



What a Difference An Experienced Mentor Makes

By Kathryn Tai MRCVS

When I joined Parkvets I was fresh out of college. Dave was assigned to indoctrinate me into the ways of the practice, it was his job to be my mentor the first three months and he did so admirably.

The first week involved Dave getting me acquainted with billing, the practice computer systems and the practice ethos. He was patient and understanding through my first week as I adapted to the practice.

In my second week we began consulting. Dave spent all his time with me whilst I consulted, he gave me double appointments so I didn't feel rushed and to allow us time to discuss each client after I had seen them. By being in the room it allowed me to have accurate and direct feedback, straight after the consult we had seen. This not only strengthened my communication skills but gave me more confidence in my work.

After these first few weeks I was not merely left to fend for myself, behind the scenes Dave would discuss medical cases with me, try to encourage reception to book me more operations for surgical experience, and taught me a great deal about one of his great passions - dentistry. He was always available when I needed him, no matter how silly the question was, he would always answer it fully and to the point.

Other than the work relationship I found him to be very entertaining and caring, he was always ready with a joke and quick to reassure me.

It was a real pleasure to work with him and I will vote him as the best mentor ever.

Kathryn Tai

Follow Up Note

Mentoring less experienced team members takes time and skill. Time many veterinary managers think they don't have and skills they frequently lack. Ultimately the benefits/results of this crucial support function, if done well, speak for themselves. How many new graduates enjoy the level of support that Kathryn received? How much better did she adapt to her new role? And if everyone could get this level of support then would our profession be a better place? Of course it would.

If you're not getting the support you want then don't panic. Firstly you should talk to your manager about your needs. But it is also perfectly possible, indeed often desirable, to engage the services of a professional mentor from outside of your organisation. And no, it doesn't cost the earth!

If you are interested in being mentored by Dave then drop him an email at dkn@davenicol.com. Or [click here to go to the contact form to submit your request](#).