

## **The Early Career Exodus - How to Beat the Retention Odds**

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#### **Summary:**

The veterinary profession, especially among new graduates, experiences recurring high rates of turnover. This turn-over is highlighted by the fact that an estimated two-thirds of new graduates leave their first practice within three years. While this statistic is alarming, it doesn't even tell the entire story. Early exits of younger veterinarians and veterinary team members can impact practice culture, minimize monetary return, and compromise patient care. The Millennial generation is now the most widely represented in the veterinary workforce, and their approach to career building should not be overlooked as we seek to redefine what it means to be a veterinary team member and how to create a practice environment focused on retention.

In this lecture we use recent employment data as a framework to better describe the primary components Millennials and their Gen Z counterparts look for in a workplace, and how to translate those items into the context of the veterinary profession. We will identify two approaches practice management can use to create a more friendly environment for these younger generations, along with strategies veterinary team members can employ to be their own best advocate. A robust and enriching employee experience retains the team needed to care for all patients and promotes a more financially stable clinic. Expectations from employees and employers tend to shift over time, but when the lines of communication are kept open, the goals of both parties are far more likely to be complementary, not competitive.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Develop a more thorough understanding of commonly held workplace values among younger generations.
2. Become equipped with strategies that can be employed by veterinary practice management to attract and retain younger veterinary team members, along with the primary ways veterinary team members can advocate for themselves in practice.
3. Build empathy and understanding between practice management and veterinary team members in order to create maximal goal alignment.