

Access to Ownership

Many veterinarians think about controlling their professional career and income by owning a practice. The methods for achieving ownership can occur in several ways and the following table offers a comparison of issues a buyer might consider.

For some, starting a practice from the ground up is the only way to establish in a specific location. However, for most, the purchase of an existing practice is the most effective and efficient method to gain control of one's professional career:

Considerations	Partnerships	Existing Practices	Starting a Practice
Start Up Time	None	None	Up to 12 months depending on location, zoning, remodeling, etc.
Initial Investments	0 – 25% of purchase price	0 – 25% of purchase price	Unknown, depends on equipment improvements, etc.
Total Investment	Varies with % of ownership and terms	Depends on price and terms	Depends on time to break even
Source of Financing	Owners or lenders	Seller or lenders	Lenders
Cash Flow	Immediate	Immediate	Slow initially
Owner's Salary	Immediate	Immediate	Unknown
Market Identity	Immediate	Immediate	Must be acquired
Client Base	Established	Established	Must be acquired
Support Staff	Present	Present	Must be acquired
Policy & Procedures	Established	Established	Must be acquired
Professional Control	Limited by ownership	Unlimited	Unlimited
Inspections by Govt.	Done	Done	Must be performed
Business Licensing	Done	Done	Must be acquired
Data Entry (records)	Done	Done	Must be performed
Business Protocols	Present	Present	Personal experience
Equipment	Present, may need updating	Present, may need updating	Must be acquired
Physical Facility	Present, may need updating	Present, may need updating	Remodeling and zoning issues to solve
Business Guidance	Maybe	Maybe	Personal experience

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Helping veterinarians purchase or sell veterinary medical practices and real estate; practice evaluations, negotiation or facilitation services; financing alternatives; and career structuring.

This information should not be construed as legal advice, nor a substitute for the advice of counsel. You may wish to consult an attorney about your specific circumstance.