

A day in the life of Tracy Rowswell

My name is Tracy Rowswell and I'm a Registered Veterinary Technologist. I graduated from St. Lawrence College in Kingston, Ontario in 1998. My career has been unique in that I've spent my time from graduation to now working in the same clinic. When I started at Thousand Islands Veterinary Services, we were a large animal only clinic and I spent most days on the road with the vets, but lots of time in clinic doing lab work and milk cultures as well. Then we added small animal and I got to split my time between farm calls and clinic small animal surgeries and appointments. A few years ago we became a small animal only clinic. I also taught Livestock to the Veterinary Assistants students at St. Lawrence College for nine years, and to the Veterinary Technology students there for 11 years part time.

My career evolved from large animal to mixed animal to teacher, to small animal, to head tech and now I'm the office manager. As an office manager, I still get to use my technical skills most days but I also get to have more input into our policies and protocols. No two days are ever the same. Of course they're will always be the unglamorous task of scheduling and dealing with difficult clients, but there are more fulfilling things too. I get to advocate for our techs and our vet assistants; I get to implement ideas that will make their jobs more fulfilling, help them to grow in their careers. Through teaching I learned how much I really loved to be a mentor to future techs, and I try to be there and support our staff every day. Getting to know our staff on a personal level allows me to know when someone needs a little extra support or to know what things really get them fired up and excited about their job. I want our staff to be able to focus as much as possible, not only on the areas where they need to learn and grow, but also about the areas they're passionate about. I've been so lucky to work for bosses who cultivated that in me -- I know how much that means to any tech.

I get to do a lot of behavioural consults as well as working closely with our canine breeder client because those are particular interests of mine. Developing personal skills in this field will not only help you to learn more about the things that you're most passionate about, they often lead you to be an asset to your team in an area that might not be someone else's strong suit. Creating a team environment with open communication where we all will support and help each other is really important to me.

As the office manager, I get to help our clinic grow and continue to be progressive. That said though, I know many of our clients very well and consider them friends. It's very important to me that we never lose the reason why we all chose this profession. Having that personal connection to our clients and patients is vital and I feel blessed to work at a clinic that shares that value. Fostering this atmosphere really helps our staff to feel valued as an important part of their patients' healthcare.

Remember that your voice matters. You have a lot to offer. If you find a clinic that values your knowledge and your skills and they want to see you succeed, then your career in this field will be longer and more fulfilling in all ways. I found that and I hope that you do as well.