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## Book review — Boekresensie

### Developing a procedures manual for your veterinary clinic

W E Fling

1996. *Veterinary Practice Publishing Company, Santa Barbara, California*, 79 pp. Price not stated. ISBN 0 9603 534 8 8.

Running a successful veterinary clinic usually implies rendering a sterling service to the community. Such service is usually the result of effective teamwork involving everybody working at the practice. Regardless of the number of people rendering the service, effective communication between them plays a pivotal role in rendering an excellent service. While it is not difficult for the owner or owners of a practice to explain the overall goal of the practice to staff members, it is much more taxing to explain every little detail that goes into consistently providing an excellent service. A clinic procedures manual could fulfil this role and provide all employees with guidelines on all aspects of their daily chores. Dr Fling's booklet provides guidelines for the compilation of a procedures manual, which, as he correctly states, is a living document that requires input from all employees, and should be revised, updated and changed as needed.

The following major points are covered in separate sections of the manual: clinic policies for all employees; clinic operational procedures; job descriptions; client relations and telephone protocol. Starting with a simple mission statement of the practice, the different sections then proceed to elaborate on guidelines regarded as attributes that, when demonstrated by an employee, should

result in a superior performance. The different sections are also supplemented with sample *pro forma* forms that detail various aspects of running a private practice such as staff disciplinary action; hospitalisation and surgery authorisation; permission for euthanasia; daily treatment sheet; veterinary assistant guide to cleaning kennel cages; separating a pet from the client; client take-home literature; telephone standards and first-aid procedures.

Dr Fling sees a procedures handbook as the Bible of a practice which should constantly be studied and consulted by all employees. He clearly states that there is absolutely no right or wrong approach in the preparation of such a handbook but that it is merely a process to get the information floating around in one's head or scribbled on scraps of paper all over the practice, collated into a single document.

This ring-bound soft cover manual is strongly recommended as essential reading for all practice managers as well as for staff employed in veterinary practices. It is bound to trigger a process that may improve the profits of the practice.

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