



University of Tennessee, Knoxville

TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange

Veterinary Partners Appreciation Conference (V-PAC)

2nd Annual Veterinary Partners Appreciation Conference (V-PAC), 2014

Jul 12th, 3:10 PM - 4:20 PM

Wow Them With Winning Service

Shawn G. McVey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/v-pac>

 Part of the [Veterinary Medicine Commons](#)

Shawn G. McVey, "Wow Them With Winning Service" (July 12, 2014). *Veterinary Partners Appreciation Conference (V-PAC)*.

<https://trace.tennessee.edu/v-pac/proceedings2014/pracmgmt/2>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at UT at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Veterinary Partners Appreciation Conference (V-PAC) by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

Wow Them with Winning Service: Turning Policies into Standards

Shawn G. McVey, MA, MSW
McVey Management Solutions, Chicago, IL

Introduction

How focused are you on your clients? If you don't have a way to measure the service you're providing or have standards for how to provide it, you could be much less client-focused than you think. In this session, you will measure their own performance to determine how well they adhere to the standards of a client-driven company. Afterward, you will learn the difference between policies and standards, the qualities that make an effective standard, and how to create standards that you can measure.

Do You Have a Client-Driven Practice?

Think about your business. How much effort have you put into identifying weaknesses and troubleshooting them? Do you know how to assess your business's performance? Think of a service attribute that you would like to see become a part of your culture.

Measure yourself on each of the characteristics of a client-driven company. For each characteristic, rate the extent to which the statement is true about your clinic or hospital:

1. Not at all
2. To a small extent
3. To a moderate extent
4. To a great extent
5. To a very great extent

Add up the scores for each set of questions, and calculate your percentage by dividing your score by the highest possible score.

Vision, Commitment, and Climate

1. My organization is totally committed to the ideal of creating satisfied clients.
2. Rather than having to undo mistakes, we aim to do things right the first time.
3. Owners demonstrate with their actions that client satisfaction is important.
4. Our goal is to exceed the clients' expectations in the things that matter most to them.
5. Being client-focused is a major factor in determining who gets ahead in my organization.
6. Our practice is totally committed to the idea of quality.
7. Serving clients' needs takes precedence over serving our internal needs.

Divide by 35.

Aligning Ourselves with Our Clients

1. When it comes to delivery of service, we play a consultative or partnership role with our clients.
2. In our advertising or promotional materials, we don't promise more than we can deliver.
3. We know which attributes and services our clients value most.
4. Information from clients is used in designing our systems and products.
5. We strive to be a leader in our industry.

Divide by 25.

Readiness to Find and Eliminate Client Problems

1. We monitor client complaints.
2. We regularly ask clients to give us feedback about our performance.
3. Clients' complaints are regularly analyzed to identify problems.
4. We look for ways to eliminate internal procedures and systems that do not add value for our clients.

Divide by 20.

Using and Communicating Client Information

1. We know how our clients define quality.
2. We provide opportunities at various levels for employees to be with clients.
3. We clearly understand what is expected of our organization.
4. We regularly give clients information that helps shape their expectations.
5. Our key managers clearly understand clients' requirements.
6. Within the organization, there is agreement about who the client is.
7. Our owners and managers have frequent contact with clients.

Divide by 35.

Reaching Out to Our Clients

1. We make it easy for our clients to do business with us.
2. Employees are encouraged to go above and beyond to serve clients well.
3. We try to resolve all client complaints.
4. We make it easy for clients to complain about our services.

Divide by 20.

Competence, Capability, and Empowerment of People

1. We treat employees with respect.
2. Employees at all levels have a good understanding of our products and services.
3. Employees who work with clients have the resources they need to do the job well.
4. Even at lower levels, employees are empowered to make quick decisions and use their judgment to make things right for a client.
5. Employees feel that they are involved in an exciting enterprise.
6. Employees at all levels are involved in making decisions about some aspect of their work.
7. Employees are cross-trained so that they can fill in for one another when necessary.

Divide by 35.

Continuous Improvement on Process and Product

1. Instead of competing with one another, functional groups cooperate to reach shared goals.
2. We study the best practices of other hospitals to get ideas about how we might do it better.
3. We work continuously to improve our service and skills.
4. When problems are identified, we take quick action to resolve them.
5. We invest in the development of innovative ideas.

Divide by 25.

To evaluate your total score, use these guidelines:

- Above 90% indicates strong client orientation.
- 80-90% indicates system troubles. Your business is getting more complaints than it needs to.
- Below 80% and you have lost your competitive service advantage.

What Are Service Standards?

Service standards serve two purposes:

- They are a powerful way of shaping the image that your clients have of you.
- They are a great management tool for measuring how well each person on your team meets the levels of service to which you aspire.

Service standards are usually built around qualities of experience that you want your client to experience. They are often defined by adjectives or qualities, such as:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| • Friendly | • Helpful |
| • Responsive | • Caring |
| • Courteous | • Prompt |
| • Efficient | • Compassionate |
| • Pleasant | |

From these qualities, a policy usually follows. Examples are:

- “When greeting the client, act in a friendly way.”
- “Be prompt in responding to the client’s needs.”
- “When dealing with upset clients, show them you care.”

These are worthy goals but are not concrete enough, because they mean different things to different people. If policies are to become standards, they must be measurable. Service standards go one step further because they turn general service qualities into specific, measurable actions that you expect your staff to take in any given situation. For your staff to understand friendly service, it must be broken down into the components that make up friendly service. Here are some examples:

- Smile at the client as s/he approaches.
- Make direct eye contact when explaining the situation.
- Greet clients with “Good morning,” and “Good afternoon.”
- Use the client’s name at least twice during the conversation.

To help you understand the difference between a quality and a standard, here are some before-and-after examples:

QUALITY

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer the phone promptly. • Return calls in a timely manner. • Be attentive to the client. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make eye contact with the client within five seconds of his/her approach. • Always apologize if a client is upset. • Always give the client your name, number, and extension. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be empathetic with an upset client. • Take personal responsibility for handling problems. | |

STANDARD

- Answer the phone in three rings.
- Return all calls within 24 hours.

An effective service standard has these characteristics:

- Specific
- Concise
- Measurable
- Based on client need
- Written in job description and part of the review
- Jointly created with the staff
- Fairly enforced

How Do You Create Service Standards?

Research indicates that clients judge us on three service criteria: product quality, ease of procedures, and personal contact quality. To make standards that address how clients judge us, follow these four steps:

1. Define your service sequences.
2. Map out the steps.
3. Determine your experience enhancers.
4. Convert your enhancers into standards.

A service sequence is a series of separate but connected interactions, kind of like the chapters in a book. For example:

- Find a veterinarian.
 - Make the appointment.
 - Check fees, credentials, and procedures.
- Check in.
 - Wait in the lobby.
- See the care provider.
 - Understand diagnosis and after care.
 - Prescriptions
 - Estimates
- Check out.
 - Follow-up calls

Map out the steps in a service sequence. Pick out an area that needs improvement and map it out. Break down each sequence into a set of chronological steps. For each step, ask yourself: “What general service qualities will enhance the client’s experience when doing business with my clinic during this step?” Next, convert enhancers to standards. Remember that as you grow, you will need to update your standards. Client expectations, technology, and the economy could all change your service enhancers.

10 Good Client-Service Habits

1. Be on time.
2. Follow up on your promises.
3. Under-promise and over-deliver.
4. Go the extra mile.
5. Offer options.
6. Express empathy.
7. Treat clients as the most important part of the job.
8. Treat co-workers as clients.
9. Give the client your name and phone number.
10. Smile and use inflection on the telephone.

Action Plan

This week, I will:

The outcome for me is:

The outcome for the organization is:

This month, I will:

The outcome for me is:

The outcome for the organization is: