VOLUME1 | ISSUE1

MARCH 2024

AUSTRALASIAN VETERINARY RECEPTIONIST ASSOCIATION NEWSI ETTER

2024 VRAD, VROM & VROY AWARDS

MANAGING THE EASTER RUSH

DOG BREED CROSSWORD 10 WAYS TO BECOME A DOG FRIENDLY VET RECEPTIONIST

FEATURED ARTICLE:

ELEVATING

EXPERIENCE:

RECEPTIONISTS

CLIENT

THE

ROLE

297.0



Editor's Note

Well, it's here - finally! After weeks of planning and careful preparation. I'm proud to present you all with our first edition of AVRAN.

AVRAN is your one stop shop for all things Veterinary Reception but with a pop of personality (just like all of us the industry). in From our receptionists, nurses and vets, to our practice owners and corporate executives. AVRANs goal is to bring our industry stakeholders together to reflect, discuss and influence the future of the Veterinary Receptionist career.

We are committed to celebrating the success we see from this movement with you all. As well as showcasing the incredible reception staff we have working for our industry practices across Australia & New Zealand. With our launch only in mid 2023, I can't quite believe how much we've grown already. Our arrival has certainly created quite the buzz amongst practice owners, managers and staff alike. I think we all know how overdue this has been and are excited to see some support for the frontline workers of our industry,

The AVRA is here to develop and guide not only our front of house roles within clinic, but our administrative roles too. We are seeing new and exciting roles develop within clinics across Australia & New Zealand. From Marketing & Social Media, Customer Success Management, Operations and even HR or Finance.

AVRA is proud to be supporting all of these roles. Demonstrating to our members the different areas of expertise and career progression they can target. While developing educational content for these areas of expertise.

I feel so incredibly lucky to be playing such an integral role within this movement. I have seen first hand the importance of these client facing roles. Both from a managerial perspective, but also from being in them myself. I look forward to continuing to connect with you all as we drive this movement forward, together.

INKARRI TRUMBULL-WARD GENERAL MANAGER



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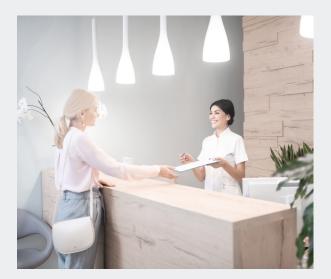
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WWW.AVRA.NET.AU/AVRAN

to download this current issue







Directors letter

Uniting Veterinary Receptionists Across Australia and New Zealand

Dear members and supporters of the veterinary receptionist Community,

I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to each one of you as one of the directors of the Australian Veterinary Receptionist Association. It is an honour to introduce our inaugural newsletter and to share the mission and vision that drive our efforts to support and unite veterinary receptionists.

Our journey began with a shared passion for the vital role that receptionists play in the veterinary industry. These individuals are the heart and soul of every clinic, acting as the first and last point of contact for pet owners, demonstrating empathy, managing appointments, and ensuring seamless communication between clients and veterinary professionals. We believe that the power of collaboration and shared knowledge can elevate the veterinary receptionist profession to new heights. Our organisation is committed to providing a platform where receptionists can come together, exchange insights, and access resources that foster their growth, development, and well-being.

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In our upcoming newsletter, we aim to bring you valuable content that empowers you in your role:



Directors Letter

Uniting Veterinary Receptionists Across Australia and New Zealand

Featured Article: Elevating Client Experience: The Receptionist's Role. Discover how your interactions with clients contribute to a positive client experience and strengthen the bond between pet owners and your clinic.

Member Spotlight: Meet Our Inspirational Members. Get to know receptionists from various regions who have made a significant impact in their clinics and communities.

Professional Development:

Upcoming Webinars and Workshops. Stay updated on our exciting line-up of webinars and workshops designed to enhance your skills, boost your confidence, and expand your network.

News and Updates: Industry Insights and Trends. Stay informed about the latest news and trends in the veterinary field, with a focus on how they impact receptionists' roles. At the AVRA, we are dedicated to fostering a supportive community that celebrates the contributions of veterinary receptionists. We invite you to actively engage with us, share your experiences, and collaborate on initiatives that uplift our profession.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Together, we can create a thriving community of veterinary receptionists who lead with compassion, efficiency, and excellence.

Warm regards,

MICHAEL MCKEAND DIRECTOR







Representing Veterinary Reception & Admin staff Across Australia and New Zealand

We are ecstatic to announce our Founding AVRA Council Members. The AVRA Council acts as an advisory board to the association and executive team. All parties collaborate to make decisions for the future of the association and it's members.

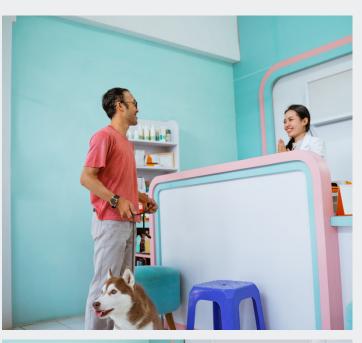
Our founding council is guiding our association until the first Annual General Meeting in 2024. At this meeting, internal and external council applications are considered for positions on the council, with roles being voted on and apppinted for a 2 year term.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Jaime Keim Senior Council Advisor
- Ashleigh Bligh President
- Shauna James Vice President
- Mary Geddie Treasurer

For more information on the roles our council plays, or how you can become a member, please visit **www.avra.net.au/avra-council/**









FEATURE ARTICLE ELEVATING CLIENT EXPERIENCE THE RECEPTIONISTS ROLE

Photographs by Odua Images

In the bustling world of veterinary clinics, where pets and their owners seek care and comfort, the role of the veterinary receptionist stands out as pivotal. These frontline professionals are not just the voice on the phone or the welcoming smile at the door; they are the architects of the client experience, shaping perceptions, building trust, and ultimately, influencing the success of the clinic.

Customer Service Trends in Veterinary Clinics

Recent studies have shown that a staggering 85% of pet owners consider customer service a critical factor in their choice of veterinary clinic. This highlights the growing importance of the client experience, with clinics now focusing on enhancing their services to retain existing clients and attract new ones.

The Veterinary Receptionist's Crucial Role

The veterinary receptionist is often the first point of contact for clients, whether on the phone or in person. They are expected to be knowledgeable about the clinic's services,



compassionate towards clients' concerns, and adept at handling various situations, from scheduling appointments to dealing with emergencies. In essence, they are the face of the clinic, embodying its values and commitment to care.

Key Expectations of Veterinary Receptionists

Veterinary receptionists are expected to possess excellent communication skills, empathy, and compassion. They must be able to communicate complex medical information clearly and effectively, while also demonstrating empathy and compassion towards clients who may be anxious or distressed about their pets' health.

Elevating the Client Experience Through Training and Technology

To enhance the client experience, veterinary clinics are investing in training programs for receptionists. These programs focus on improving communication skills, empathy, and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, clinics are leveraging technology solutions, such as online appointment scheduling and telemedicine, to make the client experience more convenient and efficient.

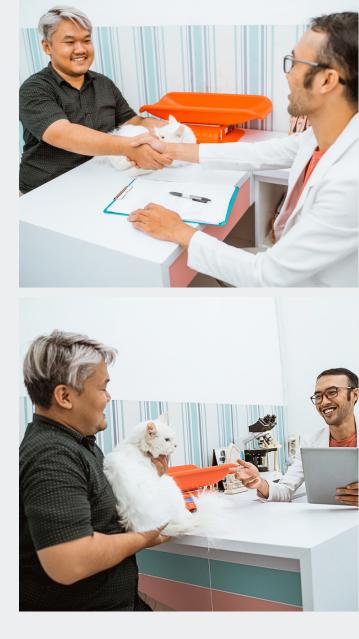
The Impact on Clinic Success

A positive client experience can have a profound impact on a clinic's success. Satisfied clients are more likely to return for future services and recommend the clinic to others, leading to increased revenue and a strong reputation within the community.

In conclusion, the role of the veterinary receptionist is crucial in shaping the client experience. By focusing on excellent communication, empathy, and problem-solving, receptionists can elevate the client experience and contribute to the overall success of the clinic. Veterinary clinics that invest in training and technology to support their receptionists are likely to see long-term benefits in client satisfaction and clinic growth. As the face of the clinic, veterinary receptionists play a vital role in creating a positive client experience and fostering lasting relationships with clients. Through their dedication and commitment to excellence, they not only elevate the client experience but also contribute to the overall success and reputation of the clinic.













Sponsor Spotlight: Gap Only

The AVRA is proud to be sponsored by an innovative company who has found a solution to the delay and out of pocket costs that often prevents clients from pursuing the best possible care for their pets.

Gap Only enables a quick turn around on claims while making veterinary services more accessible. Allowing our clients to only pay the Gap, not the entire amount and waiting days or even weeks on reimbursement.

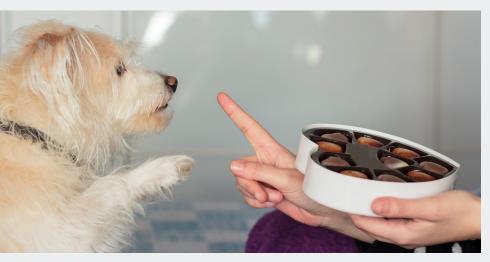
Their mission, alongside Petsure, is to help remove the worries that come with being a pet owner, by improving pet healthcare moments so that dogs, cats and their people can enjoy healthier and happier lives together. Gap Only works to support the wellness of clients and their pets, but also our Veterinary Practices. Their GoWell initiative was created to raise money to support the mental wellbeing of Veterinary Professionals.

For every GapOnly claim processed, \$1 is donated to charity. Gap Only are working closely with Flynns Walk in 2024 to support vet and para-vet professionals to improve their wellbeing and career sustainability.

www.gaponly.com.au | @gaponlyau 👩

Each month we do a deep dive look at one of our amazing sponsors that allow the AVRA to work hard towards our mission. For more information you can check out our sponsors page on our website.





EASTER ARTICLE CHOCOLATE TOXICITY

Source: VetCheck digital document management system that integrates with the practice management system to help vet teams save time and improve client communication. <u>www.vetcheck.it</u>

Overview

Chocolate and cocoa products found in lollies, cakes, cookies, brownies and baking products are highly attractive to pets. They contain toxic compounds referred to as methylxanthines such as theobromine and caffeine that can cause severe illness. The amounts of toxic compounds vary greatly between products with dark chocolate, baking chocolate and cocoa powder holding the highest concentrations.

Toxic doses of theobromine*

Mild illness	20mg/kg
Moderate to serious	40mg/kg
Lethal	100mg/kg

*Pets can respond differently to chocolate doses and the type of chocolate ingested, with some dogs more sensitive than others.

Levels of Theobromine

Сосоа	20-30mg/g
Baking chocolate or dark chocolate	15-20mg/g
Milk Chocolate	2mg/g
White Chocolate	0.1mg/g

As an estimate, 50g of dark chocolate or baking chocolate (small chocolate bar size) could be fatal to a small dog. Whereas a small amount of milk chocolate such as the size of a chocolate chip is usually not a problem.

Estimated lethal doses of chocolate*

Size of Dog	Milk Chocolate	Dark or Baking Chocolate
Small Dogs	500g	50g
Medium dogs	2kg	200g
Large Dogs	30kg	300g

* Lethal doses are estimates only and in some cases may be less in sensitive dogs.



B vetcheck

66 50g of dark chocolate or baking chocolate (small chocolate bar size) could be fatal to a small dog



Signs

Common signs of a chocolate toxicity:

- Twitching
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Panting
- Bloat
- Restlessness
- Tremors
- Seizures
- Heart arrhythmias
- Respiratory failure

Clinical signs usually occur within 6-12 hours of eating the chocolate and can persist for 72 hours in severe cases.

The half-life of theobromine is 17.5 hours and caffeine is 4.5 hours, which means that it takes that amount of time for half of it to be excreted out of the body.

Causes

Common types of chocolate that cause toxicity:

- White chocolate
- Milk chocolate
- Dark chocolate
- Baker's chocolate
- Dry cocoa powder
- Cocoa beans

Disclaimer

If your pet ingests any chocolate, contact your veterinary team immediately.

Management

Your veterinarian will determine the amount of theobromine and caffeine ingested. So, it is important to recall the type and amount of chocolate your pet has ingested. Chocolate ingestion can be a serious problem that requires urgent veterinary attention.

Treatment may include:

- Induced vomiting and removal of gastrointestinal contents
- Stabilisation and supportive care with fluids
- Medication for tremors or seizures

Depending on the amount of toxic compounds ingested, most pets will make a full recovery with aggressive veterinary treatment.

Tips

Tips to help prevent chocolate toxicity:

- Keep chocolate out of reach of pets
- Look for dog treats with carob (a chocolate alternative with no theobromine or caffeine)

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Information is provided for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not a substitute for professional health or other advice and is in no way intended to be used or relied upon to diagnose or treat the health condition of any animal, or as a prognosis of any health condition. Always seek advice or consult a health or other appropriate professional before relying on any information provided.



Beasley V.R., et al: A Systems Affected Approach To Veterinary Toxicology. University of Illinois College ed. . of Veterinary Medicine, Urbana, IL, pp. 116-120, 1999. Boothe, D.M.: Anticonvulsant drugs and analeptic agents. In: Veterinary



Member Spotlight

Let's meet one of our amazing AVRA Members. Meet Meagan!

"I grew up with a tonne of animals and always had a passion for getting into the veterinary industry and learning as much as I could. I've always loved connecting with clients and giving them the best service for their animals. After completing my cert IV, I started working in mixed practice, I really enjoyed working with a wide array of animals including wildlife which I love. Now working with Vetcx, I'm so happy to be part of such an incredible team and love all aspects of this position. It's amazing that we are able to provide clients with amazing communication all over Australia!"



A note from Meagans Colleagues:

Meagan is always willing to go above and beyond for her team. Whether this be trying new things our of her comfort zone, assisting our staff when help is needed and filling in shifts to assist in any way she can to support her team. Meagan is kind and compassionate when speaking with our clients in difficult situations and also ecstatic when speaking with our new pet parents who want to gush over their new pet. Meagan is a star and extremely valued member of our VetCX Family.





This festive time, while joyful for many, can bring about unique situations for pets, from chocolate ingestion to injuries from hidden Easter eggs. As the front line of the clinic, receptionists play a critical role in managing this rush, ensuring that both pets and their owners receive the care and attention they need. Effective management strategies and a calm, organized approach can make all the difference during this bustling time.

Firstly, preparation is key. In the weeks leading up to Easter, receptionists can help their clinics by updating and organizing As the Easter season approaches, veterinary clinics often experience a significant surge in appointments and emergencies, making it a challenging period for receptionists.

client records, ensuring that all contact information is current and accessible. This is also an ideal time to familiarize oneself with common Easter-related pet emergencies, such as chocolate toxicity, foreign bodies or lily poisoning in cats, to efficiently triage cases as they come in.

It's also critical that the team establish a clear, efficient scheduling system. For this to be successful, it's crucial all team members understand the details of this system. As staff will need to manage the sudden influx of appointments and emergencies.





Your reception team must ensure that the most critical cases receive immediate attention while still accommodating regular check-ups and consultations. This involves planning and an ability to forward book non critical cases.

Communication is the most important aspect in achieving this. Receptionists should maintain clear, empathetic communication with pet owners, providing reassurance and accurate information during what can be a stressful time.

It's also essential to communicate effectively with the veterinary team, relaying critical information about incoming cases and any changes in the schedule promptly and accurately. By fostering a team-oriented approach, receptionists can help create a calm, supportive environment that efficiently addresses the needs of both pets and their owners.

A great example of an efficient system is preparing for the common critical cases that may arise and blocking out emergency



appointments to be utilized for these cases only, throughout the weekend. It's important your team are aware of the clinic's capacity for emergency cases. This way they know whether they need to refer the client on or bring them in.

Finally, ensuring your reception team are confident with forward booking non critical cases. Typically, this involves not offering an appointment sooner than the following week. Clients can become quite frustrated when they are unable to get an appointment immediately. Providing your reception team with a refresher workshop in successfully forward booking vaccinations, health checks, and other non critical appointments, will enable more flexibility within the schedule.

With preparation, organization, and effective communication, receptionists can navigate the Easter rush, ensuring a smooth and successful season for their veterinary clinic.











The AVRA is excited to announce we have partnered up with Dr. Woof Apparel to provide our practice members with exclusive benefits!

The Dr.Woof story is one close to the heart of our industry. Tired of the growing statistics on stress and burnout within the medical fields, three veterinarians joined forces to tackle this head on. By creating functional, comfortable and most importantly, fun, work wear for the medical field. To help put smiles on the faces of our industry workers. Dr. Woof Apparel provides uniforms and smiles, to practices in many fields across the world.

Through their initiative #OperationWoof, the company has partnered with many associations to help raise awareness and support for these important causes. This includes NOMV, The Macaw Society, Countbackwards from 10 and Fairy Floss Friday.

www.drwoofapparel.com.au @drwoofapparel

Each month we do a deep dive look at one of the incredible partners that allow the AVRA to provide resources and benefits to our members. For more information you can check out our partners on our website.





AVRA Course Testimonials



Since launching in June we've had nearly 300 individual course purchases, with hundreds of people completing courses already. We love seeing the passion and drive our industry has for continued education. Have a look at what some of our current members are saying.

"Fantastic presentation that was taught with digestible information that proves functional to 'beginner' veterinary staff or as a conscious refresher to those with a basis understanding that breaks down the 'why' of dog behaviour making data and clinical information applicable and relevant to the industry and workplace."

Sarah B. – Veterinary Receptionist Dogs Trust – Dog Behaviour for Veterinary Receptionists

"I am quite new to the vet industry and was employed as a veterinary receptionist. Upon completing the online foundation course, I have gained the skills and knowledge to perform certain tasks and duties in my role. It has also given me the understanding of how important my role is in my practice and what qualities I can bring. I have found the reception reference guide to be super helpful and handy and keep it at my desk all the time if I ever need to flick through it. Thank you." Stacey S. – Veterinary Receptionist

AVRA Foundation Course



There is nothing more important than doing the work you are meant to do in the world

MARIE FORLEO

Tired of paperwork?

Go digital with VetCheck consent forms with e-signatures. And say goodbye to printing, scanning and filing!

Visit **vetcheck.it** for more information

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Upcoming Content Calendar April - June

APRIL: Webinar: Vet CX: A day in the life of a Virtual Vet Receptionist

MAY

B

Webinar: Hills Science Diet. The 4 PAWS Approach: EMpowering Veterinary Receptionists in Nutritional Advocacy

JUNE:

Webinar: VetCheck: Simple steps to a paperless practice



Mental Wellbeing Possiurces



Beyond Blue have online counsellors and advice available 24/7. If you find you need assistance contact them at:

www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

1300 224 636

Access guided meditations & yoga to help with the daily stresses of working in clinic.

https://collective.vetyogi.com



Veterinary Joke of the Month What does a veterinary receptionist use to calculate a clients bill?

A Cow-lculator!



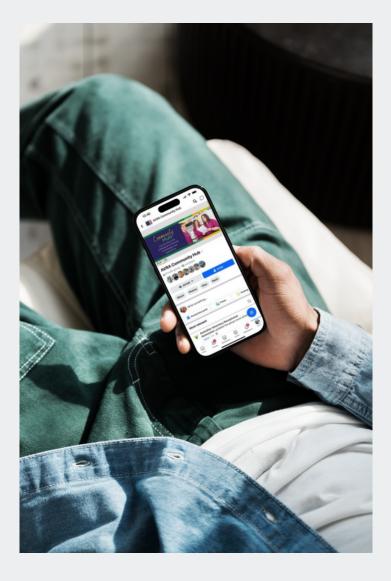
CONNECT WITH OTHER INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

FACEBOOK COMMUNITY

Our online Facebook community is the perfect place to connect with other AVRA members.

Exclusive to our practice members, the AVRA Hub is used to generate discussion, build networks and connect veterinary professionals with job openings.

We encourage all our members to join in the fun.





Here at AVRA we are avid supporters of celebrating the amazing staff we have in our clinics. In the spirit of this celebration, we have awards given out to our community throughout the year.

AVRA ANNUAL AWARDS

VROM, VROY, VRAD. So many acronyms but what do they all mean?

VROM is our Veterinary Receptionist of the Month award. It's a certificate awarded to outstanding receptionists who have been nominated by their colleagues. Sometimes it's for a specific task that impacted many around them, other times it's simply for excelling in their role.

VROY is our Veterinary Receptionist of the Year award. All recipients of VROM go into the running for the VROY. Additional Nominations for VROY Open 1st of August and close 1st of October. The winner is announced at our Annual Conference.

VRAD is Veterinary Receptionist Appreciation Day. VRAD is on the 1st of October. In celebration of another year of amazing VROM Awards and in anticipation of our upcoming VROY award, we run a competition throughout September. The competition style changes each year. With prizes provided by our amazing Sponsors & Partners.

In order to participate or go into the running for any of these awards, you must be nominated by a member of industry or by a client. We encourage you to share this nomination process with your clients. For resources to do this please reach out to us via info@avra.net.au



How does the nomination work?

In order to nominate a staff member, you need need to fill out the form on our website on the VROY/VROM pages using the "Nominate" button. In this form, we require your name, the nominee's name and the reason for the nomination. Along with your contact details. Those who are awarded an award are asked to provide a photo for us to share on our media. You can also send this information as an email to info@avra.net.au

The VROM awards are sent out each month to the clinic directly. With a digital copy available upon request. VROY are awarded during the Ceremony at our Annual Conference.



FIRST QUARTER

JANUARY 1 Candice Clark The Pet Practice Veterinary Clinic IGRATULATIONS FEBRUARY **Bianca Fattore** Alma Street Veterinary Hospital MARCH

Laura Newey

MyVet Strathfieldsaye







It's so exciting to see the Receptionist **Role receive the recognition it deserves** through these awards. Our Reception Team are the pinnacle of success within clinic. They are the first and last point of contact for clients and have direct influence over a clinic's schedule. It's a tough role requiring both customer service and clinical knowledge.

We want to continue to grow these awards every year.

Each year we strive to bring out additional awards celebrating the skills of our industry. While our top priority are our Receptionists. We also want to acknowledge the administrative teams within clinics. We see more and more of these roles emerging in both small and corporate practices.

These administrative roles such as Practice Manager, Social Media Manager, Customer Success Manager and even OH&S Officers all interact and directly impact our receptionists day to day.

As such, we plan to expand our annual awards ceremony to include a range of categories. If there is a award you would like to see celebrated within our industry that is NOT clinical. we would love to hear your suggestions! Please email us via info@avra.net.au





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- Develop a positive attitude towards dogs
- Use pheromone sprays or diffusers to create a calming atmosphere
- Familiarize yourself with dog behavior and body language
- Be patient and gentle when handling dogs, especially if they are anxious or scared
- Offer treats and water to dogs and their owners upon arrival

- Complete AVRA's 'How to become a Dog Friendly Receptionist' course
- Use positive reinforcement techniques
- Be knowledgeable about dog breeds and their specific health needs
- Create an environment with comfortable seating & toys to play with
- Keep the reception area clean and free of hazards



Trivia

When a client calls regarding their large dog who is making a gagging noise, seemingly trying to vomit, restless and won't stop stretching - what condition are we concerned the dog may have?

A client calls to order more prescription medication for their pet, however, we haven't seen this pet in clinic in seven months. Can we fulfil this request for medication?

A client is coming in with their elderly pet for an elected euthanasia. Upon arrival we:

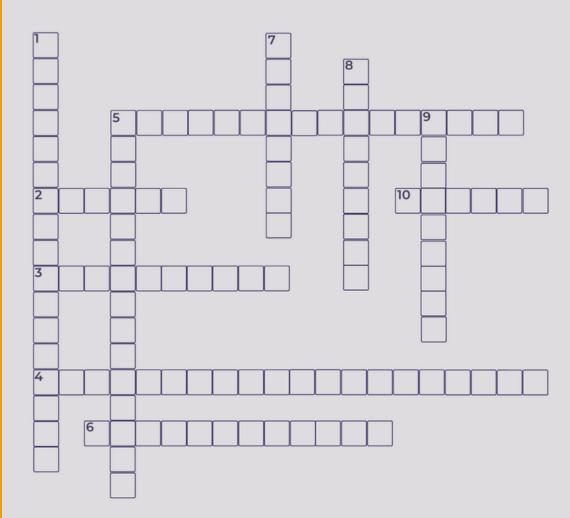
a) greet them with a cheery smile and ask "Hi, who have we got here?"
b) check them in and let them sit in the waiting room.

c) greet the client by name before moving them straight into a private room.

Tune in to next months AVRAN to check if you got the questions correct!

Crossword: Dog Breeds

Test your knowledge on our dog breed cross word puzzle. Some of these are tricky!



Clues.

Down:

1 - Characterised by the steep curve of their hindquarter, loyal protective demanour and often used as police dogs.

- 5 Largest and oldest French breed.
- 7 Alaskan arctic sled dog.

8 - A tiny dog, with a big personality. Often called a 'purse dog'.

9 - Large ancient dog breed whose name traces back to latin.

Across:

2 - Tall slim hunting dogs with long fluffy ears.

3 - A small dog with a long double coat and big personality.

4 - Small breed that comes in pepper and mustard. Short legs and a chest that almost touches the floor. Uncommon breed.

5 - Large breed slender dog used for guarding, often have their ears and tails docked.

6 - Giant dog breed best known for the famous barrel collar.

10 - Known for hunting rabbits. Medium tri colour breed.





Foundation

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Course

The Foundation course covers a wide variety of topics that are essential, for veterinary receptionists.

1

Dogs Trust Behaviour (

This course covers the basic information that every receptionist should know about dog behaviour.

ICC Cat Friendly Reception

Introduction to the charity International Cat Care and learn about helpful resources and info on cats yourself.



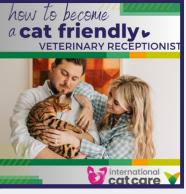
A one stop shop for all the information in your clinic. Collating price lists, procedures, contacts and more!

3ero Abuse Policy Poster

We support respect within the clinic. A friendly reminder to clients that abuse is not tolerated.

5











Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the

world.

DESMOND TUTU