

Make yourself essential

Must-have employees enjoy better job security, more satisfying careers, and higher pay. But how do people reach this superstar status? Four team members reveal how they managed to stand out from the crowd so you can follow their leads and do it too.



BY KERRY HILLARD JOHNSON, EDITOR

Jennifer Finn



Clinical charge coordinator

Veterinary Specialty Hospital of the Carolinas

Location: Cary, N.C.

First veterinary job:
Customer service representative

Career path

After stints as a restaurant manager and streetlight salesperson, Finn wanted a job she could believe in. So when she saw an employment ad for a receptionist position at Veterinary Specialty Hospital of the Carolinas, she sent in her resume—three times. Her persistence paid off, and she's been working there for 10 years now.

Finn moved from customer service representative to group supervisor then to her current role: clinical charge coordinator, a brand-new position at the 24-hour practice that employs about 100 people. "Nurses enter charges for patients, but some of the fees were getting missed," Finn says. "We wanted to avoid having to send out invoices after patients were discharged, so this new position was created to maximize charge capture."

In about a year, Finn has saved around \$120,000 in revenue. How does she do it? Before a patient is discharged, she pulls up the hospital's inventory records through its automated inventory management system and visits the digital radiography and laboratory providers' Web sites. This allows her to see which treatments and services the patient has received. She compares this information to the in-house flowchart and adds any missed charges.

Why managers love her

"Jennifer has been with the hospital for years," says Paige Phillips, RVT, chief of operations at Veterinary Specialty Hospital and a *Firstline* Editorial Advisory Board member. "She maintains a positive outlook in her position by her professionalism and belief in our hospital's core values."

Essential qualities

"As a customer service representative, when I had time, I'd read patients' discharge instructions and teach myself about their presenting problems and the related diagnostic tests and treatments," Finn said. "This way I could better serve pet owners when answering their phone calls and better assist the medical staff by ensuring clients had accurate instructions and information." This additional knowledge—as well as her follow-through and attention to detail—positioned her perfectly to take on extra responsibilities.