



**Fishing for Unicorns:  
Hunting for Good Help in  
the Veterinary World**

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# Fishing



- Trying to catch a live fish with a dead worm or a fake fly on a hook
- Trying to look faintly dignified in hip waders

# Unicorn



- 1. A mythical, mystical creature with all kinds of magical powers, the horn of which could detect poison, cure diseases, and generally be a Jolly Good Thing™
- 2. Suspected to be a distorted description of an extinct rhinoceros

# Problem: That's not how you catch a unicorn



Help, I've got to hire someone!



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
START  
PANICKING**

# Just why are you hiring, anyway?

- Why does this job exist?
- What skills and attitudes did the last colleague have (or not have!) that are sorely lacking?
- What does success look like in 6 months? In 12 months?
- Who, what, where, when, and why are you looking?



# The Job Specification: What are you looking for?

- What skills do they need to have?
- What qualifications are you looking for?
- What tasks must they be good at?



# The Person Specification: Who are you looking for?

- What kind of attitude are you looking for?
- What kind of personality would fit with your team?





# Belbin's 9 Roles of the Ideal Team



Shaper / Driver	Challenges the team to improve.
Implementer / Executive	Puts ideas into action.
Completer / Finisher	Ensures thorough completion.
Coordinator / Chairperson	Acts as a chairperson.
Team worker / Player	Encourages cooperation.
Investigator / Explorer	Explores outside opportunities.
Plant / Innovator approaches.	Presents new ideas and
Monitor/ Evaluator / Analyst	Analyzes the options.
Specialist / Expert	Provides specialized skills.

<http://www.123test.com/team-roles-test/>

# Exercise time:

## The Good!

- Discuss your best team members!
- What made them memorable?



# Exercise time: The Bad & The Ugly

- Discuss your WORST team members!
- What made them memorable?



# Warning: Beware of Purple Unicorns!



# Where do I look for these amazing people?



- VN Times
- Vet Times
- Vet Record
- Online job boards
- Recruiting companies
- Networking
- Events & CPD

- An exciting opportunity has arisen for an enthusiastic RVN to join a lovely small animal practice in XXXX. The position is full time, and will be a mixture of shifts 8am-5pm, 9am-6pm, 10am-7pm. 1:4 Saturday mornings (9am-12pm). 4 Vet, 4 nurse team size. This practice is very forward thinking and allows the VN's to be very hands on.
- Positions available for a vet and a nurse. We're an independent, friendly and compassionate team, long established, with a good reputation and a large and loyal clientele. Vet for four-day week, easy Saturday rota, no on-call. New grads welcomed. Registered or experienced nurse to cover maternity. May lead to permanent. Four-day week, easy Saturday rota.
- Busy, independent, accredited small animal practice requires full-time RVN to join a friendly, progressive team. Our RVNs are involved in all aspects of the practice, lab, radiography, surgery and clinics. Fully funded CPD. 1-in-4 Saturday mornings and quiet OOH. Salary commensurate with experience.

# How do most employers interview?

- **Procrastinate!**
  - Try and put it off
  - Make do with what you have
  - Ignore the underlying problem
- **Pretend!**
  - It's all fine!
  - I know exactly what I'm looking for!
- **Pray!**
  - That the right one will apply



# Pre-interview to-do list



- Check Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Check Local News
- Google!
- Check the RCVS Register
- Print out their CV & cover letter
- Clear your diary(!!!)



# Bad Interview Questions

- “Why should we hire you?”
- “How many ping pong balls fit in a 747?”
- “What is your greatest weakness?”
- “What is the answer to that interview question I read in an HR blog the other day while I was sat on the loo?”



# What can you ask in an interview?



- Hours/rota in previous job
- Reason for looking for new job
- Routine caseload, types of clients, species breakdown in previous job
- Unusual clients/cases they've dealt with
- Stories of success or dealing with difficulty
- What are they looking for in a boss?
- Questions relating to your specific needs
  - "Tell me about a time you had fun at work."
  - "Tell me about a time you feel like you made a difference."
  - "Tell me about a time you went above and beyond the call of duty."

# What **SHOULDN'T** You Ask?



# Calling for help

- **Internally**
  - Asking colleagues for help
  - Asking your boss for help
  - Reading/researching
- **Externally**
  - Phone a friend
  - Ask an expert
  - Hire a consultant
  - Phone The Doctor



# What you & they both want to know



- Will you be a good fit?
- Skills and experience? Motivation and interest?
- Desire – do you want their job or just a job?

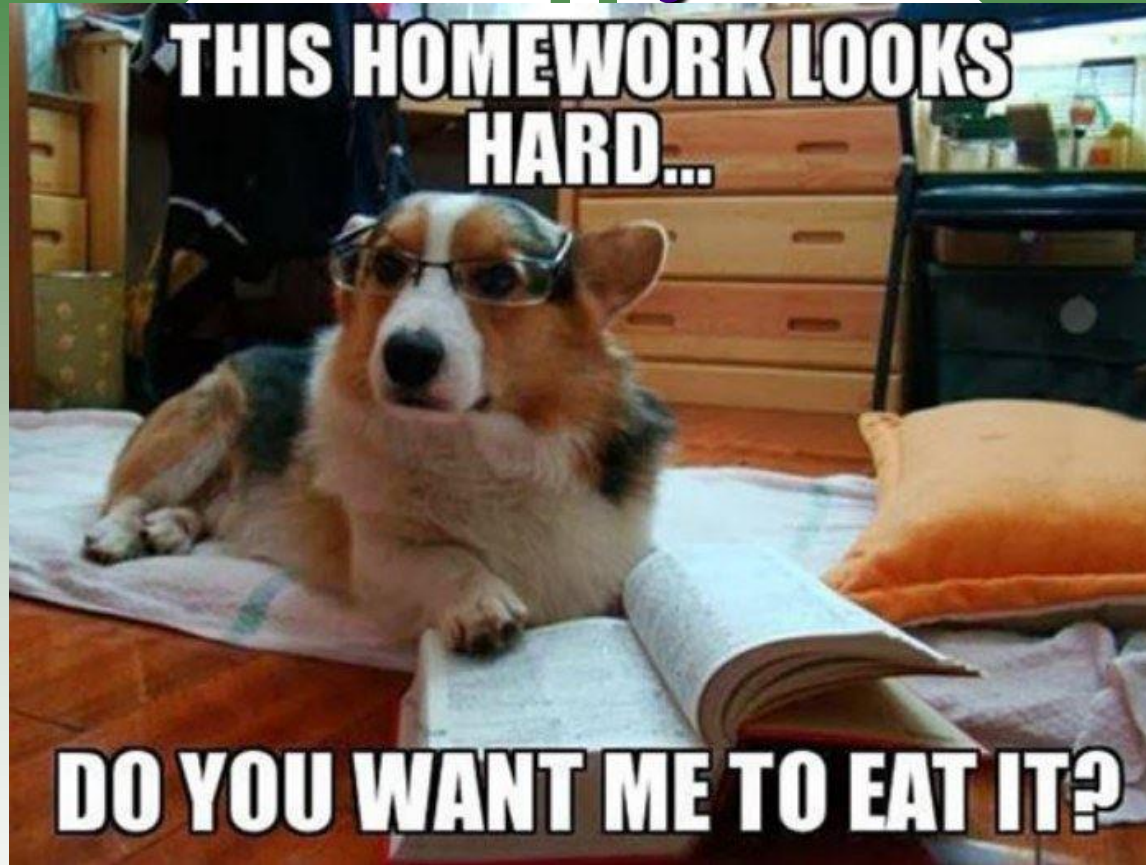
What do you want?  
What will they give?

# Summary



- Every job has a “Who, what, where, when, why” - discover what yours is
- What the job is and who does it are two different things
- Beware of purple unicorns - don't look for a perfect team member
- Get help if you need it
- At the end of the day you both want it to be a good fit

**Thank you!**



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