

Technician turnover? The simplest part of your onboarding: Therapy laser training

By Amanda Hoffmeyer
For The Education Center

Staff turnover in veterinary medicine is a painful reality. All clinics face this challenge, whether they are a one-doctor operation or a large, bustling general practice. Many clinics rely on creating and maintaining a solid core team and accepting there will be churn in certain roles within the practice. Unfortunately, the role often turning into a revolving door is one that practices rely on most: the veterinary technician.

When a technician leaves and a new one is brought on, the learning curve is steep. They have to understand your clinic's internal procedures, the way you like to practice medicine, and how to use all the technology and tools available at your clinic. Sometimes you are fortunate and your new hire has come from a practice with a standard of care matching your own, which makes the transition easier. But have you ever encountered an employee that you knew could be great, maybe even an expert, at one of your technologies, but you simply don't have time to train them? They work hard, but never meet the potential you know they have.

Capital equipment presents a unique challenge with the new hire process. A piece of equipment generally has many settings, and requires very specific training to use and maintain it properly. To further complicate things, most capital equipment companies aren't very good at providing retraining opportunities. This concern is one of the main reasons many veterinarians choose to pass on capital equipment. However, one treatment method that does not have to cause frustration in regard to training (or retraining) staff is laser therapy. Many years ago, Companion Animal Health diagnosed this training problem and developed a multifaceted solution: in-laser innovations that provide real-time training and treatment setup; on-demand, technician-centric retraining modules; and on-going monthly educational opportunities.

Real-time training on your laser, by your laser

Recent innovations in laser therapy technology support both experienced and new staff to achieve the best clinical outcomes, every time. The new CTX-IQ features "smart" technology, which provides patients with the most accurate and therapeutic dose of energy, while teaching staff proper application technique—all in real time.

The CTX-IQ comes equipped with a delivery system called Empower IQ. Combining Empower IQ and the intelligent software is key to teaching your technicians how to get consistent results. Here's how it works from start to finish:

- **Species selection:** After turning the laser on, the technician selects preset protocols and then indicates the species of animal they intend to treat.
- **Body weight and body type selection:** Next, the technician selects the weight range of the patient to ensure proper dose is calculated based on the surface area and depth of tissue the light needs to penetrate for the condition selected.
- **Condition selection:** Based on the species, the software provides a comprehensive list of conditions from which to choose (e.g. arthritis, wounds, post-surgical, otitis, anal sacculitis, urinary tract disorders, abdominal disorders).
- **Additional considerations:** Based on the selected condition, the technician enters information about the area to be treated. For example, if wound is the selected protocol, they will enter the size of the wound, or if arthritis is selected, they will indicate the part(s) of the body to be treated.



The CTX-IQ offers real-time visual and haptic feedback to help guide new staff members to administer treatment.

- **Treatment head recommendation:** This entire protocol setup takes technicians about 10 seconds to perform. When they are finished, the operation screen shows the recommended treatment head that should be used to administer treatment. For example, a large noncontact treatment head may be suggested for the wound protocol, while for the arthritis case, a contact treatment head may be recommended instead. These treatment head recommendations are based on the delivery method that will most effectively deliver the therapeutic dose to the target tissue. Historically, this was just a judgment call on the part of the treatment administrator—now it's streamlined into a few simple clicks. If the incorrect treatment head is attached for the protocol, the software alerts the technician to switch the attachment.
- **Real-time visual and haptic feedback:** When the technician begins treatment, the handpiece provides instruction on proper application technique. If the treatment administrator is correctly performing the treatment, a green light illuminates. When handpiece movement is too fast, the green light turns to yellow and the handpiece shakes gently. When the treatment technique is too slow, the light turns red and the handpiece shakes more vigorously to alert the user to correct their speed immediately.

Training for your technicians on their schedule

When a new technician is onboarded, there are on-demand online courses developed specifically for them that support the path to becoming a laser therapy expert. These technician-taught modules include a basic introduction to laser therapy and the science behind the technology, tactical treatment considerations for the current laser therapy user, and advanced applications and client communication tips for the expert user.

These modules were developed as step one to onboarding and training new staff. Companion's superior clinical and customer support teams also are available to support with product and clinical questions along the way.



A visual indicator on the handpiece alerts the treatment administrator in real-time when they need to correct their treatment technique.

Customers for life, an on-going educational mission

Creating diverse educational opportunities for our customer partners is a cornerstone of Companion's promise: Evidence, Education, Partnership. Companion provides monthly live webinar opportunities, monthly live and hands-on educational opportunities, and the largest archive of on-demand laser therapy webinars in the industry.

This on-going education initiative supports your practice with the mission of continuous education, supporting new staff, and providing resources to employees that need refresher training. Team up with the leaders in laser therapy and gain both a technology and educational partner for life. ●

Amanda Hoffmeyer, the director of marketing at Companion Animal Health, collaborates with veterinarians, laser scientists, and engineers to share information and resources with the veterinary community. She can be contacted via email at amandah@litecure.com.

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