Ten-minute chat

Liz Edmondson Day is the practice manager at Stanley House Veterinary Group, which recently won the Employer of the Year category in the Pendle Business Awards 2016.

Why did you decide to nominate the practice?
I got the idea from a ’marketing your practice’ lecture at London Vet Show.

What did the nomination involve?
Initially, I had to complete a questionnaire that was about four pages long. It asked, among other things, for a description of our business, information about the group’s history, its future plans and about the clients we look after. Then I had to write a 500-word statement about why I felt the group deserved to win. I told the partners what I had done but, to be honest, as I hadn’t done anything like this before I didn’t really expect us to get very far, so I didn’t make a big deal of it.

What happened next?
To my surprise, a few weeks later I got a phone call telling me that Stanley House had made it to the top eight. The next step was to ask our staff to complete an online survey, so I sent everyone a message with our news and the link to complete it. We also shared the news with our clients through our Facebook page.

How did the team get involved?
Most of our 62 staff filled in the survey, which mainly consisted of saying what they felt about working at Stanley House. The staff were very excited to be in the top eight and were more than happy to do the survey.

We have been allowed to see a small selection of what they said, such as:

‘Stanley House = best place to work! The staff are such a great team and this is a result of great leaders. I wouldn’t want to work anywhere else.’

‘Stanley house is the best place to work. We have a top team of highly motivated and fun people. We all work hard plus we love what we do – this passion is shown in work.’

‘Professional, caring, friendly supportive staff with animal wellbeing at the forefront of all we do.’

What did the judging involve?
The judges included a group of local business people, council employees and others from the business department of our local college.

How did it feel to hear the practice had made it to the top three?
There was great excitement when we received a phone call to say we had been selected for the top three and that we had an invitation to the award ceremony. Again, we sent a message to the staff to let them know the news and to ask who would like to go to the ceremony. We also used Facebook to keep our clients up to date.

What was the award ceremony like?
Unfortunately, we couldn’t get tickets for everyone to go so, to make it fair, we pulled names out of a hat. At the event, I was accompanied by Patrick Moore one of the directors, Leanne Mattinson our head receptionist, Vicky Hughes veterinary nurse (VN) and Sam Rushworth accounts administrator. Robin Hargreaves joined us briefly but he was on-call and was called away. It was a fantastic feeling when it was announced that we had won – such a proud moment. It’s also been a brilliant morale boost for everyone.

What’s your own background?
I started work at a local practice when I left school and trained as a VN with them. I left to travel the world and worked as a VN in Australia for about a year before I returned to the UK where I locumed for a while. I always loved being a VN, and although I wanted to try my hand at something different, I couldn’t see myself working in any other industry than the veterinary industry. I joined Stanley House 20 years ago and became practice manager a couple of years after joining.

As far as proud moments go, has anything topped this award?
No.

Will you share an embarrassing moment with us?
When I was a young nurse, a Mrs Tickle come in for an appointment with her dog, Tess. Guess who walked in to a full waiting room and shouted ‘Tess Tickle please’. Actually, I’m not sure who was more embarrassed, me or the dog’s owner as it dawned on her why her husband’s workmates had given him the same nickname.

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