understand the team's needs, then held follow-up meetings and provided a suggestion box to learn more.	NEWStat
CAREER DEVELOPMENT		
Why Care About a Positive Culture?	This excerpt discusses the importance of leadership allowing people to show up at work as human beings with lives outside of work.	<i>Trends</i>
Effective Mentoring Strategies	This can't-miss resource covers everything from open-ended questions to guide a mentoring relationship to the different types of mentoring models.	2023 AAHA Mentoring Guidelines
CARING LEADERSHIP		
AAHA Guidelines Certificates	Opportunities to learn and grow are important for everyone in your practice. These certificates cover topics ranging from anesthesia to nutrition.	AAHA
AAHA Technician Utilization Guidelines	Credentialed veterinary technicians (CrVTs) are a valuable resource for a veterinary practice, but their skills, education, and experience are often not being used to their full potential. Optimal utilization of credentialed veterinary technicians can benefit the entire veterinary team by supporting professional longevity, mutual trust and collaboration, improved patient care, and financial sustainability.	American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA)
ABILITY TO PRACTICE MODERN AND/OR SOUND MEDICINE		
Boost Your Training Game With Simulations	Designing a sim to meet your team's needs might be simpler than you imagined.	<i>Trends</i>
Collaborating With Specialists to Expand Your Spectrum of Options	This article explains why the VetHive community believes GPs shouldn't hesitate to build relationships with specialists.	NEWStat
Technology and Empowered Vet Techs	Tune into this episode on how this combination is changing the landscape of vet med, for the better.	Central Line: The AAHA Podcast

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AMERICAN ANIMAL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Since 1933, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) has been the only organization to accredit veterinary hospitals according to more than 900 standards directly correlated to high-quality medicine and compassionate care. AAHA seeks to simplify the journey towards excellence for veterinary practices and lead the profession in the provision of the highest quality care for pets by improving standards of care, championing accreditation, and supporting our members in all aspects of this pursuit. Today, more than 4,800 practices—nearly 15% of veterinary hospitals in the United States and Canada, as well as a growing number in Japan—are AAHA accredited or preaccredited.

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