

Pet Age

JAN. 2013

2012-13 RETAILER REPORT

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WEB EXTRAS



Pet Age is available to you all day every day, on our website. Visit www.petage.com for daily news, as well as this month's web extra stories and features.

2012-2013 PET AGE RETAILER REPORT

The Grooming Blues

One of the surprising trends we found in the Pet Age Retailer Survey was in-store grooming services have declined over the past few years. That alone was surprising, but the bigger shock was that grooming was near the top of services owners wanted to add in the future. To better understand the results, we talked with store owners and experts in the field to get to the bottom of the issue.

Behind-the-Scenes

Pet Age recently spent a day in Cranberry, N.J. at Loving Pets to see what goes into making their products and getting a tour from President Eric Abbey. You'll find a short video of our trip on the Web Extra page of our website.

Meet the Bloggers

We've assembled a top-notch team of bloggers who will be sharing their knowledge with you on our website.



Behind the Counter: A successful retailer, Dave Ratner is owner of Dave's Soda & Pet City, and a long-time *Pet Age* columnist. He also sits on the board of the Retail Advertising and Marketing Association, and the National Retail Federation.



Mark Your Territory: Kerry Sutherland is the principal of K. Sutherland PR, a boutique public relations, social media and branding agency specializing in the pet industry.



Market Like a Bulldog: John Cullen has over 10 years of pet product marketing and sales experience. He is the principal of Bulldog Marketing & Sales, Inc., a dedicated pet product consultancy, with the mission of helping small to mid-sized manufacturers navigate the nuances of the pet industry.



Editors' Pawspective: Michelle Maskaly is the editor-in-chief of *Pet Age*, and Jason Kamery is the assistant editor. They will be talking about social media, giving you a behind the scenes look at the magazine and sharing interesting business related stories they come across.

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Full Circle

With a new look, new products and new website, Pet Age is your new must-read

It seems like yesterday that I was a young salesman and my boss called me into his office to tell me I would be selling space in a magazine called Pet Age. A pet magazine?! Little did I know then, that conversation would lead to a career in an industry that I have called home for the past 30 years.

Now, as the vice president and publisher of Pet Age, a division of Journal Multimedia, my career has made a full circle, giving me the opportunity to build the magazine up to what I believe it can be, a must-read pet industry publication.

To do this, we've redesigned the magazine, launched a new website and added more digital products, such as social media and an e-newsletter. We want to humanize Pet Age, and foster a community where people come together, and constantly interact with us, each other and industry professionals.

We will keep you up-to-date on the latest pet industry, consumer and business trends and products, through not only our magazine every month, but also daily on our website and 24/7 on our social media channels. For example, a smart phone app called Tout will allow us to capture short, 15 second videos and send them immediately to social networks, like Twitter. This tool will especially come in handy at trade shows as a way to create buzz and interest in products and events.

When we post content online, especially through our social media networks, it's not static. Whether it's a Sunday night or a Wednesday morning, we're responding, and interacting with our followers. It's our editors personally running those feeds, and

not an automated service. I encourage you to interact with them on a regular basis.

At different points in the magazine, you will hear about a feature called "Web Extras." These are to inform you that you can find additional information, tips or something extra relating to this story on our website.

For example, you will find it at the end of this issue's Back Story Q&A with Eric Abbey, president of Loving Pets. You will also see it at the end of the stories in our Retailer Report, as well as in Fish and Pond, just to name a few.

Since September I have been traveling all over the country, working hard to introduce the industry to the new Pet Age. I plan to continue to spread the word of the new Pet Age as we continuously build new relationships and strengthen the ones we already have. This is the commitment I have made to our readers, to produce a product for the pet industry that you will want to read time and time again.

So, after you've finished reading our first issue, visit our website, <http://www.petage.com>, read the Web Extras and sign up for our weekly newsletter to make sure you know everything happening in the pet industry. Then follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ and all our other social media channels to keep up on all the latest pet news.

I am excited for the challenge ahead as we deliver the best content possible for you, not only in print, but also in all forms of digital media.

Craig Rexford
Publisher

Pet Age

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Members of: PIJAC, PIDA, American Pet Products Association, World Pet Association, BPA

PET AGE (ISSN 0098-5406) is published monthly by Journal Multimedia, 1500 Paxton St., Harrisburg, PA 17104. Phone: 717-236-2433 Fax: 717-236-6803 Printed in U.S.A. Copyright © 2012 by Journal Multimedia. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without prior written consent of the publisher. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** PET AGE is mailed at no cost to qualified members of the pet industry. Non-qualified subscriptions: \$95 per year in the U.S.; and \$160 for air mail (U.S. funds) to all other countries. Back issues are available; contact our business office for information. Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA., and additional mailing offices.



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■ Editor's Letter



Business Focused

Filled with topical articles, the latest trends and informative tips, Pet Age gives you an edge in the pet industry.

Whether it was my aunt's horse Sundown, whom I started riding when I was 12 months old, the various hamsters, turtles, toads and birds I had, despite my Dad's objections, or my 5-year-old dog, Toby, animals have always been a part of my life. In fact, before I wanted to be a journalist, I wanted to be a veterinarian.

But, then a) at a very young age my vet showed me how to take blood from a dog, and I realized it was not something I wanted to do on a daily basis, and b) I got bit by the writing bug.

Pet Age is a long way away from the municipal government world I started my journalism career in 13 years ago, but it combines my passion for writing and the pet industry, a business that I accidentally stepped into several years ago, but quickly fell in love with.

Our talented editors and designers worked tirelessly (including through a hurricane) to create a magazine that is easy for you, the reader, to follow and contains tools to help you be successful in this industry. More than 92 percent of Pet Age recipients represent retail outlets, and that stat played a major influenced in how we organized this publication.

As you page through the first issue published by Journal Multimedia, you will notice the Storefront section. Inside you will find important news, the latest pet products, a different sampling of featured items every month, management articles, as well as various columns, facts and tips to help make your business dreams come true.

Our cover stories will be topical, informative pieces, which provide insight into industry issues and trends. Speaking of trends, I'm very excited to introduce you to our Trends and Products section. Each companion animal that we cover, plus grooming, now has its own, easy-to-find section.

Toward the back of the magazine, you will enter a section appropriately titled, Community, because one of the things I learned pretty quickly that separates the pet industry from others, is the sense of community it fosters. Here, you will find photos from pet happenings around the country, a calendar of events, trade association news and a feature called the Back Story.

The Back Story is one of my favorite sections, because we get the rare opportunity to sit down with industry leaders, and tell their personal story – the philosophy behind their company, how they got started in the industry and the business lessons they learned.

Last but not least, we have a page about our website after the table of contents. There, we will be sharing many of the exciting things happening on the digital side of our publication, such as behind-the-scenes videos, blogs and our Web Extras.

We love connecting with our readers, and hope you visit our website, follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook, where we will be sharing daily industry news and business tips.

Michelle Maskaly
Editor

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Storefront

Pet industry news and management tips

MOVERS & SHAKERS



Herbsmith Hires New Sales Manager

Sarah P. Grandinetti, joined Herbsmith as an equine sales manager. Grandinetti, who has been riding and working with horses since she was 13, spent 10 years within the equine industry working at tack stores, as an equine photographer, beginner riding instructor and stable manager. She said her goal is to increase sales, and public awareness of Herbsmith, Inc. while supporting the equestrian sport.

Planet Dog's Top Dog, Gets Top Honor



Planet Dog's President **Stephanie Volo**, was named to the 2012 MaineBiz Next List as one of Maine's most innovative and inspiring business leaders. The annual recognition by Maine's leading business publication identifies 10 people shaping the future of Maine's economy.

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Steady Growth For Natural Pet Products

More large pet companies are launching natural product lines.

U.S. retail sales of natural pet products totaled \$4.1 billion in 2012, according to a recent survey released by Packaged Facts, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 17 percent over the 2008-12 period.

Helping to keep the upward trend in sales is the consumer demand for food products that are grain-free and human grade. When it comes to pet products, consumers are looking for items made by companies who are increasing their commitment to sustainable packaging and production processes.

An August 2012 Pet Owners Survey by Packaged Facts, shows 63 percent of pet owners are very concerned about the safety of the pet products they buy.

Manufacturers are well aware of the trend, and are responding to it with new product lines that they hope consumers will buy into.

According to Packages Facts, Hill's is reformulating Science Diet with a natural product line, Nestlé Purina is coming on strong with Purina One Beyond and Walmart launched Pure Balance as its first natural store brand.

Animal Supply Acquires Lone Star Pet

ANIMAL SUPPLY COMPANY acquired Schertz, Texas-based Lone Star Pet Supply.

Dennis Stahl, chairman and CEO of Lone Star Pet, and Danny Selman, president of Lone Star Pet, will become equity investors in Animal Supply. Stahl will join Animal Supply's board of directors and Selman will continue as Animal Supply's regional president for the Southwest.

"We are very excited to welcome Dennis Stahl, Danny Selman and the rest of the Lone Star Pet team to Animal Supply," Jeff Sutherland, president of Animal Supply, said. "This acquisition accelerates Animal Supply's strategy of offering innovative solutions and world-class service to our manufacturer and retail partners on a nationwide basis. Together with Lone Star Pet, we will

have over 400 associates working every day to achieve our mission of delivering success to our partners."

"I'm looking forward to joining the Animal Supply board of directors and working on our shared strategic vision of building out a truly exceptional pet distribution company, providing unique services in support of our retailer and manufacturer partners across North America," Dennis Stahl said.

The acquisition enables Animal Supply and Lone Star Pet to offer its customers and manufacturers an unmatched level of service, breadth of products and geographic reach. The combined business will now cover 20 states, represent over 300 pet product manufacturers and delivers to more than 4,000 pet retail stores.

Cat's Pride Launches New Website

OIL-DRI CORPORATION of America's Cat's Pride has designed a new, fun and interactive website, created by Doner.

Cat's Pride wanted to develop a site that was as engaging as its wildly popular Facebook page to expand the Cat's Pride community experience. This also comes as Cat's Pride expands its distribution.

The new site is playful in nature and catlike in its movement and sense of discovery. The site surprises and "reacts," using a scratching post as the metaphorical guide to navigate the browser as a cat chases a toy mouse, heralding new content along the way.

Askew in its movement, the irreverent Cat's Pride site allows users to discover something new with each visit and provides a seamless connection to the Cat's Pride Facebook page for consumers who are looking for more fun.

"One thing we've learned about our industry is that cat owners really value the full experience of interacting with their cats," Thierry Jean, vice president, general manager, consumer products at Oil-Dry; Corporation of America, said. "Through this new site, our customers can explore a cat's world while gainfully learning more about what Cat's Pride has to offer."

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Continued from p.10



Earthbath Names Eastern Territory Sales Manager

Robert Nicastro was appointed eastern territory sales manager for Earthbath. Nicastro most recently held the position of national accounts manager for Lambert Kay. He brings over 20 years of marketing, sales and business experience to his new position.

"We are very excited that Robert is joining our team here at Earthbath," Paul Armstrong, CEO and founder of Earthbath, said. "He brings with him many years of experience in the pet care industry and we feel that he will be a real asset to our company."

Exopack Executive Appointed to Board

Kevin Constantine, president of Exopack's performance paper division, was appointed to the Board of Directors for the Paper Shipping Sack Manufacturer's Association. Constantine's appointment will allow the company to cultivate relationships with Exopack's multiwall kraft paper and converting equipment suppliers, as well as providing knowledge of next generation developments in paper and sack manufacturing.

Nestlé Purina Joins HABRI Steering Committee

John Saguto, vice president, Pet Specialty Group at Nestlé Purina PetCare, is the newest addition to the Human Animal Bond Research Initiative Foundation Steering Committee. He joins 13 others in support of achieving widespread awareness of the human-animal bond and the positive roles animals have on human health.

Have an item for possible inclusion in our Movers & Shakers column? Email it to michellem@journalmultimedia.com with the subject line Movers and Shakers



Lambert Kay Gives Away One Year Supply of Products

The contest served as a new way to help support the grooming industry.

Lambert Kay gave away a year's worth of Fresh 'n Clean products to Tamara Muslin, owner of San Clemente and Dana Point Grooming and Pet Spas in California.

The contest was held at SuperZoo in September where Lambert Kay introduced some of its newest Fresh 'n Clean products to the grooming community. To enter the contest, the Lambert Kay team scanned badges of grooming professionals interested in entering and selected the winner by random after returning from the show.

"I have to admit, I was skeptical when I first heard I'd won the contest," Muslin said. "I thought there was a catch, but there wasn't. I'm really excited to try

something new in my spas. We groom nearly 600 pets at each location and groom many dogs with allergies. I'm curious to see how my staff and clients like Fresh 'n Clean products."

Lambert Kay had a great deal of interest in its Fresh 'n Clean contest, collecting around 60 entries.

"The contest was a new way for us to support the grooming community and continue to introduce groomers to some of our newer products," Alyssa Guertin, communications manager for Animal Health Products at Lambert Kay, said. "We look forward to hearing from Tamara and her team on what they think and how clients enjoy the long-lasting scent of Fresh 'n Clean."

Certification Program Offered In Lodging

OUTSTANDING Pet Care University, an online provider of education and training, is offering a certification program for pet lodging facilities and pet care professionals.

Outstanding Pet Care University purchased the educational assets of the Pet Care Services Association, previously the American Boarding Kennel Association, and has updated, revised and expanded the program to provide education, training and support to the growing pet lodging and pet care industry.

"We believe that pets are best cared for in top-quality pet lodging facilities that provide the expertise, qualified staff, services, resources and systems to ensure their comfort and safety," Joanne Morris, executive director of OPCU and vice president of Morris Animal Inn in New Jersey, said. "Leaving a loved pet in the home of a stranger or in the care of someone without

proper pet care training hardly gives pet owners the peace of mind they deserve when traveling or working."

OPCU certification will help pet owners identify professionals who are qualified to care for their dogs and cats. A national online directory will connect pet owners to lodging facilities and animal caregivers in their own areas.

OPCU is launching its curriculum with a Level One certification that is designed for all pet care technicians. Advanced levels will become available in January 2013. Courses will include canine and feline behavior, security of pets, immunizations, zoonotic diseases, nutrition and more.

"Caring for pets is a privilege but one that comes with great responsibility," Morris said. "We want to help pet lodging facilities and pet care professionals provide the best care possible for our furry best friends and peace of mind for their owners."

Dog Show Gets Best Ratings in 8 Years

"**THE NATIONAL DOG SHOW** Presented By Purina," broadcasted from noon to 2 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day received its highest rating in eight years, according to Nielsen.

The rating is an 11 percent increase over last year's rating and the best since the broadcast did a 5.3 national household rating in 2004. The double-digit percentage increase comes against competition from NFL football and other live and first-run programming on a clear weather day through most of the country.

Among the top-rated markets were Knoxville (11.9), West Palm Beach (10.7), Buffalo (10.1), and Oklahoma City (10.0). In New York City, America's largest market, the rating was 6.4.

"These great dogs were the big stars this Thanksgiving weekend," said Jon Miller, president of pro-

gramming for NBC Sports and NBC Sports Network, who created the show in 2002. "Let's remember, more than 40 million American homes have dogs. Men, women and children salute their best friend."

The special, hosted by television personality John O'Hurley of "Seinfeld" fame and prominent canine expert David Frei, featured Best in Show competition among 1,500 of America's show dogs along with features and vignettes on interesting breeds and pet health and wellness.

"The National Dog Show Presented by Purina" is hosted by the Kennel Club of Philadelphia, which staged its first show in 1876 and has operated the Philadelphia shows annually since 1933. It takes place each November at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center.

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New Store Partners With Vet

The partnership will give customers access to holistic veterinary care.

Living Pawsitively, a new pet store in Lafayette, N.J., is partnering with a local veterinarian to provide pets and their owners a holistic approach to veterinary care.

Jan Hopper said her store offers unique pet accessories that are made from organic materials and pet food items that are made with all-natural ingredients.

The store's "Barkery" offers an assortment of homemade dog biscuits and treats that are prepared from all-natural components. They also provide a variety of services, including training classes.

"We are very glad to open Living Pawsitively to serve pet owners in New Jersey," Hopper said. "The pet food that we sell and the treats that we offer are all-natural, meaning there is no soy, by-products or fillers. We also work with local animal shelters to help those who are interested in adopting a pet."



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NEWS BRIEFS

Pet Insurance Plan Offers New Coverage for Cancer Treatments

Pets Best Insurance launched a new, low-cost plan designed to help owners afford life-saving, though often expensive, cancer treatments for their pet.

The Cancer Only plan offers coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of malignant cancers, including chemotherapy, MRIs, examinations, blood work, surgeries, medications and other cancer-related expenses.

Cancer is responsible for nearly half of deaths among pets older than 10, with dogs experiencing the disease at about the same rate as humans, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. Treatments can cost thousands of dollars, and is considered one of the most expensive medical conditions among pets.

"Our Cancer Only plan is especially valuable for people who have older pets or breeds that are more susceptible to cancer," said Dr. Jack Stephens, the founder and president of Pets Best Insurance. "While pet cancer often went untreated years ago, the disease is no longer a death sentence for animals. Veterinary oncology is an expand-

ing field, and Pets Best is proud to play a role in making advanced cancer treatments more affordable for pet owners across the nation."

Pets Best Insurance has offered comprehensive coverage since 2005 for pet accidents and illnesses, including cancer. They developed their new Cancer Only plan to provide customers with budget-friendly coverage options.

Exopack Creates New Manufacturing Center of Excellence

Exopack established a new manufacturing center of excellence for its pet food business in Spartanburg, S.C.

This move follows the completion of the closure of Exopack's Seymour, Ind., plant and the consolidation of Seymour's manufacturing assets to Spartanburg and various other Exopack facilities. By balancing assets with current market conditions, Exopack now has a differentiated manufacturing platform, driven by continuous improvement initiatives focused on operational and customer service excellence.

Continued on p.17

Pet Supplies Plus Opens New Store



THE NORTHERN NEW JERSEY town of Fair Lawn is home to the newest Pet Supplies Plus store, offering natural pet food, grooming services and equipment for a wide variety of animals.

Customers at Pet Supplies Plus will find a huge array of natural pet food that does not contain any chemically synthetic additives, artificial preservatives or any fillers or animal byproducts often found in non-natural pet food.

The store prides itself on having an expert staff, made-in-the-USA products and will feature regular public pet adoptions.

CAT TOYS



GOOD DEEDS

PrideBites Donates to spcaLA

More than 150 dog toys were donated to the spcaLA as part of PrideBites' "Buy a Toy, Help Save a Dog" campaign. PrideBite is currently looking for its next shelter to donate to.

To nominate one, email Sean Knecht at sean@pridebites.com. For information about the give back program visit, www.pridebites.com

\$25,000 in Pet Food Distributed to Sandy Victims

Stella & Chewy's teamed up with Bideawee and The Mayor's Alliance for NYC Animals to provide \$25,000 worth of their dog and cat food products to those impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

"This storm has caused a lot of distress in our community and taken so much away from so many," said Marie Moody, founder and president of Stella & Chewy's, who began her business almost 10 years ago in her New York City kitchen.

World's Best Cat Litter Helps Shelters During Hurricane Emergency

World's Best Cat Litter donated 30,000 pounds of cat litter to those impacted by Hurricane Sandy through a special GiveLitter charity effort.

The Manhattan-based Animal Haven, and the Eatontown, N.J.-based Monmouth County SPCA, both received 15,000 pounds. Animal Haven was without power for nearly a week after the hurricane, and Monmouth County SPCA, was running on emergency generators.

While GiveLitter campaigns are usually scheduled in advance, the company reached out to these two shelters to make sure this special donation of free litter was delivered quickly to meet their dire need for supplies after the storm.

Have an item for possible inclusion in our Good Deeds column? Email it to michellem@journalmultimedia.com with the subject line Good Deeds.



BUSINESS WIRE

Animal Care & Control of NYC shelter dog Huey is treated to an early Christmas as pet charity Rock & Rawhide, in conjunction with Petco Foundation, releases over 10,000 tennis balls to shelter dogs.

Tennis Ball Campaign Benefits Shelter Pets

A portion of the donation also went to shelters who were impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

In an effort to generate pet adoption awareness, the nonprofit Rock & Rawhide released 10,000 tennis balls for animals to play with during an event at Animal Care & Control in New York City.

A portion of the tennis ball donation were also distributed to other shelters in the tri-state area that were impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

"We wanted to help our furrever friends by increasing awareness of the fact that anyone can go to these facilities and adopt a loving dog or cat," Sean-Patrick M. Hillman, president & co-founder of, Rock & Rawhide said. "We are hoping the pet food and supply deliveries to storm-ravaged areas will help families care for their pets so they won't have to surrender them."

The balls were the result of a program at Petco in Union Square that in conjunction with the Petco Foundation, set out to raise 3,000 tennis balls.

"We have been working with Rock & Rawhide for almost six months," Josh Axelband, general manager of the Petco in Union Square, "Their creative ability to increase awareness of the need of adoptions is something that I have seen firsthand. It lines up with Petco and Petco Foundation's mission to help local shelters and rescues with adoptions, especially with their limited resources after the impact of Hurricane Sandy."

In addition, Rock & Rawhide, along with organizations like the Petco Foundation and the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, delivered over 75,000 pounds of pet food and supplies to hurricane ravaged areas in Staten Island, Long Island, Breezy Point and New Jersey.

"Rock & Rawhide has been a tremendous supporter of AC&C, donating nearly \$50,000 worth of pet supplies," Richard Gentles of Animal Care & Control said.

NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from p.15

Completion of this nearly \$6.5 million project provides the Spartanburg facility with increased printing and converting capacity and broadens its substrate diversity. It complements Exopack's recent investments in pet food, including a Starlinger woven polypropylene converting cell and a Comexi 10-color, gearless quick change press for the Spartanburg plant and two Totani Flat Bottom Quad Seal converting lines and two B&B Quad Seal converting lines in Tomah, Wisc.

Katie's Bumpers Partners With Gralen Company

As Katie's Bumpers celebrates 10 years of being in business and making products in Colorado, they also announced a partnership with the Gralen Company in California to be the master distributor for all of Katie's Bumpers toys.

The change will give Katie's Bumpers the flexibility and time to create more products, while keeping their commitment to excellent customer service.

PrideBites Announces New Partnerships

PrideBites formed regional distributor partnerships with Companion Pet Products, BERR Pet Supply and Waterloo Mills Company that will help expand its line into the West Coast and Mid-West region.

The company will also be partnering with 5 Star Marketing for sales representation in the South.

PrideBites said they are looking to strategically align its brand with some of the top and most reputable distributors and sales representatives in the industry and think these groups are a perfect fit.

Kurgo Harness Passes Crash Test

The Kurgo Enhanced Strength harness recently passed a crash-test performed by an accredited university test facility that simulated a 35-pound dog traveling in a car at a rate of 30 mph.

Upon impact, the harnessed crash-test dog remained strapped in the harness while the unrestrained crash-test dog launched into the front of the vehicle. To see the test video visit, <http://tinyurl.com/bukem6a>.

The harness features five custom adjustments, chest pads and seat belt hooks to provide proper control and safety for your pets.

"Our Enhanced Strength harnesses are engineered to safely restrain dogs in moving vehicles," Gordie Spater, president of Kurgo, said. "This keeps driver distraction to a minimum with dogs properly restrained in the event of a quick turn or accident."

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✕ EDITORS'S PICK



Off/On Squeaker from KONG

The Off/On Squeaker is perfect for dogs who like playing with squeaker toys, and consumers who hate the sound. Equipped with an "off" button, it allows owners to turn the noise off when they've had enough, while still letting the pet play with the toy. Although the Off/On Squeaker appears to be made with a surface similar to a tennis ball, its rubber is thicker, and covered with a non-abrasive felt material, making it ideal for all dogs, from puppies with super-sharp teeth, to adult dogs with strong jaws.

Website

<http://www.kongcompany.com>

Twitter

@KONGCompany



PooYah!

A formulation of all-natural ingredients ground and blended together, PooYah! will immediately adhere to the exposed surface of poop to form an outer, crusty barrier. It absorbs surface moisture immediately, as well as smell. PooYah! also contains natural insecticides to stop flies.

Website

<http://www.pooyah.com>



Rascals Fleec-e-Friends from Coastal Pet Products

Available in a squirrel, raccoon and owl, these toys are the perfect comforting canine companions. Woolly and whimsical, these toys are colorful with detailed facial expressions and tails plus a squeaker in the tummy.

Website

<http://www.coastalpet.com>

Sport Balls by KONG

KONG's Sport Ball is covered in rubber and is bouncier than a tennis ball. It comes in four styles, basketball, baseball, soccer ball and 8 ball. They are covered in a polyester felt-like material which is gentle on a dog's teeth. It comes in three sizes.

Website

<http://www.kongcompany.com>

Twitter @KONGCompany



Resultix by Bayer HealthCare

This simple spray-on formula that kills attached or crawling ticks is available in 20 mL bottles. Two sprays of Resultix will dissolve the outer wax layer that covers the hard shell of the tick, resulting in uncontrollable water loss and death of the tick. The tick dies within three hours and may either fall off the dog or cat, or be immobile when removed.

Website

<http://www.bayer-ah.com>



Green by Northmate from The Company of Animals

Green is an innovative turf placemat that not only lets your animal have fun while they eat, but also slows down their eating habits. After scattering a handful of two, of kibble across the deeply sculpted surface, it forces the dog to search for the food and stops the dog from eating so fast which could lead to vomiting, choking, bloat and digestive issues. Green is also made of a durable plastic that's phthalate-free and it's 100 percent pet, and dishwasher safe.

Website

<http://www.companyofanimals.us>

Twitter @COAnimals_US





Designer Dog Beds From Duroque

The West Hollywood, Calif. boutique, Duroque's new line of designer dog beds include 12 ready-to-purchase beds that can be customized with over 500 fabrics, a wide variety of nail heads, fasteners and Swarovski crystals.

Website

<http://www.duroque.com>



New Bowls from ModaPet

Adding three new colors to its expanding line of Italian design-inspired food and water bowls, Sapphire, Green with Envy and Cool Azul, are BPA-free and feature non-slip bases to help keep bowls in place while pets eat.

Website

<http://www.modapet.net>

Twitter

@modapet



New Dog Carriers by Pet Flies

The Bon Ami Tote comes in four designs that include air vents, a side mesh window, two cargo pockets, a zipper compartment, a locking horseshoe window, paw print metal feet, pass-through feature for telescoping luggage, a convertible mesh top, two mats and a blanket. The totes are airline approved and will accommodate pets up to 16 pounds. Dimensions are 16 inches in length, 11 inches in height and 8 inches in width.

Website

<http://www.petflys.com>

Twitter

@petflys



AnimAlarm

Primarily designed for transporting dogs, it can also be used for any purpose where temperature needs to be measured. If the temperature measures too high or too low, AnimAlarm will instantly

alert your cell phone via SMS message.

Website

<http://www.animalarm.co.uk/>

Twitter

@animalarm_uk

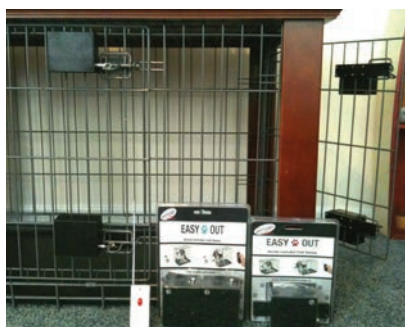


Rascals Floppy Big Mouth Toys from Coastal Pet Products

These toys are soft and colorful with red floppy tongues, plush paws and tails, and a squeaker. They are available in lion, monkey, hippo and alligator.

Website

<http://www.coastalpet.com>



Easy Out by PetGadgets

Easy Out allows owners to release their pet from several floors, or up to 50 yards, away using a small remote control. Owners can control when their pet is released, and instead of just door openings it works on crates, pens, and most other latched enclosures or containment areas.

Website

<http://www.petgadgets.com>

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With stronger UVB and brighter light, these are twice as strong as the standard T8 ReptiSun, making it a good choice for larger reptile habitats. Made in Germany, these lamps help prevent or reverse metabolic bone disease commonly seen in captive reptiles.



Website

<http://www.zoomed.com>

Twitter

@zoomeds

Home Grooming Kits for Dogs and Cats by Scaredy Cut

Scaredy Cut has an eight-piece kit that makes in-home grooming for dogs and cats easy. Simple and silent, Scaredy Cut kits eliminate the anxiety and discomfort caused by buzzing electric clippers.

Website

<http://www.scaredycut.com>



Moonlight Reptile Bulbs by Zoo Med

These bulbs simulate night time "moonlight" allowing for good terrarium viewing and heating of nocturnal animals, while not disturbing an animal's sleeping pattern. They are European quality for a long burn life.

Website

<http://www.zoomed.com>

Twitter

@zoomed



Exo Terra Turtle Filter FX-200 by Hagen

The Exo Terra Turtle Filter FX-200 is designed for the special filtration needs of turtle terrariums, Hagen's Exo Terra Turtle Filter FX-200 provides maximum ammonia absorption for odor elimination and crystal clear water. It also has a spray bar system that provides water aeration for better oxygenation and circulation.

Website

<http://www.hagen.com>

Twitter

@rolfc_hagen_inc

Flavored Natural Rawhide Ring Refills for Busy Buddy from PetSafe

Peanut butter and sweet potato are the newest flavors of natural rawhide treat ring refills for Busy Buddy toys. Each package of treat ring refills includes 16 rings for eight full playtime sessions. Treat rings are also available in natural rawhide and bacon flavored cornstarch options.



Website

<http://www.petsafe.net/>

Twitter

@petsafe

Chase-It toy for Dogs by KONG

KONG's Chase-It toy is a 2-in-1 teaser wand toy made specifically for dogs. It is designed to satisfy a dog's natural instincts towards prey. A minimally-stuffed critter hangs from the end of the cord suspended on a long, flexible pole, allowing the dog owners to simulate live prey that moves.

Website

<http://www.kongcompany.com>

Twitter

@KONGCompany





Comfort Soft Sport Wrap Harness by Coastal Pet Products

With a sporty, yet cool, feel this new wrap has a stylish appeal, and is available in pink, blue, black and red. These harnesses feature a gray mesh overlay and the medium, as well as large, sizes are reinforced for extra strength.

Website

<http://www.coastalpet.com>

Simply Venison by Stella & Chewy's

A single-source protein formula, this dinner is offered in two sizes of freeze-dried and two sizes of frozen. It is made of 90 percent venison with organic fruits and vegetables, and enhanced with vitamins, minerals and probiotics.

Website

<http://www.stellaandchewys.com>

Twitter

@stellachewys



Fluval Spec V

Nano Aquarium by Hagen

The larger, yet still compact 5.6-gallon aquarium has a slim profile, but is more horizontally elongated, allowing for twice as much water and 10" more aquarium space while still maintaining the ability to fit on a 12" wide shelf, or narrow table

Website

<http://www.hagen.com> @rolfc_hagen_inc



Field & Stream Flea and Tick products by Hartz

Designed with the rugged outdoor enthusiast in mind, these products for dogs are made in the USA, and include topical treatments, collars, shampoos and a spray.

Website

<http://www.hartz.com>

Twitter

@hartzpets



SHOUT Branded Line of Cleaning Products by PetSmart

Designed specifically for the needs of pet owners, this cleaning line provides pet owners with stain fighting power to battle messes on a variety of different surfaces.

Website

<http://www.petsmart.com> @PetSmart

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PoopPac

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Website

<http://www.pooppac.com>

Twitter @pooppac



Auggiedog

Weighing 2.8 pounds, the Auggiedog can be easily carried on a walk, and can be used on grass, pavement and tile floors. To pick up waste, lower the barrel opening over the poop, select the "collect and lift" switch, and push the "pickup/release" button. To dispose of waste, put it over a waste container or toilet, select "empty lower" switch and push the "pickup/release" button. The product will rotate and eject the waste.

Website

<http://www.auggiedog.com>

Twitter @auggiedogday



DoggieDooley

The Doggie Dooley works like a miniature septic tank, using natural bacteria and enzyme cultures to reduce dog waste to a ground absorbed liquid. Shovel poop into the system, occasionally add water and the Digester Powder to create an environmentally friendly way to dispose of pet waste. Each unit comes with a starter 6 month supply of the powder.

Website

<http://www.doggiedooley.com>

Flush Puppies

Made from polyvinyl alcohol, a water soluble, eco-friendly alternative to plastic, Flush Puppies doodie bags are 100 percent biodegradable and flushable. The bags are 8"x10", which can typically accommodate a dog up to 75 pounds. They are safe for both septic and sewer systems.

Website

<http://www.flushpuppies.com>

Twitter

@flushpuppies



Looper Scooper

The loop design, by Emanuele Bianchi Designs, insures waste bag dispensers stay in place. Available in 12 colors of soft polyurethane.

Website

<http://www.petego.com>

Twitter

@petegoEBdesign





Petmate's Clean Response

Easy to use, simply add a liner to the bucket, set the bucket next to the waste and use the rake to move it into the pan. The bag can then be removed and disposed of with no mess.

Website

<http://www.petmate.com>

Twitter

@PetmateProducts



Clean Go Pet The Poop Snoop II

This lighted waste bag holder has a built-in LED light that makes nighttime cleanup easy. One roll of 20 black waste bags are included.

Website

<http://www.petedge.com> @petedge

Nandog Waste Bags

The Nandog Pet Gear's printed bags come in a variety of prints and in packages of eight, 16, or 24 rolls per package. The soft, silky and smooth textured, waste bags are scented with Nandog Pet Gear's fragrance, and folded in bundles of 20 bags per roll and will fit any standard dispenser.

Website

<http://www.nandog.com>

Twitter

@nandogpetgear

Earth Rated PoopBags

Earth Rated PoopBags are an environmentally friendly way to pick up dog waste. There are 120 scented and sturdy biodegradable bags on each roll.

Website

<http://earthrated.com>

Twitter

@greenpoopbags



AnimalsINK Bag Dispensers

The bag dispensers are dog shaped with clips to attach to your dog's collar, leash or your belt loops.

Website

<http://www.AnimalsINK.com>



The Shabby Dog's Tote Bag

Part of the Sandradee Collection, these genuine Italian black leather bags featuring Swarovski crystals, hand-painted edges and matching hand stitching makes picking up poop stylish. Available in blue, clear, pink or yellow, they are perfect for discreetly carrying poop bags.

Website

<http://www.theshabbydog.com>



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The Inventory Guessing Game

Many pet retailers are animal lovers, causing them to be susceptible to making inventory choices based on heart, rather than data.

BY DAN CALABRESE

For many pet retailers, decisions about inventory come down to a matter of space.

You have a certain number of square feet in which you want to display chew toys. So you procure enough chew toys to fill the space – and your retail floor looks the way you want it to look.

But often, your cash flow doesn't. That's because every item in inventory represents cash that's been converted into non-cash, and is waiting to be converted back into cash. Experts in retail inventory management say it's a common mistake of retailers to make inventory decisions by sight or by feel, rather than by hard data. And the only data that really matters, they say, is sales data.

"What we typically see is that they're over-inventoried," Ani Collum, a partner with CITY-based Retail Concepts,

said. "And that they don't have the right handle on what is the right amount of inventory they need to turn the sales so their floor and their back room isn't over-inventoried."

Decisions about how much of each item to procure must be tied to sales figures.

"Say dry pet food represents 15 percent of your sales, but it represents 45 percent of your inventory," Collum said. "That would indicate you need to cut back on the amount you buy. At the same time, dog collars for whatever reason are doing 10 percent of your sales volume but they're only one percent of your inventory. You need to go get more dog collars."

A useful method might be to break down inventory by classification – possibly pet food, accessories, clothing, treats, etc. – and then analyze within each classification the percentage of inventory on hand, and its relation to sales.

That seems obvious enough, but many retailers have trouble managing through the process, especially when sales patterns change along with seasons.

"There are different cash flow cycles, so in July and August, when you're purchasing all your fall and holiday goods, you've got cash that's tied up in inventory," Collum said. "Payroll and things like that become much more tricky. In January, you've gone through all this so hopefully you have cash on hand. But if it's just sitting on your floor taking up time, energy and space, you can't convert it to cash, and you need cash to run your business."

According to Ted Hurlbut, a retailer consultant, retailers often get tripped up over the fear that too little of an item in inventory will cost them sales.

"They've merchandised their stores," Hurlbut said. "They like the way the stores look, and they're doing business but they're chronically short on cash, or to put it another way, they're short on working capital. They've got too much of what they don't need and not enough of what they do."

But if inventory should be based on sales, how does a retailer just getting started know what sales will be? Hurlbut said there are ways of answering that question that are more sophisticated than merely trying to guess.

"It's taking the knowledge you do have and making estimates and establishing benchmarks, then measuring how you're doing against those benchmarks,"

Decisions about how much of each item to procure must be tied to sales figures.

Hurlbut said. "Before long, you're evolving from estimating to developing some really insightful forecasts."

The newly established pet retailer can also gain insight by asking established stores what how they seen in their own sales patterns. Not that your competitor up the street will necessarily share that information with you, but you can probably find someone, somewhere, perhaps in a different part of the country where you wouldn't have to worry about com-

petitive considerations, who would.

"Maybe you've been to some trade shows and you've connected with some key vendors, and they can help you based on their knowledge and contacts to develop a set of initial sales plans that you can work off," Hurlbut said. "But it's got to come from somewhere; otherwise you're just throwing stuff against the wall to see what sticks."

If struggles with inventory management are more prevalent than usual in the pet retailing industry, it may ironically be a product to some degree of pet retailers' passion for what they do. In a lot of industries, people with cold, hard profit-driven brains, get into the business solely because they see an opportunity and know how to convert it into cash. How many people do you see in the manhole cover industry who is really passionate about manholes?

But many pet retailers are huge animal lovers, and that's why they get into the business. Is there anything wrong with that? Not in and of itself, but if their love of animals was the sole motivator for them to open a pet retail operation – and didn't come with a commensurate base of business knowledge – such people might be susceptible to making inventory choices based on their heart rather than on data.

That doesn't mean passion for pets is all bad – not at all. It just means you still need to be able to make rational business decisions in the pursuit of your passion.

"I have a client that is deeply passionate about fly fishing," Hurlbut said. "And the real business driver is that passion, because customers respond to that passion. But that doesn't mean there's a complete skill set in place. The challenge of these retailers is being able to develop the quantitative analysis to apply the concepts."

Dan Calabrese is a freelance journalist and syndicated columnist based in Wyoming, Mich. He covers a wide variety of industries, including pet retailing, trucking, logistics, railroading, construction and economics. Visit his website at www.northstarwriters.com to learn more about him.

Business Visionaries

Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc. celebrates 175 years in business with retailer sweepstakes.

BY MICHELLE MASKALY



Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc.'s headquarters in Bermen, Germany.

When Brent Weinmann graduated from Bowling Green State University in the mid-1980s, he wasn't ready to settle into a full-time job, so he took a temporary position filling bags with bird seed at a local company called Sunseed.

Little did he know then, the company that gave him the flexibility at the time to earn some money, while being able to

explore other interests, would also be the business he would eventually go on to purchase, sell and grow into what is now known as Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc.

"In those days, the pet industry was growing like crazy," Weinmann, who serves as president and CEO of Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc., who is celebrating their 175th anniversary, said. "The bird business was very strong. It was a combi-

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Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc.'s original offices in Germany when they started.

nation of good timing and good fortune on my part.”

Weinmann eventually purchased Sunseed in 2001, and then made the decision to sell it in 2007 to Vitakraft – a family owned business in Germany whose roots go back five generations.

“That [it was a family owned business] was part of the appeal,” he explained. “At first, I wasn’t interested, but when I saw what they could offer and felt where we could take both brands, I got excited, and it’s been quite a good ride since.”

Weinmann shuns away from taking credit for having the vision to bring the company to where it is today. He says a major factor in what has helped make Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc. so successful is listening to, and working with, the retailers -- which, he says, is why when they decided to mark their 175th anniversary with a year-long celebration, they focused on the retailers.

The sweepstakes, which was open to only pet industry retailers, had prizes that featured everything from full-store displays and t-shirts with the store’s logo, to the grand prize, which was a trip to Germany for the winners to visit the parent company, where they would meet with other European retailers to share ideas, best practices and see how business is done there.

“We are a manufacturer, and the retailers are our focus,” Weinmann said, explaining why they decided to limit the contest to those in the pet industry. “Let’s celebrate with the people who have helped build our business. We are nowhere without our distributors and retailers.”

Having a pet store background himself, Les Gonda founded Sunseed in part to help solve a problem retailers were dealing with for a very long time – bug infestation. He borrowed technology from human food manufacturing, and began safely injecting nitro-

gen gas, which displaced the oxygen and helped eliminate bug infestation, a technique that is commonplace today.

Gonda was also one of the first people to utilize the concept of putting bird seed behind glass and instead of just dumping it into large garbage cans and letting people scoop it out from there.

“I was fortunate that Les had big ideas and I enjoyed taking those ideas and making them commercially viable,” Weinmann said, who was quickly moved up to the front office, and eventually became part of Gonda’s vision for the company. “As he grew older, he was looking for a retirement plan, but he wanted to keep the com-

pany with the people who grew it.”

That same commitment to the business, and how the owner was very much still engaged and loved talking about product and innovation, was something he saw in Vitakraft’s leadership.

Sunseed was already doing private label packaging for Vitakraft when they approached Weinmann in late 2007 about selling the business, after realizing they needed a bigger U.S. facility if they really wanted to make a dent in the U.S. market.

“I went and saw their quality control measures, and was impressed it was family run even at 170 years into their business. The owner was a real pet product guy, and I felt that I could work with them. I wasn’t looking to sell the business, but after seeing what they could bring in terms of ideas and resources, I made the decision.”

Innovation and having a long-term vision has been critical to the success of the company.

“In the ‘80s it was easy to grow by just being in business, but the competition intensifies and you have to find ways to differentiate yourself from the competition,” Weinmann said. “You can do that

“Let’s celebrate with the people who have helped build our business. We are nowhere without our distributors and retailers.”

through innovation and product packaging, marketing strategy and figuring out how to reach the consumer better by working with retailers to make it easier to sell to the consumer. It's innovation that drives a business forward, and has been a driving factor behind our company."

So after 175 years in business, what's next for Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc.?

"The consumer's expectation level is increasing more and more," he said. "Just the fact that they are more knowledgeable and are reading more about hamster nutrition is an example. And, there is a lot of information being shared among hamster parents. We need to be the ones that are leading that charge when it comes to things like nutritional development and making longer lasting bedding so it makes it easier for pet owners."

Go to www.petage.com to read about Brent Weinmann's advice to young pet industry professionals who are looking to move up in the business, as well as his top five business tips.

BIO

Brent Weinmann

President and CEO Vitakraft Sunseed Company Inc.

Age: 49

Education: Bowling Green State University, Finance Degree and MBA

Years in the Pet Business: 27

Outside the Office: Loves to travel for business and with his family. Plays disc golf.

Fun Fact: After he graduated from college he backpacked through Europe for six months.



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Pet Age





It's All About the Numbers

Keeping good records now will help in the future.

BY DAVE RATNER

Boy, have I had a busy couple of days. Today, I signed the lease for store number seven. This one was supposed to be an 8,000-square-foot store in a very busy shopping center that is anchored by a grocery store. The space is 10,000-square-foot but the auto parts store on the left wanted an extra 2,000-feet so the landlord was going to demise the space and give me the 8,000.

Last week I got a call from the landlord, "we have a deal for you." OK, I said, "whatya got?"

Well, the auto parts store was demanding so much and cost of building the demising wall was so much that the landlord told me I could have the extra 2,000 feet...FREE! Great was my first thought! Sure, I will take the space, thanks for thinking of me. Then it hit me, my whole plan for the store changed.

Instead of just putting in racks and selling food and supplies with, are you ready, no fish, I was thrown right back into opening a full line pet store (no puppies or kittens). And, instead of the 8 percent payroll, I am back to a 10 or 11 percent payroll. I felt like Al Pacino in the "Godfather III" complaining I want to get out and they keep pulling me back in.

Well, then I had to meet with my banker to go over what it is going to cost to open the store. He has been through this with me a bunch of times and I have a long and great relationship with him, so I was spared the questions and projections and what ifs etc. While I was talking to him, I was thinking of

this article. I get so many emails and phone calls from folks thinking about opening another store.

Here is some advice.

If you have a business and don't borrow from a bank, start borrowing from

"I don't have to tell you the worst mistake you can make is to be undercapitalized. Always ask for more than you think you need."

a bank. You need to develop a relationship with them so if the time comes when you need money, they know you and they know you can run a successful business.

Make sure you have financial numbers for them. I promise, you will never get a loan if you don't have professional looking financial statements. Have your accountant prepare your year-end statements. They will know what the bank looks for. Trust me, a banker does not want to hear you made a gazillion dollars but it was all cash. Bankers are under such scrutiny, they have just about no leeway -- it's all about the numbers and your reputation in the community. The banker wants to feel assured they are going to get paid back.

If you are thinking of expanding or opening a new store have your account-

ant help you draw up cash flow projections and what you will need to get going. In my experience, a bank will make two loans if you can prove your endeavor makes sense. The first loan will be for the fixed assets such as rack-ing, point-of-sale system, store fixtures and signage and build out.

The second part is a loan for inventory and start-up costs like advertising, promotions and some extra cash for the period it takes before the store's "cash flows." Most banks will loan you on a percentage of the value of your inventory at cost. The bad news is, that figure is about 50 to 65 percent of your cost. So if you need \$100,000 in inventory, chances are the bank will agree to loan you about \$60,000. See if your banker will let you borrow that money as a credit line so you are never paying the principal, just interest.

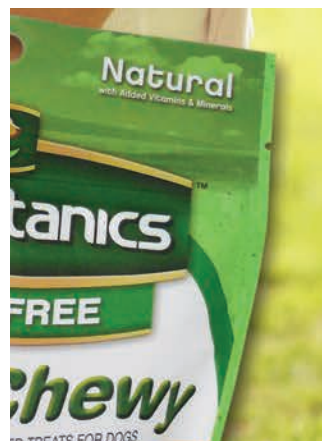
I used to be guilty of being too shy when I would go to the bank. I don't have to tell you the worst mistake you can make is to be undercapitalized. Always ask for more than you think you need. All they can say is no. I can also tell you from experience whatever you think it will cost you add at least 30 percent to your budget. Ever hear of Murphy's Law? You will if you don't have enough money to ride out the storm!

A successful retailer, Dave Ratner is the owner of Dave's Soda & Pet City an award winning seven store mini-chain. Dave sits on the Board of the Retail Advertising and Marketing Association, and the National Retail Federation.

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Just Selling Online Is Not Enough

Cross-selling and up-selling has the potential to make your profits jump.

BY KEN LEVY

Anyone who has spent more than 10 minutes shopping online knows product recommendations are gaining a major foothold in the world of online retailing.

Amazon makes \$19,000 every minute from cross-selling and up-selling items that similar shoppers have liked, viewed or bought. Large retailers like REI and Nordstrom have been employing this highly lucrative form of merchandising for years, but similar options for smaller businesses have generally been limited.

Recently, there has been an explosion of options for smaller businesses that want to use the same recommendation methods as national retailers to help drive conversion and profitability.

Here are a few key questions to ask when considering implementing recommendations:

Do you have at least 100 products?

Do you introduce new products frequently?

Does your analytics indicate that your site is getting traffic that isn't translating into sales?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then it's a good time to look into a recommendations solution.

Many retailers begin by using the manual recommendation tool that came with their shopping cart solution. Manual recommendations meet a shopper's expectations for a typical online experience, but they have some inherent problems and these can mul-

tiply as your product line gets larger. Some of these issues include:

- They can be extremely time consuming to manage, since they require an employee to link and merchandise products.

- The addition of new products to your store requires you to change your recommendations to keep up to date. If you run out of the product, there's no way to adjust for the change.

"There has been an explosion of options for smaller businesses that want to use the same recommendation methods as national retailers to help drive conversion and profitability."

- They're static – they are the same for every shopper and the same for every page view.

- These types of recommendations don't show shoppers other products in your catalog that they are likely to purchase and are limited in their ability to cross-sell or up-sell items.

Automated recommendations can provide higher conversion rates and save the time and expense of a dedicated employee, but they require an initial investment in the technology. Designed to

provide a personalized shopping experience, capable of supporting new products with appropriate recommendations the day they are introduced, they offer a range of advantages:

- Automating the process of cross-selling and up-selling is proven to enhance profitability more than manual recommendations.

- They're dynamic – They continually change the product offerings based on each click a shopper makes.

- They can be combined with business rules to automatically create the recommendations that you want. For instance, they can allow exclusions so if a person is looking for products for a dog, automated recommendations will only show dog products rather than similar cat items.

Whether you choose a free manual recommendation tool or feel it's time to move to the advantages of an automated recommendation solution, recommendations help your online shoppers navigate through product categories while also allowing them to see what others searching for similar products have bought.

Ken Levy, PhD, is CEO and co-founder of 4-Tell, a technology company that increases sales for online retailers with personalized cross-sell and up-sell products. An acknowledged thought leader, Ken is passionate about helping merchants provide online shoppers the best experience possible. You can reach him at Ken@4-Tell.com or by visiting www.4-Tell.com.

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Pet Age





JONNY MENDELSSON

Spoiling Other People's Pets

As more people purchase pet products as gifts for their friends, your customer is no longer just pet owners.

BY JASON KAMERY

When it comes to deciding what to stock, pet retail stores know dog food is going to be one of, if not the number one, item that is going to bring in the money. But, another segment of the industry has started to carve a dent in that.

The 2012-13 Pet Age Retailer Report shows dog supplies and accessories surpassed dog food as the top gross income source among the retailers surveyed.

Retailers attribute the rise in sales of dog supplies and accessories partly to the changing consumer.

Lesley Bowers, the owner of P.U.P.S. (Pawsitively Unique Pet Shop) in Lewes, Del. said she has seen an increase in customers who are not necessarily pet owners, but are buying items for friends and family who have pets.

"People come in and say, 'I don't know what to get them anymore, but they adore their pets, so I'm going to get them something for their pet,'" Bowers said. "I also get a lot of grandparents who come in and say, 'I don't have a dog, but I have a granddog, and I have to get my Christmas shopping done for my granddog.'"

This demographic has increased quite a bit since she started her business eight years ago.

"It's way more than when I started," Bowers said. "I would say about 25 percent of the people who come into the store that talk to me about this are non-pet owners. Eight years ago it was more like five percent."

Combine that trend with the recession, and pet industry experts are not surprised dog supplies came out on top

during the latest report.

"In many cases, folks who still have pets that have been with them during the difficult last few years are slowly becoming able to thank them for helping the owners cope with the stress," Bob Vetere, president of the American Pet Products Association, said. "Since many of us have humanized our pets, these 'thank you's' have to be meaningful to us in human terms and not just pet terms. That results in toys, gifts and accessories that cost more."

But, that's not to say dog food purchases are declining. In fact, one thing that has helped to keep it at the top is the rise in popularity of natural pet foods, according to Michael Dillon, the president and founder of Dillon Media of San Francisco.

"What I think that has continued to strengthen the sales for pet store owners are

the pet food trends,” Dillon said. “Customers reading labels have hit the main stream, they are looking for it to say natural and have higher quality standards. We have also seen high quality dog treats on the market that are selling really well.”

David Lummis, the senior pet market analyst of Packaged Facts in New Orleans, has noticed that natural pet food has been growing double digits for the past 5 to 10 years and sees it growing in the 15 to 20 percent range annually.

“Natural is a big trend,” Lummis said. “It’s nothing new; the market has been shifting toward natural.”

Vetere added, the key predictor with the natural food industry, is to watch the human trends in the natural food area.

“Since the same person is buying for pets as for the rest of the family,” Vetere said. “The buying patterns are very similar.”

So, if the person eats gluten free because they feel it’s better for them, there is a good

naturalpetcare.com based in British Columbia said, she has seen a dramatic increase in sales over the past year. The site carries natural pet food ingredients and supplements, homemade pet food baking accessories, gifts, natural aquarium supplies and natural fish food.

“We spend a lot of time researching to provide detailed information from reliable sources,” McKinnon said. “This results in shareable posts and discussion, while also supporting more traditional marketing concepts of building trust, familiarity and demonstrating expertise. We cater to visual networks like Pinterest by designing branded graphics to be shared.”

McKinnon embodies another trend seen in the Pet Age Retailers Report: Social media is becoming the preferred way to advertise.

“Blogging has been the best thing that ever happened to my small business and the businesses I work for,” McKinnon

TRENDS

Responsibility Equals More Sales

AS DOGS BECOME more a part of the family, owners want to make sure they, and their pooch, are responsible citizens of the community.

“Growing up we never took the dog to training. We just opened the door and let our dog out,” explained Patti Colandrea, the owner of Bark Bark Club in Chicago. “You can’t do that in the city, so there is this need to have more training and more responsible pet owners. There is a lot more information out there and people are realizing, ‘if I train my pet, it’s going to make for a much easier life together.’”

That, in part, may explain why she has seen an uptake in dog pick up products. In fact, when she opened her business 11 years ago, it wasn’t even one of the items she offered.

“I don’t think companies were really pushing it, but in the last few years everyone has to carry them,” she said. “People want to be responsible and pick up their dog’s poop.”

While using a plastic grocery bag may have been acceptable in the past, consumers are looking for more stylish and eco-friendly items, some of which can range in price from \$5 to \$300.

Items like toys, collars and leashes are still big sellers – and they don’t stop at just one.

“People buy multiple things,” says Lesley Bowers, owner of P.U.P.S. in Lewes, Del. “They just don’t get one thing of treats. They will walk the store and get a treat and a toy and a new collar.”

Many store owners also said they have seen an increase in sales of treats that also double as supplements, in addition to a demand for more eco-conscious products, like those made from bamboo, hemp and recycled materials. – *Michelle Maskaly*

“I would say about 25 percent of the people who come into the store that talk to me about this is non-pet owners.”

chance their dog will also be eating grain or gluten free, because they think, ‘It’s good for me, then it has to be good for my pet.’

Neither analyst was surprised that pet industry spending has pretty much stayed steady, despite concerns some shoppers might have about the economy.

“When the economy hits the gutter, people spend more [on pets],” Dillon said. “When 9/11 happened, people spent more on pets. Katrina happened, pet services especially went up. The housing crises happened; the industry once again had done great.”

Signs of economic recovery are there, but it’s been slow.

“Every year since 2009 we are going to see this recovery slowly get better and it just really started to begin to kick in, in 2012,” Lummis said. “Not just the pet market was slow but all the markets in general. The reigns are beginning to loosen up and I think you will see a lot more growth in the industry soon.”

For Melody McKinnon, founding partner and marketing manager of all-

said. “A combination of social media networks, used primarily to promote blog content, has resulted in an increase of almost 30 percent in traceable sales over the past year alone. We have yet to buy advertising on these networks; the returns are solely from time investment.”

Many business owners are following the same strategy.

In 2011, social media, email marketing and website advertising produced the best results for retail businesses with 29 percent, according to the report. Behind that was referrals and word of mouth with 26 percent. The next highest was newspaper ads, shoppers and classified ads with 10 percent.

Dollars spent on advertising has also dropped. Retailers spent \$10,622 in 2010 on it, but in 2011, it sank to \$7,885.

Visit PetAge.com for additional trends from the Retailers Survey, including the pros and cons of using social media as a way to advertise, and how offering grooming services has been a roller coaster of a ride for business owners.



Andersen's Pet Shop in Montrose, Calif., is as close to an institution as any pet shop could be.

Back to the Basics

With so many shopping options, retailers look to customer service, niche markets to build loyal customers.

BY JON VANZILE

It's no secret the last few years have been challenging in the retail pet industry.

Even as the overall size of it has remained fairly stable, the number of retail channels has multiplied almost exponentially.

According to a study performed by Packaged Facts in late 2011, almost half (47 percent) of pet owners report shopping around for pet products at a variety of outlets, including independent stores, big-box pet retailers and online outlets. At the same time, the number of "channel loyal" dog and cat owners fell to 41 percent in 2011, a 12-point reduction from 2006, according to Experian Simmons.

This multiplication of retail channels hit at the worst time for many pet shops, right when the recession of 2008 caused many pet owners to pull back on their spending.

So what's a pet retailer to do?

Sometimes the best strategy is also one of the oldest: Provide superior customer service and build your brand. At the same time, there is plenty of opportunity in niche market segments, especially in holistic food and "alternative" pet health.

Andersen's Pet Shop in Montrose, Calif., is as close to an institution as any pet shop could be. The store started as a feed and seed shop in the 1940s, until it was taken over by the Russell family in the 1960s and converted into a pet shop. Since then, the store has been in the same location, quietly collecting awards from various Los Angeles media outlets as the best independent pet shop in the area.

Yet, according to Rob Russell, a store manager and son of the owners, there's nothing particularly special about Ander-

sen's product lineup, it doesn't do any extensive marketing or have a huge ad budget, and its prices are competitive but it's not a low-cost shop.

"Everybody says this, but it's really about customer service," Russell said. "All of our employees are very involved, and my parents are very involved. People come in here to see them and talk to them. Our customers know us by name. So we have the same products as Petco or PetSmart basically, but our customer service distinguishes us."

The focus on fundamentals is more than a quaint business strategy, Russell said. It's a deliberate strategy to focus on what Andersen's does well. As a result, while other pet retailers have moved aggressively into online sales, or even expanded locations, Russell said his company has opted against it.



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Even niche stores—which operate in a slightly different retailing environment—recognize the value of superior customer service.

Christine Mallar and her husband own Green Dog Pet Supply in Portland, Ore. Green Dog specializes in holistic and natural pet food, pet supplements, and “alternative” health products, especially for dogs and cats. It also offers a full line of more traditional pet supplies, although Mallar promises that every product in her store meets certain criteria for nutrition and manufacturing.

Still, the secret to Green Dog’s success, Mallar said, “is entirely customer service and especially the quality of advice we can give. The better advice you can give, the bigger your customer base.”

This means Mallar spends a significant amount of time reading about pet health and nutrition, and works with customers to recommend the right foods and supplements for any particular health concern.

don’t have to maintain attractive storefronts, pay a staff of hourly salespeople, or snag prime real estate for their shops.

As a result, online retailers have been able to drive down the cost of basic pet supplies, including dog and cat food, while also offering very niche animals such as certain reptiles and even tropical or rare fish.

The temptation might be to go into online retailing, but pet shop owners who have looked into it frequently shy away and counsel restraint.

“The barriers to enter online retailing are so small that anyone can do it,” Russell said. “It’s tough to get a competitive edge.

“Our marketing dollars are better spent trying to keep existing customers and get them coming back.”

All the big boys have the warehousing, and we know we can’t compete.”

At Green Dog, the situation is similar.

Mallar knows there is a national market for her products, but it doesn’t necessarily

ier. Online marketing seems tailor-made for most pet retailers. It’s targeted, can be highly local, and is typically less expensive than print and broadcast marketing. Digital marketing includes email campaigns, content marketing such as writing articles and blog entries, and a branded website. It can be as simple as registering your store with Google so it shows up on Google maps or as complicated as a full multiplatform social media campaign.

“Our marketing is 90 percent to existing customers,” Russell said. “Our marketing dollars are better spent trying to keep existing customers and get them coming back. So we have an email program and a rewards program. Getting new customers is so cost-prohibitive in newspapers and TV.”

By collecting email addresses, Andersen’s has built up a database of about 5,000 customers.

“It’s so powerful,” Russell said. “We can push out information right away.”

After trying several different styles, Green Dog has taken a slightly different approach to marketing. Instead of taking out ads in large newspapers or having a heavy online presence, Green Dog works hard to cultivate the local neighborhood through targeted branded micro-campaigns. If Mallar does advertise, it tends to be in local weeklies or newsletters, and she has formed relationships with several local holistic vets, who regularly send her referral customers.

“We feel online pressure a little bit, but Portland is a very supporting community,” she said. “People here want to buy local and many of our customers want to support local shops like ours.”

When the company was new, Mallar even went to local dog parks to hand out cards and coupons personally to dog owners. She also placed dog treats on counters throughout shops and coffeehouses in the area, each with a sign reading, “This was supplied by Green Dog Pet Supply”

The resulting word of mouth has built slowly into a steady customer stream on a limited marketing budget.

Read more about the 2012-2013 Retail Report online at www.petage.com



The owner of Green Dog Pet Supply in Portland, Ore. says one of the keys to their success is the quality of advice they offer to the customer.

She prints out articles and even refers customers to other shops and holistic vets.

Customer service’s role in successful pet retailing has been reinforced by the single greatest change in all retailing in a generation: the rise of online retailers. As any pet shop owner intimately knows, online retailers have a set of built-in advantages over their brick-and-mortar counterparts. They

make sense for her company to jump into online retailing. She would have to set up the warehouse and shipping space, figure out the online shopping cart, tax and returns issues, and expand her staff. Considering that her shop is doing well, there is limited motivation to make those kinds of changes.

If the Internet isn’t the answer for retailing, it has made marketing much eas-

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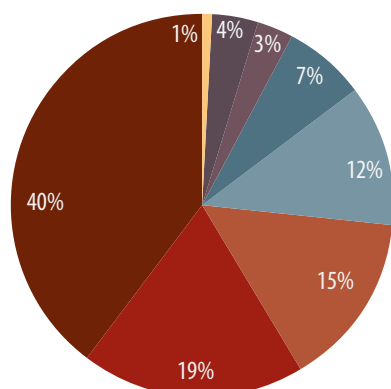


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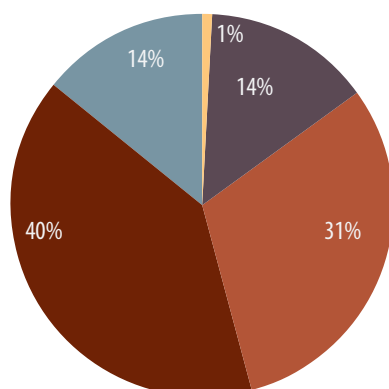
Who Took the Survey

	2012	2011
Independent pet store that sells companion animals and/or fish	29%	28%
Independent pet store that sells supplies only	27%	22%
Franchise and/or chain pet store	2%	2%
Franchise and/or chain pet store	12%	12%
Pet Services facility	9%	12%
Online-only pet store	12%	15%
Other	9%	10%

Who You Are



Age
 18-24 1%
 25-29 4%
 30-34 3%
 35-39 7%



Education
 Some high school or less
 Graduated from high school
 Some college
 Graduated from college
 Postgraduate study or more

Dollar Volume & Profits

In 2011, 63 percent of retailers saw an increase in gross dollar volume, while 29 percent saw a decrease. In 2010, retailers saw a 59 percent increase overall and a 31 percent decrease. In 2011, 57 percent of retailers saw an increase in net profits while 34 percent saw a decrease. In 2010, 56 percent saw an increase in net profits while 30 percent saw a decrease.

Gross Dollar Volume	Net Profit	
	2011	2010
Up to 25 % or more	11%	16%
Up 10-24	21%	16%
Up 6-9	14%	14%
Up 1-5	17%	13%
Unchanged	10%	11%
Down 1-5, 12/14	12%	14%
Down 6-9, 7/51	7%	5%
Down 10-24, 7/8	7%	8%
Down 25 or more, 2/3	3%	4%

Where Pet Stores Make Their Money

	2011	2010
Dog supplies and accessories	27%	26%
Dog food	25%	22%
Service	16%	13%
Companion animals and fish	15%	14%
Gifts and novelty items	8%	10%
Fish food and supplies	8%	9%
Bird food and supplies	8%	7%
Cat food	7%	6%
Cat supplies	6%	6%
Reptile food and supplies	5%	4%
Small-animal food and supplies	4%	4%
Pond supplies and accessories	1%	1%
Other	8%	5%

Totals don't add up to 100 percent because averages are based on reports of each separate category.

Of the retailers surveyed, 42% of store owners were male, 58% were female.

Top Pet Categories

	% Stores Carrying Category	
	2011	2010
Freshwater fish and invertebrates	66%	69%
Reptiles and Amphibians	57%	59%
Small animals	59%	58%
Birds	55%	53%
Saltwater fish	43%	52%
Registered puppies	21%	28%
Mixed-breed puppies	24%	26%

Totals don't add up to 100 percent because averages are based on reports of each separate category.

\$7,885

The median amount that pet stores spent on advertising in 2011.

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Gross Dollar Volume

In 2011, 63 percent of retailers saw an increase in gross dollar volume, while 29 percent saw a decrease. In 2010, retailers saw a 59 percent increase overall and a 31 percent decrease. In 2011, 57 percent of retailers saw an increase in net profits while 34 percent saw a decrease. In 2010, 56 percent saw an increase in net profits while 30 percent saw a decrease.

	2011	2010
Average gross dollar volume	\$592,233	\$421,966
Up to \$99,999	29%	34%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	23%	20%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	19%	20%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	7%	11%
\$750,000 to \$999,999	6%	5%
\$1 million or more	16%	9%

Net Profit

Companies that had a 6 to 9 percent increase in the year 2011, jumped 2 percent from 2010. As a whole, 57 percent of the companies saw an increase in net profit.

	2011	2010
Up to 25 percent or more	11%	14%
Up 10-24	13%	14%
Up 6-9	12%	10%
Up 1-5	21%	18%
Unchanged	12%	17%
Down 1-5	12%	11%
Down 6-9	9%	4%
Down 10-24	7%	7%
Down 25 or more	3%	5%

51 The percentage of stores surveyed in 2011 that did not carry any companion animals or fish.

Average Customer Transactions

While average customer transaction amounts went down as a whole from 2010, it increased for aquarium, bird and small-animal owners.

	2011	2010
All Transactions	\$36.33	\$50.77
Dog Owners	\$39.85	\$46.62
Cat Owners	\$19.78	\$22.98
Aquarium Owners	\$34.74	\$26.43
Bird Owners	\$29.28	\$22.98
Small-animal Owners	\$19.10	\$17.77
Reptile Owners	\$21.29	\$28.28
Gift and Specialty	\$21.45	\$34.71

Fastest Growing Categories

	2011
Dog food	13%
Grain-free dog and/or cat food	9%
Treats	4%
Dog chews	4%
Aquarium products	3%
	2010
Dog food	14%
Food/Pet Food	11%
Raw Food/ Diets	6%
Treats	3%
Collars/Leads/Harnesses	3%

Ancillary Services

	% Stores Offering Service	
	2011	2010
Grooming	45%	54%
Boarding exotic animals	21%	23%
Delivery	20%	36%
Aquarium/ pond installation/ maintenance	23%	21%
Boarding dogs and/or cats	14%	18%
Pet sitting and/or dog walking	9%	17%
Obedience and/or agility training	17%	16%
Day care	13%	12%
Self-service dog wash	18%	8%
Other	34%	38%

Average Customer Transactions

	2011	2010
All Transactions	\$36.33	\$50.77
Cat Owners	\$19.78	\$22.98
Aquarium Owners	\$34.74	\$26.43
Bird Owners	\$29.28	\$22.98
Small-animal Owners	\$19.10	\$17.77
Reptile Owners	\$21.29	\$28.28
Gift and Specialts	\$21.45	\$34.71

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Market Leaders in Key Pet Supply Categories

By percentage of stores citing company/brand as No. 1 seller*

Dog Products

Apparel

1. PetEdge	29%
2. R.C. Pet Products	8%

Beds

1. Midwest Homes for Pets	15 %
2. West Paw	13 %

Collars & Leads

1. Coastal	24 %
2. Lupine	22 %

Feeders

1. Duskocil	30 %
2. PetRageous	15%

Flea/Tick Products

1. Merial	28%
2. Central Life Sciences	24%

Foods

1. Diamond	16%
2. Champion Pet Foods	10%

Grooming Tools

1. PetEdge	21%
2. Coastal	20%

Dog Health & Hygiene

1. TropiClean	28%
2. Bio-Groom	15%

Dog Housing & Travel

1. Duskocil	27%
2. Midwest Homes	18%

Dog Sanitation

1. PetEdge	19%
2. Central Garden & Pet	18%

Shampoos

1. TropiClean	23%
2. Bio-Groom	17%

Toys

1. Kong	21%
2. PetEdge	15%

Treats

1. A Guy & His Dog Zuke's	14%
2. Red Barn Pet Products	9%

Cat Products

Beds

1. Precision Pet Products	22%
2. Midwest Homes	17%

Collars & Leads

1. Coastal	29%
2. Lupine	19%

Feeders

1. Duskocil	43%
2. PetRageous	18%

Flea/Tick Products

1. Merial	32%
2. Central Life Sciences	23%

Foods

1. Diamon	18%
2. Hill's	11%

Furniture

1. Ware Manufacturer	23%
2. Custom/Local manufacturer	22%

Grooming Tools

1. Coastal	24%
2. Furminator	19%

Health & Hygiene

1. Central Garden & Pet	24%
2. Garmon Corp	22%

Housing & Travel

1. Duskocil	53%
2. PetEdge	14%

Litter

1. World's Best Cat Litter	41%
2. Precious Cat	14%

Litter Accessories

1. Duskocil	49%
2. Van Ness Plastics	37%

Sanitation Products

1. UPG Companion Animals	33%
2. Van Ness Plastics	16%

Shampoos

1. TropiClean	28%
2. Bio-Groom	26%

Toys

1. PetEdge	21%
2. Ducky World Products	16%

Treats

1. Nutro	30%
2. Zuke's	18%

Fish Products

Aquariums/Tanks

1. Central Aquatics	66%
2. UPG Aquatics	21%

Cleaning Equipment

1. UPG Aquatics	24%
2. Lee's	22%

Decorations

1. Penn-Plax	40%
2. Blue Ribbon	38%

Filtration Products

1. UPG Aquatics	46%
2. Central Aquatics	21%

Foods

1. UPG Aquatics	48%
2. OmegaSea	22%

Health Aids

1. Mars Fishcare	66%
2. Seachem Labs	14 %

Heaters

1. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	37%
2. Central Aquatics	22%

Lighting

1. Central Aquatics	59%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	14%

Meters

1. UPG Aquatics	28%
2. Milwaukee	24%

Pond Products

1. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	30%
2. Mars Fishcare	24%

Pumps

1. UPG Aquatics	43%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	28%

Test Kits

1. Mars Fishcare	58%
2. UPG Aquatics	25%

Water Conditioners

1. Mars Fishcare	32%
2. Seachem Labs	27%

Bird Products

Bedding & Litter

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	28%
2. Vitakraft Sunseed	25%

Cages

1. Prevue	45%
2. Blue Ribbon	15%

Feeding Equipment

1. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	33%
2. Prevue	24%

Food

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	30%
2. Vitakraft Sunseed	19%

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Health Aids

1. UPG Companion Animals	33%
2. Central Garden & Pet	26%

Sanitation Products

1. UPG Companion Animals	37%
2. Central Garden & Pet	28%

Toys & Exercise

1. JW Pet	25%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	23%

Water Bottles & Accessories

1. Lixit	35%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	26%

Small-Animal Products

Bedding & Litter

1. Absorption	42%
2. Central Avian & Small Animal	22%

Chew Items

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	48%
2. Vitakraft Sunseed	19%

Feeding Equipment

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	57%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	20%

Foods

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	29%
2. Vitakraft Sunseed	25%

Health Aids (tie)

Central Garden-Central Life Sciences	28%
UPG Companion Animals	28%

Housing

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	53%
2. Ware Manufacturing	17%

Sanitation Products

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	63%
2. Penn-Plax	17%

Toys & Exercise

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	66%
2. Penn-Plax	16%

Water Bottles

1. Central Avian & Small Animal	40%
2. Lixit	31%

Reptile Products

Bedding & Litter

1. Zoo Med	53%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	21%

Feeding Equipment

1. Zoo Med	40%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	36%

Foods

1. Zoo Med	31%
2. Fluker Farms	22%

Health Aids

1. Zoo Med	62%
2. Central Aquatics	21%

Heating

1. Zoo Med	34%
2. Central Aquatics	31%

Housing

1. Central Aquatics	65%
2. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	30%

Housing Décor & Accessories

1. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	40%
2. Central Aquatics	31%

Lighting

1. Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	31%
2. Zoo Med	28%

Sanitation Products

1. Zoo Med	64%
2. Central Aquatics	33%

Water Bottles & Accessories (tie)

Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.	46%
Zoo Med	46%

Gift & Specialty Items

Crab Products

1. Florida Marine Research	40%
2. Zoo Med	34%

Crickets Products

1. Fluker Laboratories	60%
2. The Bug Co.	24%

Books

1. Barron's	37%
2. Central Garden & Pet	28%

Calendars

1. Brown Trout Publishers	39%
2. Custom and local manufacturer	33%

Greeting Cards

1. Avanti Press	37%
2. Leanin' Tree	21%

Ornaments and Figurines

1. Local and handmade	41%
2. E & S Imports	22%

T-Shirts & Sweat Shirts

1. Custom and homemade	54%
2. Dog Is Good	23%

* Rankings reflect companies/brands that were cited most often by respondents as their best sellers. Neither rankings nor percentages represent market shares or sales percentages as respondents were not asked to provide actual sales figured or sales percentages by brands or information about other brands sold in their store.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Statistical data for the 2012-2013 Pet Age Retailer Report was compiled using SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey tool.

Pet Age sent emails June 1, July 1, and July 21, inviting more than 4,600 retail owners/managers from the Pet Age subscriber list to complete our internet-based questionnaire. Additionally, we publicized the questionnaire's availability via the "Editor's Note" and advertisements in Pet Age.

Retailers who didn't have access to

the internet or preferred not to complete the survey online received printed versions of the questionnaire.

The 2012-2013 Pet Age Retailer Survey drew 469 valid responses with the margin of error at 4.5 percent, with a confidence level of 95 percent, according to the random sample calculator by Custom Insight, an online survey firm not affiliated with Pet Age.

Percentages will not always total 100 because many responses were round-

ed, and not all respondents answered all questions.

The 2012-2013 Pet Age Retailer Survey, performed by H.H. Backer, was sponsored by Coastal Pet Products Inc. (Alliance, Ohio), Fromm Family Foods Inc. (Mequon, Wis.), Marchioro (Isola Vicentina, Italy), MiracleCorp Products (Dayton, Ohio), PetEdge Dealer Services (Beverly, Mass.), ProLabs (St. Joseph, Mo.), Vitakraft Sunseed Inc. (Bowling Green, Ohio).



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Trends & Products

DOGS



Evicting Fleas

Affordability, natural options drive flea and tick product sales.

BY MAGGIE MARTON

Flea and tick medicine is big business, because it meets a consumer need – eliminating pests from their pet and home. In fact, 64 percent of dog owners purchase it for their pet, according to the American Pet Products Association.

There are two major factors affecting the segment: Affordability, which is being driven by generic and grocery store brands, and natural care,

which is being driven by a desire for eco-friendly ingredients.

When the patent for fipronil, one of the leading ingredients in Frontline Plus, expired in 2010, the market changed dramatically. It allowed for generic equivalents to be manufactured and sold, at lower price points, opening the category up to more competition.

One of the products that entered the market was PetArmor, which is made

by FidoPharm, a companion pet health product company. According to Alex Kaufman, president and CEO of FidoPharm, PetArmor filled a consumer need by providing flea and tick protection that is both accessible and affordable.

“What makes PetArmor unique is that we brought a vet-quality flea and tick product to the pet retailer, which traditionally has offered older technologies, many having lower effectiveness and a poorer safety profile,” Kaufman said. “This is made possible since many manufacturers of the best flea and tick products have chosen a commercialization strategy to sell their products only through veterinarians. The introduction of PetArmor has caused disruption in the marketplace as we have focused on pets and pet parents and offering the most recommended flea and tick active ingredient.”

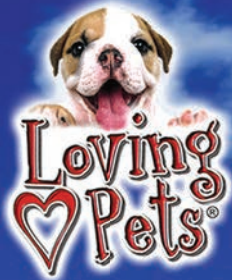
Another generic fipronil product is Sentry’s Fiproguard line of products. Like PetArmor, Fiproguard is available at a lower cost than Frontline Top Spot since it is the generic equivalent. Fiproguard is available to be carried by specialty pet stores, farm and garden supply stores and through online retailers.

Now that these products are available widely, innovations are coming from other areas like formulation and delivery method.

For instance, Merck recently introduced new products, Activyl and Activyl Tick Plus, which contains a chemical that is turned on by an enzyme in the flea’s gut. Unlike other similar medications, Merck decided to offer these products exclusively through veterinarians.

Retail pet store owners say they see more customers asking about organic, or natural flea and tick control. One ingredient gaining in popularity, especially among the consumers, they say, is neem, a tree that has been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. It is billed to be an effective pesticide.

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Trinity Ava, the herbalist for Organix-South, a natural products division of Nutraceutical Corporation, says neem is effective against over 200 types of insects. Products like Organix-South's TheraNeem Herbal Outdoor Spray for Pets contains both the neem leaf and neem oil to provide dogs with natural protection against insects.

However, neem can cause some confusion for consumers, retail owners and product developers because it is not an EPA-registered ingredient.

Susan Weiss, president of Ark Naturals, explained her company came out with two neem-based products early on, but because of the lack of EPA approval, they – along with any other neem product

– can't claim to repel fleas and ticks, even if their studies and research show it does.

"We definitely wanted to have a product in the flea and tick category because it is a gigantic category," Weiss said. "Humans do not like bugs."

As a result, the company offers a botanical product called "Flea Flicker! Tick Kicker!" which has performed well for Ark Naturals, in part because the name appeals to consumers.

Like Ark Naturals, companies offering flea and tick alternatives, are adding creative marketing to their business plans.

Healthy Dogma, a family-owned business that sells natural and organic products for pets, offers a flea product

"Retail pet store owners say they see more customers asking about organic, or natural flea and tick control."

that is not topical, unlike many other options on the market. Instead, they offer a supplement called "Flee Flea Flee!" that is added to the dog's food. The ingredients are kelp, flax meal, garlic and yeast.

"It's a flea and tick deterrent," Darby Peters, from Healthy Dogma, said. "It's a natural way to ward off the fleas if a customer is looking for something that isn't quite as intense as the squeeze on the back of their neck type of product."

One of the ways that Healthy Dogma has helped consumers familiarize themselves with the product is through innovative packaging.

The packaging helps customers make an informed decision.

"Our packaging is a little bit unique," Peters said. "Even if someone wasn't right there to explain it, through the name of it and the photo on the side, it clearly explains what the supplement is going to do."

Maggie Marton is a freelance writer who covers pets, the pet industry and lifestyle topics. She lives in Indiana.



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Rebecca
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If you want to keep up-to-date on our products, make sure you sign up for our Retail Newsletter.

Couch Potato or Olympic Toy Chaser?

New feature can track how much activity an animal has had during the day.

The pet GPS tracking device Tagg – The Pet Tracker now allows owners to not only track where their pet is, but what they are doing, in an effort to better monitor an animal's health when it comes to daily exercise.

The new activity tracking function – available at no additional cost to Tagg customers – provides the user with daily Tagg Points, an at-a-glance snapshot of a pet's activity in a 24-hour period. Movement

is detected by the tracker, and points are assigned based on the intensity and duration of the activity.

Tagg Points are accumulated and charted each day, providing the user with easy-to-read data that will help them know how much more, or less, activity their animal needs.

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THE EDGE

What Customers Are Buying

According to the 2012-2013 Pet Age Retailer Survey, dog food was the fastest growing product category for store owners quickly followed

by grain-free dog and/or cat food. In 2010 dog food was also the fastest growing product with a 14 percent response rate.

Fastest growing product category for store owners in 2011

Dog food	13%
Grain-free dog and/or cat food	9%
Food/pet food (not include bird food or fish food)	6%
Treats	4%
Dog chews	3%
Aquarium products/supplies	3%
Dog toys	3%
Dog accessories	3%
Live fish	3%
Raw diets	3%
Services	3%

SOURCE: 2012-2013 PET AGE RETAIL REPORT



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Food Trucks Go to the Dogs

Pet food companies bring popular consumer trend to the pet world.

Food trucks have been a consumer trend for several years, and now, some dog food companies are hoping it will be just as popular with pets.

Chef Michael's recently hosted a national sweepstakes to help 25 food trucks make special improvements just for dogs, after an online survey they conducted showed nearly six in 10 dog owners have gone to a food truck, and 48 percent would likely take their dog

provided food for dogs if there was one in their neighborhood.

"Food trucks aren't just for people, and we hope this sweepstakes will help as many dogs as possible enjoy the food truck experience with their owners," Sarah BonDurant, a brand representative from Chef Michael's, said.

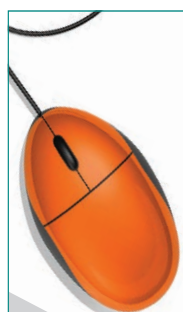
The 25 winners received a \$1,000 cash prize to help make dog-friendly improvements to their trucks, Chef Michael's food dispensers that will



CHEF MICHAEL'S

Owners and their dogs line up at the Chef Michael's Food Truck for dogs.

improvements to their trucks, Chef Michael's food dispensers that will



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offer dogs their own food truck dining experience and a one year supply of Chef Michael's products.

Hill's Pet Nutrition also took a gamble on the food truck craze last year, by introducing the Science Diet Ideal Balance Pet Café Truck.

The national tour that hit cities across the country from California to

Maryland, was part of a marketing campaign for the company's Ideal Balance line of products that include 100 percent all-natural ingredients, and contain no artificial flavors, color or preservatives.

While touring the country they gave away free samples of both their Ideal Balance dog and cat foods.

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Joining Forces for Health

Pet, human health advocacy groups work together to find cures.

The Coalition for Pulmonary Fibrosis and The Westie Foundation of American are joining forces to fight a deadly lung disease that claims as many human lives as breast cancer each year, as well as a similar percentage of West Highland Terriers.

Both organizations fund research into Pulmonary Fibrosis, and act as advocates for their patients and members.

"It is our hope that through our combined efforts, much will be learned about Pulmonary Fibrosis through these precious dogs who are also suffering greatly," said Mishka Michon, chief executive officer of the Coalition for Pulmonary Fibrosis.

The two organizations first met at a human/canine research meeting that was held on the subject.

In the U.S., 120,000 people are known to be affected by Pulmonary Fibrosis and are likely higher due to misdiagnosed and undiagnosed cases. The disease causes progressive scarring in the lungs that eventually suffocates the dog or human.

"The Westie Foundation is honored to work with the Coalition for Pulmonary Fibrosis to support efforts to identify commonalities and differences between the human and canine form of the disease," Bebe Pinter, president of the Westie Foundation of America, said. "It is through this type of collaboration that we can gain important answers to this deadly disease."



Not Your Same Old Litter

Ever-evolving consumer demand drives cat litter innovation.

BY KATIE A. VOSS

Carrying cat litter in your store is a no-brainer.

"It's basically toilet paper for cats," Tobi Skovron, CEO and founder of Pup-Pee Solutions in Los Angeles, said.

But, Skovron cautions, just because litter is a necessity it doesn't mean retailers should settle for selling the same-old same-old.

"My perspective is that you want products in your stores that are going to attract customers and bring them back on a regular basis," Skovron said.

And, anyone will tell you, giving consumers a variety of litter types and brands to choose from is important.

"There are new cat owners everyday and what works for one cat might not work for another cat," Linda Cope, new media marketing manager for Marshall Pet Products in Wolcott, N.Y., said. "It's important to have a variety of litters on the store

shelf for cat owners. Some consumers will purchase cat litter based on odor control, but some will prefer to purchase an eco-friendly litter that is not strip-mined or contributing to landfill problems. Other consumers will purchase based on their cat's immediate needs, such as health issues and post-surgical procedures."

As a result, manufacturers are always bringing to market new products that answer the ever-evolving consumer demands.

"The cat litter category has been evolving in recent years with the introduction of more natural litters made of everything from wood, corn, soy beans, and yes, even green tea," Stan Yamamoto, president of Next Gen Pet Products Inc. in Laguna Niguel, Calif., said. "It is important to offer customers natural alternatives that are as effective and functional as the traditional clay litters.

Continued on page 63

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Saving a Life

Purina recognizes cat's lifesaving efforts.

A shelter cat named Pudding, who saved the life of his owner from a diabetic seizure was named the grand prize winner in the Purina Pro Plan Rally to Rescue "Tales of Greatness" story contest.

Pudding was returned twice to the Door County Humane Society in Sturgeon Bay, Wis. before Amy Jung and her son, Ethan, who were volunteering at the shelter, decided he should become a part of their family.

Jung wasn't planning on adopting, but changed her mind after forming an instant connection to the green-eyed cat. And, it's a good thing she did, because he ended up saving her life.

Just hours after falling asleep, Jung woke up to find, Pudding, sitting on her chest. Jung, a diabetic since the age of four, had come out of a seizure from what her doctor described as an adrenalin rush caused by the cat pouncing on her chest.

"When Pudding jumped off of my chest and ran out of the room I instantly felt a sense of panic thinking that my life

depended on this animal and without him I would die," Jung said. "After minutes of feeling alarmed and helpless, the next noise I heard was the sound of my son's feet hitting the floor and I immediately felt a wave of relief and realized that this cat had just saved my life."

After Jung recovered from the seizure, she called the shelter to inquire if Pudding had any rescue experience. After learning that there was no record that the cat had such training, Jung registered Pudding as a service animal. Now, Pudding can tell

when Jung's blood sugar drops two points below normal and alerts Jung when something is wrong through meows and nibbles.

"Pudding's story serves as a reminder that all animals, rescue or purebred, have something innately great inside them and with the help of small pet rescue organizations can truly make a positive difference" Mike Chirco, of the Purina Pro Plan marketing team, said.

"Jung, a diabetic since the age of four, had come out of a seizure from what her doctor described as an adrenalin rush caused by the cat pouncing on her chest."

SPOTLIGHT



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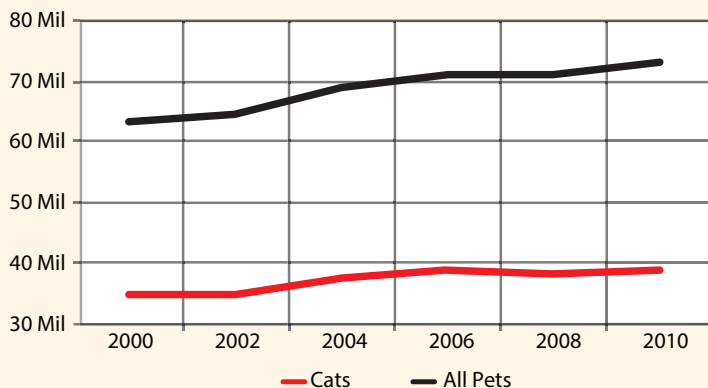
Twitter

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THE EDGE

Number of Cat Owners

Number of U.S. households that own a pet versus the number of U.S. households that own a cat (in the millions)



SOURCE: APPA NATIONAL PET OWNERS SURVEY

Continued from page 61

If the customer is aware of alternatives that clump, flush, [and] control odors like clay litters but are also compostable, lightweight, long lasting and natural, then they can see the benefits of being environmentally conscious."

Marshall Pet Products' Good Mews is one of those eco-friendly options.

The premium litter is made from 100 percent recycled paper fiber that is shaped into highly-absorbent pellets. The pellets absorb odor-causing moisture. Cope points out that the recycled pellets aren't just good for the environment, but are also dust-free and made without additives or chemicals so the litter won't irritate sensitive or post-surgical cats.

"The cat litter category has been evolving in recent years with the introduction of more natural litters made from everything of wood, corn, soy beans, and yes, even green tea"

In 1994, Pet Care Systems in Detroit Lakes, Minn., was founded in an effort to create a quality alternative to clumping litters. Mark B. Hughes, co-founder and national director of sales and marketing, and his partner, discovered wheat to be a successful alternative, and Swheat Scoop litter was born. Their newest offering, Lightly Scented Swheat Scoop, is made from aspen wood, something that through research, they discovered was very absorbent.

Many manufacturers are also offering a way to control odor naturally for those consumers who want the litter they use to have a scent.

According to Jean Broders, brand manager for Kent Nutrition Group Inc. in Muscatine, Iowa, the scent in their new World's Best Cat Litter prod-

uct comes from 100 percent all-natural lavender oil.

Next Gen Pet Products Inc. uses materials like wood and green tea in order to deodorize naturally by suppressing the growth of bacteria in the litter box. The company's newest litter, Forest Fresh, is derived from a special type of cypress wood called hinoki, which is

resistant to the growth of odor-causing mold and bacteria.

Gentle Touch Pet Products in Gretna, Neb., has a patent-pending aspen wood pellet cat litter.

"The litter is similar to the pine litters out there but has a couple advantages," Brent Karstens, the company's president, said. "First, the aspen

By Pet Loo

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pellet is extremely safe on the animal's respiratory system compared to pine, because there are no phenols found in aspen like there are in pine. Second, there is not much of a smell to the aspen pellet, but it absorbs the ammonia smell second to none. So you do not have to have your house smell like a Christmas tree 365 days of the year."

Along with all-natural ingredients, Pup-Pee Solutions uses science and innovation in order to keep litter boxes odorless and fresh. The company's Fresh Air Litter features a patented odor-eliminating carbon pad that takes the ammonia present in feline urine and converts it to nitrogen.

"Once the urine hits the carbon pad

and the bacteria is killed, the urine is ultimately not urine anymore," Skovron, CEO and founder, said. "It becomes nitrogen and nitrogen is a gas that lifts up from the box without any odor. All of this is done without using any chemicals whatsoever."

The litter itself offers extra odor control. Made from zeolite, a volcanic rock, the litter absorbs ammonia. Additionally, proprietary syrup coats the litter to minimize dust, keeping cats from upper respiratory irritation.

Precious Cat Inc. in Englewood, Colo., uses all-natural ingredients and addresses feline behavioral and health concerns. Nearly 10 years ago, feline-only veterinarian Dr. Bruce Elsey created Cat Attract to help cats with litter box aversion.

They have branched out creating different formulas, such as Kitten Attract, which helps train kittens to use the litter box, and Long Haired Litter, which won't stick to long-haired cats' fur. The company's most recent addition, Respiratory Relief, is a low-dust litter specifically designed for cats with allergies or asthma, said marketing director Gina Zaro.

The litter comes in clumping clay or a silica gel formula and does not contain any plant-based material. Just like humans, cats' allergies or asthma can be exacerbated by things made with a plant-based material because they often create mold.

Moving cat litter off the shelf might not be as difficult as some other products, but manufacturers stress that retailers need to know what's available on the market.

"When people come in and say, 'My cat's not using the litter box,' or 'My cat's sneezing a lot,' it's really important that retailers are up to date on what's going on so they can direct people to new products," Zaro said.

Plus, Zaro points out, staying educated gives retailers more credibility, thus instilling trust. And, trust is huge in creating return customers.

Katie H. Voss is a Chicago-based writer who has covered the pet industry for more than 5 years.

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Nano Tanks Make a Big Splash in Small Spaces

These small wonders can really brighten up someone's desk, office or home.

BY BILL KOLBENSCHLAG

The saying "good things come in small packages" certainly rings true in the fish keeping world with nano tanks and aquariums.

If you have customers who want to own a fish tank but don't have much space, it's now possible to provide them with a solution.

Experts seem to have varying definitions of what exactly a nano tank entails. Some feel that a nano tank has to contain saltwater fish or reef; others include freshwater tanks in the category of nanos. Either way, most seem to agree that nanos are small in size, often all-in-one (meaning they contain a built-in filter and light), and do not require a stand.

These mini tanks have become quite popular in the aquarium industry over the last 10 years. The niche started in late 2003 around the time when JBJ Aquariums launched its Nano-Cube, a product geared toward the reef aquarium hobbyist, Adam Jackson, spokesman for JBJ, said.

Released in late 2003 and early 2004 JBJ's original Nano-Cube was not eagerly adapted initially as it was seen as a gimmick or a fad, but sales were strong and this small all-in-one aquarium quickly became one of JBJ's cornerstones, according to Jackson.

The original 12-gallon nano cube was simple, with built in rear filtration, a return pump that served to circulate water, and slip-top canopy that housed a single 24 watt 50/50 power compact fluorescent light.

"The original Nano-Cube not only changed the direction of our company, becoming a more inclusive brand selling a full line of aquarium products versus the lighting systems we were known for, but it also changed the industry," he said, adding that with their huge popularity,

companies constantly try to keep these products evolving, dishing out new models to sell on a regular basis.

JBJ redesigned the Nano-Cube and now offers it in a deluxe version to meet the needs of the serious reef enthusiast. The New Nano Cube Deluxe offers double the light output of the original model, providing corals and invertebrates 48 total watts of compact fluorescent illumination. All models come standard with two built-in cooling fans to dissipate excess heat, a new highly efficient remote electronic ballast with disconnect cable and return

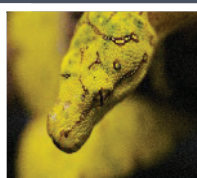
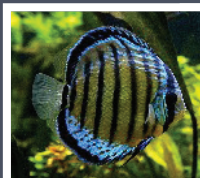


JBJ AQUARIUMS

nozzle for directional flow output. The cube is available in 6 gallons, 8 gallons, 12 gallons, 24 gallons and 28 gallons.

Damian Hall, marketing and events manager for Rolf C. Hagen Corp., also says that nanos continue to evolve in the aquarium industry, with companies putting more attention to detail into their creation so that they can stand out from the competition.

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“Over the past couple of years we have seen rapid growth in nano segment,” he said. “These aquariums appeal to first time buyers who see them as a less intimidating first tank as well as expert aquarists who want to try something new.”

One of Rolf C. Hagen Corp.’s most popular models on the market today are the Fluval Spec, which is known for its sleek contemporary look that makes for a

a large three-stage filtration system that provides more than enough filtration for ultra clean and clear water.

It also comes with all the necessary filter media: A porous foam block with convenient handle, activated carbon, and BioMax bio rings for effective and thorough mechanical, chemical and biological filtration. The pump and filtration system are conveniently located in a separate

The calming aquatic setting creates a profound sensory and spiritual experience by combining the soothing sound and motion of bubbling water with ambient illumination.

It is available in 5 gallons and 6.6 gallons. The 5-gallon model includes an efficient filter and lighting system, an in-tank plant basket and pebble tray, natural pebbles, Nutrafin Aqua Plus Water conditioner, Nutrafin Cycle Biological Aquarium, and filter media.

JBJ’s presence in the nano industry hasn’t slowed down.

One of their current premiere products, the Rimless RL-30, highlights how nano aquariums are part of the mainstream and modern hobbyist crowd, rivaling tanks 10 to 20 times its size. The 30-gallon rimless model departs from the classic look of the nano cube in favor of a more modern open-top look.

The tank offers a panoramic view of the aquarium and includes 8mm bent glass; tempered glass lid and clips; acrylic filter wall with dual overflows; three-stage filter media basket; mechanical sponges; activated carbon sponges; biological ceramic rings; dual return nozzles; designated heater column; and designated refugium column.

Bill Kolbenschlag is a freelance writer and chief communications specialist at Radiant Tribes Internet Marketing Company. He has been keeping fish for more than 10 years. Follow him on Twitter @tribes_bill.

Go to www.petage.com for a list of tips to share with customers about keeping nano aquariums.



MARINE DEPOT

good centerpiece on a desktop or counter-top. The aquarium has etched glass with aluminum trim. Included with the tank is an overhanging lighting system, consisting of 31 powerful LED lamps, that arch above the aquarium to provide brilliant illumination for plants and décor.

Also included is a powerful circulation pump with adjustable output nozzle and

chamber at one end of the aquarium to simplify maintenance.

Taking advantage of the calming effect aquariums can have, Rolf C. Hagen Corp. has also created the Fluval Chi series. The design of these aims to create a perfect balance of sight and sound. It helps inspire positive life flow energy or Feng Shui.

THE EDGE

Top Customer Benefits and Drawbacks of Owning Fish

Why customers buy fish...		...and why they don't	
Fun to watch, have in household	84%	Cleaning/gravel cleaning	60%
Appearance	74%	Algae	42%
Relaxation/relieves stress	67%	Keep water clean/clear	39%
Quiet	49%	Cost for equipment	24%
Conversation piece	45%	Fish die too easily	20%

SOURCE: APPA NATIONAL PET OWNERS SURVEY 2011-2012

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Supplements to the Rescue

Manufacturers infuse the market with solutions to combat deficiency worries in captive reptiles.

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

The days of reptile owners depending entirely upon food diets for complete nutrition have gone the way of the Dodo bird. Today's busy shell and scale lovers look to pet retailers to provide reputable and reasonably priced reptile nutritional supplement products that can fill in the dietary gaps for such critters living in captivity.

Consequently, many manufacturers have infused the market with a plethora of vitamin drops, powders, pellets and more that can better help herps survive and thrive outside their natural wild habitats.

Kevin T. Fitzgerald, PhD, DVM, DABVP, staff veterinarian for Alameda East Veterinary Hospital in Denver, Colo., said he's encouraged that pet owners, retailers and vets alike are continuing to gain a better understanding of basic reptile nutritional requirements.

"It is very hard for [vets and pet owners] to mimic in captivity the nutritional base that reptiles experience in nature," Dr. Fitzgerald said. "In captivity, these animals often become deficient

in vitamins, nutrients and obtainable calories. As a result, we need to supplement captive reptiles."

While a greater variety of reptile supplement products are available today than ever before, the prominent trend experts in the industry are observing is manufacturers formulating complete diets, or "superfoods," for specific species.

"These complete diets include the daily required vitamins and minerals for the specific reptile you have, so you don't need to supplement on top of feeding," Kate Larsen, general manager for LLLReptile and Supply Co. Inc., Vista, Calif., said. "Since it's not convenient for everyone to have live feeder insects on hand, complete diets are becoming more popular as successful formulas become more readily recommended by top breeders and retailers."

One innovator in this arena is Repashy Superfoods, which offers formulas for a variety of species, including a meal replacement powder for all fruit-eating geckos that also serves as a

supplement for anoles, skinks, chameleons and iguanids.

Eric Haug, owner of Pets-A-Plenty: The Ultimate Reptile Shop in Hockley, Texas, a retailer that specializes in reptiles and amphibians, continues to recommend meal replacement formula products by Repashy and others to his customers.

"We can sell our customers a tortoise that eats vegetation and then give them a list of 12 different grasses, veggies, leafy greens and other things they should get. But the truth is that not a lot of people will go out and purchase that many different foods for the animal," Haug said. "These superfood supplements help fill in the gaps."

Two other big movers for Haug are Herptivite and calcium with or without vitamin D3 powder, both by Rep Cal. Herptivite is a multivitamin, multimineral and amino acid food supplement for reptiles that boasts a "sea vegetation" base rich in essential trace elements and minerals. It also uses beta carotene instead of vitamin A to guard against vitamin A toxicity.

Rep Cal's calcium powder with vitamin D3 is scientifically formulated from 100 percent natural oyster shell, phosphorous-free calcium carbonate with added vitamin D3 to aid in calcium absorption—ideal for lizards, turtles, tortoises and other cage-bound creatures kept under artificial light. For herps kept outdoors in natural sunlight as well as nocturnal species like leopard geckos, Rep Cal's calcium powder without vitamin D3 is a wise choice, Haug said.

The alternative to superfoods and powders is a liquid supplement. Vita-Drops by Oasis Pet Products, configured in a 2 ounce bottle with a dropper cap, is a popular choice.

Tortoise and box turtle owners have yet another supplement option. Blocks, such as Zoo Med Labs' Tortoise Banquet Block, can help augment nutrition while also preventing overgrowth of the animal's beak. Zoo Med's product is a food and calcium supplement in one.



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Responsible Breeding

Supplements, nutrition gain popularity among bird breeders.

BY JASON KAMERY

While the market for bird breeding may be a small one, Mitch Rezman, vice president of Windy City Parrot Inc., said there is a number of tried and true, must-use items that help make the process go smoothly.

"Day-to-day breeding for a bird hasn't changed," Rezman said. "You give the smaller birds a wooden house to live in and a cage for the larger birds so they can't break through the house."

Windy City Parrot also stocks different hand-feeding formulas, which can be used to feed the birds when they are born. One of the brands they stock is ZuPreem, which offers two different feeding formulas, the Embrace hand formula and the Embrace Plus.

The Embrace hand formula uses moderate amounts of protein, geared toward smaller birds, Gail Shepard, director of marketing at ZuPreem said, while larger birds, such as Amazon parrots, macaws, hawkheads, Asiatic parakeets and African greys would use the Embrace Plus, which

has moderate amounts of protein and fat.

Once the bird's old enough and can start breeding, there are different formulas available to breeders.

ZuPreem sells the AvianBreeder FruitBlend with Natural Fruit Flavors Diet and the AvianBreeder Natural Diet.

"The fruit blend has the different colors and shapes which some breeders like to use because it stimulates the bird

"there is a number of tried and true, must-use items that help make the process go smoothly."

and helps with the interaction of the bird," Shepard said. "The natural is the same with nutrition; it just doesn't have the colors or shapes."

Both products have increased levels of protein, fat and calcium aids because the bird is using more energy, which they need to stay in good condition.

The fruit blend is also one of ZuPreem's top sellers for maintaining a bird's health and can be used as a compliment with other popular feeding formulas.

"The products have been the same for a while, probably 15-20 years," Shepard said. "There hasn't been much need to improve it or change it because we know already it's a good product and we work with a lot of breeders all-around the world that say the same thing. What is changing is where these products are selling. Companies say they are now shipping to more retailers all over the world."

Drs. Foster & Smith is a retailer that carries all things related to bird breeding and other bird supplies including a partner program to help organizations and breeders.

"We do provide the Drs. Foster & Smith Business Partner Program to non-profit organizations, like animal shelters and rescue groups, as well as to professionals, like breeders," Mary Ellen Kaminski, merchandising manager for Drs. Foster & Smith, said. "Under this program eligible organizations and professionals can receive 10 percent off every day on qualified orders over \$250."

The largest selling items related to breeding that Drs. Foster & Smith carry are its various food options. One of the most popular, is the hand feeding diets from Kaytee, ZuPreem and Lafeber. They have also started selling Higgin's New Intune Natural Hand Feeding Diets.

Other top items breeders are snatching up are economy cages, such as the Prevue Stack & Lock Breeder Cage and the American-made metal cages, such as Prevue's Model 124 and 125 cages.

"Some of the newer items we have been encouraging breeders to use are CareFresh Ultra bedding which avian veterinarians agree make it easy to examine changes in bird droppings," Kaminski said. "Another unique item for customers with large aviaries is the U brackets which boast versatile use, perfect for creating interactive and enriching environments."

Jason Kamery is the assistant editor of Pet Age.



Brushing Up on Brushes

Using the correct brush not only helps you, but feels great for the dog.

BY DARYL CONNER

As the grooming industry has grown, brushes have evolved from the simplest array of metal teeth on a handle into highly stylized tools designed to perform very specific tasks.

Ranging in price from \$10 to \$100, groomers have a boggling array of choices when it comes to buying these most basic of tools.

But, there are plenty of features to look for when buying them.

Ergonomics

There is no “one size fits all” in the world of brushes. In order to keep groomer’s joints happy when they work, they try to choose a brush that is ergonomically designed, looking for a handle that feels good when they hold it.

Some brushes offer thick, cushioned handles that help reduce strain on the

hands. Others, such as Les Pooches, offer a longer handle, destined to keep the wrist in a stress-free position as you work.

Ranging in price from \$10 to \$100, groomers have a boggling array of choices when it comes to buying these most basic of tools.

Some groomers prefer a brush with a no-slip grip like the popular Miracle Coat slicker.

The Chris Christensen line of brushes features several styles with light, beech wood, contoured handles designed to keep your wrist properly aligned as you work. Repetitive motion injuries are common among groomers, so having tools that minimize strain is important.

Design

For most professional stylists, the slicker brush is their “go to tool” for tasks from fluff drying to detangling. Yet, not all slickers are designed the same. There are flat or curved styles, a variety of head shapes and pin styles and designs.

Les Pooches offers a line of flexible headed brushes that are wildly popular with groomers across the world.

They offer firm brushes for double and wiry coats, medium and soft styles, finishing brushes and even a “mat zipper” that is unrivaled when tackling a neglected coat.

Quality

For every high-end brush on the market there is an inexpensive “knock off” out there somewhere.

Having quality tools pays off. Not only do they perform well, but a nicely engineered brush will outlast its cheaper cousin by months, if not years. When purchasing one, groomers look for smooth, polished, nicely finished pins or teeth.

They also check to see what material the cushion, where the teeth are attached, is made of.

A soft, flexible cushion that is securely attached to the head is important. The pins should be firmly anchored in the cushion to minimize bending or loosening.

Features

Some brushes are intended for very specific uses.

Tiny triangular headed slickers to reach tricky spots, boar bristle and ionic brass combinations that are static free, and palm pads designed just for harsh coated terriers.

While some of these brushes are made with specific show dogs in mind, you may find that a specialty brush serves a handy purpose in your day-to-day grooming.

Ditch It

Using an old brush for too long may cause more harm than good, because even the best brushes will become worn with use.

Old brushes make a groomer work harder, because they will have to go over and over an area again to achieve proper brushing.”

Daryl Conner, MPS, Meritus, CMCG has loved grooming dogs and cats for nearly 30 years. An award winning photo journalist she shares her meadow hugged Maine farmhouse with her patient husband and a lot of animals.

SPOTLIGHT

Farm to Bottle Ingredients

Locally sourced blueberries and oats work to nourish a dog's coat.

Mutt Nose Best, a natural pet products company in Maine, offers a line of sulfate-free shampoos and conditions that feature locally-sourced wild Maine blueberries, and certified organic oats.

Their U. Berry Clean Dog, U. Berry Itchy and U. Berry Calm Puppy shampoo and conditioners use a proprietary wild Maine blueberry blend that is intended to nourish and protect a dog's skin and coat.

U. Berry Itchy Dog shampoos and conditioners feature a proprietary triple oat process intended to calm and sooth inflamed, irritated skin.

All of their biodegradable shampoos and conditioners are free of alcohols, DEA, sulfates and parabens.

Website

<http://www.muttnosebest.com>

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THE EDGE

Grooming Methods By Size Of Dog

Out of 544 total dog owners that were surveyed, 78 percent of them had their dog groomed in the past six months. Of that, 256 were small dogs, 142 were medium-sized dogs and 257 were large dogs.

Grooming method	Total Owners	Small Dogs	Medium Dogs	Large Dogs
Mobile service	2%	4%	1%	1%
Center (self-service)	2%	1%	4%	3%
Full service salon	38%	49%	32%	30%
Groom dog at home myself	70%	61%	75%	79%

SOURCE: APPA NATIONAL PET OWNERS SURVEY 2011-2012



Like Human, Like Hamster

Consumer food habits and trends drive treat purchases.

BY KRISTEN RYAN

With the popularity of people treating their pets like part of the family, manufacturers are counting on natural human behavior to drive their purchase decisions by creating products that are not only nutritious for the animal, but also appealing to the consumer.

Ware Manufacturing's Bark-N-Bites, for example, are wooden chew sticks that strongly resemble bacon.

"We find that pet owners have a lot of fun pampering their critters with treats that look like human food is something people can relate to," Heather Cappel, Ware's creative coordinator, said. "Our Mini Alfa-Carrots are in a carrot shape and are made from compressed alfalfa hay. People enjoy the wholesome aspect of it and

the veggie shape makes people think of the natural food their pets would enjoy in the wild."

While some human foods if fed in their natural form, like chocolate, could be harmful to a small animal, feeding ones that look like them, such as Ware's Chew-A-Lot Bon-Bons, is a good alternative.

They are dark brown wooden chews that look like chocolate truffles – wrappers and all – though they do not share any common ingredients with the real thing.

Kaytee is working on several new small-animal treats that fit right in with the human-food trend, Annie Marcell, a brand assistant, said.

Yogurt Bars resemble Hershey bars, while Yogurt Chips look a bit like Her-

shey's Kisses, and Crunch Arounds look like popcorn balls.

"They appeal to pet owners because they are a food they can relate to," Marcell said. "It's the human buying the treat, not the pet."

Jeremy Barney, the floor manager at Arcata Pet Supplies in Arcata, Calif., echoes the trend, saying small-animal treats that look like granola bars are popular with his customers.

"You can see bits of nuts or carrots, so they look healthy," Barney said.

Yogurt is a treat ingredient that appeals to humans and small animals alike. In addition to Yogurt Chips, Kaytee's Yogurt Dips, balls of timothy hay dipped in yogurt, are also very popular.

Barney said sales from his online store show ferret owners are also into the yogurt trend, since the 8 In 1 Yogis treats are popular.

"They sell very steadily and I'd say they are the best seller," he said. "We ship them all over the country."

Mounds Pet Food Warehouse, a Wisconsin retailer with five locations, also does well with yogurt treats for small pets.

"We sell a fair amount of yogis and yogurt bites," April Schroeder, assistant manager, said. "People say their small animals really like them."

Marshall Pets, among other things, manufactures ferret treats, and is always working to create new, nutritious products that also have a consumer appeal. Paul Juszczak, director of sales and marketing, is keeping their new treats close to the vest, but hinted at the treat trends Marshall is pursuing.

"We've delved into the grain-free, gluten-free world, because you're basically playing to the owner, not to the animals," Juszczak said. "If you want to compete, you have to have those types of items and they have to go on the shelves."

As long as the ingredients align with the pets' recommended diet, novelty items for small animals are here to stay.

Kristen Ryan is a freelance writer based in New Jersey. She is an avid animal-rescue advocate and a therapy-dog handler.

BRIEFS

Small Animal Bedding Goes Green



Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc. is hopping on the eco-friendly trend with ECO-Bedding, a clean, absorbent and dust-free bedding made of 100 percent recycled double-layer paper.

The bedding helps reduce odors and features super-clean, high-absorbency, double-layer paper crinkles, expands to more than 30 liters and is made in the USA. It is available in 1.5-pound packages in purple/white, blue/white and brown varieties.

"Not only do the paper crinkles expand and absorb quickly to help reduce odors, but the bedding is a simple way to provide pets with a safe, clean and comfortable home," Holly Hoffman, director of marketing for Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc., said.

The bedding is ideal for pet rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, rats, ferrets and chinchillas.

Rabbits Come to Life in New Book



A new children's series of books and cartoons follow the misadventures of four small rabbits who decided to become Vikings and sail the great sea in search of adventure.

Created by Noah B. Wilson, an Emmy-nominated video producer, editor, writer and animator, The Viking Bunnies, has a cast of characters that try to appeal to both children and adults.

Aboard Bunny Ship is the know-it-all Captain Fuzzy, his disbelieving first mate Lars, the sassy mechanic Thora and the clumsy Steve. They get encounter all types of trouble with characters like, The Ninja Hamsters, The Pirate Ducks, The Bureau-Cats, The King Crabs, Smokey The Monster and more.

For more information about the books visit The Viking Bunnies' website at www.vikingbunnies.com

SPOTLIGHT

Critters Get Cozy in Their Home

Multi-level enclosure has added safety features.



With two levels of living and a built-in nesting nook, the CritterTrail Double Decker Habitat from Super Pet gives small animals an expanded environment.

It includes a tip-proof food dish, drip-resistant water bottle and a Comfort Wheel in addition to Bubble Wave Fun-nel Tubes that give pets an easy way to navigate around the habitat.

The front and top wires allow for easy access to your pet. Ideal for mice, dwarf hamsters, hamsters and gerbils.

Actual size is 17-inch length by 11-inch width by 15-1/2-inch height.

The Double Decker is idea for mice, dwarf hamsters, hamsters and gerbils.

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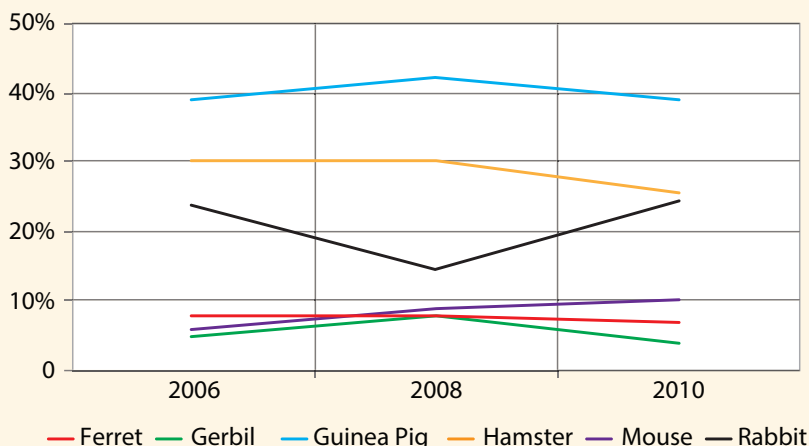
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THE EDGE

Rabbit Ownership Hoppin'

Guinea pig and hamster ownership has declined, while rabbit ownership went back up. The amount of mice owned has gone up, while ferret and gerbil owners have gone down.



SOURCE: 2011-2012 APPA NATURAL PET OWNERS SURVEY



More Vegetables, Please

Less ingredients, careful marketing create big win.

BY STACY MANTLE

Natural pet treat ingredients are becoming simpler while the marketing for them has become more elaborate. Some walk the line between nutritional supplement and culinary sensation, but they all have a specific purpose and are designed for active training, supplemental feeding, or the favored “just because I love you” gourmet treat.

“Good nutrition is the single most important factor in promoting longevity and quality of life for your pet,” Marie Moody, founder of Stella & Chewy’s, said.

This could account for why the U.S. market for natural pet products is projected to grow 32 percent in 2013 as retailers devote more shelf space to manufacturers’ spe-

cialty channels, according to Packaged Facts.

The robust sales of natural pet treats present unique marketing opportunities for boutique pet stores. Many of which are now offering pet treat samplings at “yappy hours” and as giveaways to draw people into booths at special events, which drive sales and encourage customer loyalty.

But, to really capitalize on the success of all-natural treats, it’s important to understand the ever-changing consumer, who is taking the time to learn, and care about their pet’s food, just as much as they would about their own.

“Providing the best possible product for pets not only nourishes the health and well being of the animal, it nourishes the relationship between pet and

parent,” Rob Cadenhead, vice president of sales and marketing for Spring Naturals, said.

Pet owners are turning to raw, grain-free and locally-sourced treats as they look to be more eco-friendly in their overall life.

Whole Life Pet was one of the first to take consumer concerns to heart.

“We pioneered the concept of Farm to Friend,” John Gigliotti, founder of Whole Life Pet, said. “Our freeze-dried treats are made in our own state-of-the-art facility in western Massachusetts. Our treats are human-quality, hormone-free, free range and organic meat – guaranteed.”

WYSIWYG (pronounced whizzy-whig) is the buzzword that encompasses what

pet owners seek out in pet treats. Meaning, what you see is what you get, consumers want treats that are nutritious, functional, all-natural and preservative-free.

Functional ingredient combinations that focus on “super fruits” (such as blueberries), meat-only treats (particularly for carnivores like cats), and simple, highly-nutritious ingredients are also important to consumers. Barksters from Loving Pets boasts nine healthy varieties that consists of flavor combinations of beef, liver or chicken with alfalfa, brown rice or sweet potato.

“We find more and more that pet-parents are reading the ingredients on each treat’s package,” Eric Abbey, presi-

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dent of Loving Pets, said. “So promoting our simple, all-natural ingredients like fresh meats, fruits and vegetables are very important to us.”

Many companies are also creating specialty treats to assist in resolving problems, including joint rescue or active dog training. Treats that include antioxidants, glucosamine, or vitamin supplements are now popular to both reward pets as well as act as dietary supplements.

Environmentally conscious owners are actively seeking out dog and cat treats that utilize recycled materials, sustainable resources and fair-trade ingredients.

“People want to know where their pet’s food and treats are coming from,” Lucy Postins, founder of the Honest Kitchen, said. “We always choose sustainability over cost. Our free-range chicken and line-caught wild haddock, fair-trade quinoa, non-genetically-modified produce and recycled, compostable packaging.”

Pet food and treat manufacturers are becoming increasingly aware of the impact packaging has on their success. Treats in packaging that supports freshness and ease of use are important. Resealable packages made of recycled materials, and

ease of display is nearly as important as what is inside the package.

“Each package of Barksters features a distinctive die-cut bone-shaped box for excellent merchandising, and contains a resealable inner treat bag, guaranteeing freshness and the ultimate air-popped crunch,” Abbey said.

“Good nutrition is the single most important factor in promoting longevity and quality of life for your pet.”

Independent retailers are taking advantage of this trend by showcasing holistic, grain-free all-natural treats in separate sections within the pet treat aisle. They are also spending the time and money needed to educate their employees on the health-promoting benefits to the pet as well as customer affordability. The goal is to offer solution-oriented products that are good for pets’ health as well as the consumer’s pocketbook.

“Every dog’s needs are different, so engaging with the consumer and asking some key questions about their pet is very important,” Abbey said. “Do their pets have any food allergies, health issues, dietary restrictions, etc? This will help independent retailers offer solution-oriented products that are a win-win for everyone.”

Educating consumers and listening to the individual challenges they have with their pets will help guide customers to the best treat for that animal.

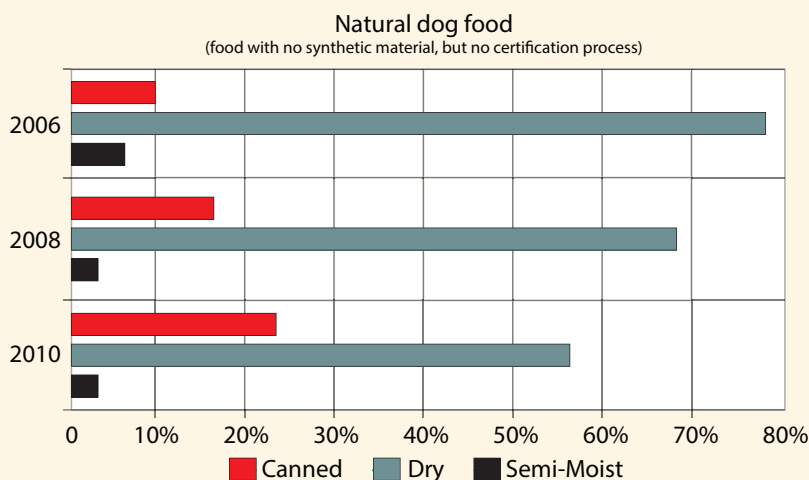
“Your staff is very important,” Elizabeth Pfeiffer, manager of Bark Avenue Pet Supply, said. “Our employees’ focus is on solutions for pets rather than the trend of the week. We are always seeking to learn more about pet nutrition and share what we have learned with our staff. We invest in our employees with ongoing training by bringing experts into the store to explain the benefits of their products.”

Stacy Mantle is a freelance writer who has covered the pet industry for nearly 16 years. She is the founder of PetsWeekly.com and an award-winning author.

THE EDGE

Types of Natural Dog Food Used

The most popular natural dog food is dry food but from 2006-2010 it has decreased over 20 percent. Semi-Moist also fell three percent in the same time frame. Canned natural dog food is on the rise though, going up 13 percent in that four year span.



SOURCE: APPA NATIONAL PET OWNERS SURVEY 2011-2012

Check out Web Extras on petage.com!

- Tips to share with your customers about keeping Nano aquariums
- A behind-the-scenes look at Loving Pets New Jersey headquarters
- Take a deep dive into trends from the Retailer Report



Chew Their Way Clean

Toothpaste treats make dental care easy.

Breath-Less Brushless Toothpaste, made by Florida-based Ark Naturals, is a chewable dental solution for pets.

These highly digestible dental chew are made from natural ingredients, including chlorophyll, cinnamon, vanilla and clove.

Also available in mini size, ridges on the outside of the chew provide teeth scrubbing and support healthy gums, while Ark's patented toothpaste center provides protection against plaque build-up, plaque-forming bacteria and assists with bad breath, according to the company.

The product is intended for dogs 12 weeks and older, and is suitable for cats if they like the taste. One to two chews a day are recommended to help

reduce bad breath, tartar, stained teeth and plaque.

Ark Naturals offers natural health, remedy and lifestyle products for pets including dental, joint care, skin and coat, flea and tick solutions, vitamins, calming aids and more.



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Community

News and Events in the Pet Industry

Phillips New England Buying Show

Representatives from almost 400 pet stores in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic attended the two-day Phillips New England Buying Show Oct. 16 and 17, at the MGM Resort & Casino in Connecticut. Retailers checked out new products and cashed in on show deals from 115 exhibitors.

Have a photo from a pet industry event you would like considered for Scene? Email it to michellem@journalmultimedia.com with "Scene Photos" in the subject line.



Left: Blaine Phillips, from Phillips Feed & Pet Supply; Michael Cato, from Well Pet; Cheryl Maher from Phillips Feed & Pet Supply and Jack Drasner, from Simply Pine.



Fred Phillips, from Phillips Feed & Pet Supply; Erica Chappell, Becky Bigalow and Chris Hedden from Vom Deutschenblut Kennels; and Dave DeLorenzo from Fruitables.



Joe Cannova and Jessica Farina-Morris, from Phillips Feed & Pet Supply; Mike Silverman, from Mutts & Butts; Katie Hatfield, from Central Brands; Dennis VanEtten and Frank Hon, from Canidae.



Ari Jacobson, from Pet Pantry and David Levesque and Neil Abelman from Kanberra Gel.



Ray Arabia, from Pets Plus, and Scott Steed and Alyssa Crosby, from Precise Pet Products.



Nancy Toce, from ABC Obedience; Paul Kuny from Ethical Products and Robi Tatkin from ABC Obedience.



Diane True, from Worldly Pet and John Vasone from ConAir.



Paul Cimino, Callie Hartzell and Andy Mihalak from Natural Balance; Jessica Farina-Morris, from Phillips Feed & Pet Supply and Stephen Portch, from Natural Balance.



Jackie Oyder from Ellington Agway and Bob Nicastro from Lambert Kay.



You Can't Afford to Miss It

Trade shows are a cost effective way to get everything you need for the year ahead in one place.

BY DOUG POINDEXTER

As a past pet retailer myself, I know how hard it can be for retailers to carve out time to attend trade shows. But if you can, you'll find it's well worth it. Trade shows are the most cost effective way to get everything you need for the year ahead—all in one place, at one time. It's the time of the year when the industry comes together to showcase what's new, share ideas, overcome challenges and come away refreshed and inspired. Here are just a few reasons to consider when making your decision to attend.

No other forum lets you shop and compare such a wide range of products in one place.

Trade shows offer a unique opportunity to see what's on the market. You can track trends, get new merchandising ideas, stock up on product and freshen up your mix—all in a few short days. Larger trade shows tend to have more options that may provide new selling opportunities. At our annual trade show, SuperZoo, buyers can find everything from food to fashion to grooming products. And unlike the

Internet or catalogues, you can see, touch, and compare products side-by-side before you buy.

Meet with suppliers face-to-face. Trade shows give you quality face time with key suppliers so you can ask questions, refresh relationships, make deals and forge new partnerships. Suppliers want to make sure you succeed—after all, your success is theirs, too. Tap into their wealth of knowledge to help you sell better. And don't forget to negotiate. With show specials and discounts, it's a great opportunity to save a few bucks.

Educate and train your team. SuperZoo features robust education programs to run a better business. Seminars are relevant to your entire team and can range from business and marketing to grooming and animal wellness. With so many products available today, it's critical to stay on top of the latest information, so you can both buy and sell more effectively.

Network with fellow retailers. Trade shows are the perfect platform for sharing ideas and best practices, gaining valuable insight and connecting with your peers. Many trade shows offer cocktail hours, concerts and other fun-filled networking events. We work hard... sometimes it's nice to have a little fun, too.

And if you're an industry supplier, trade shows are equally important. According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research, they are the most effective tool for generating qualified leads. In fact, closing a deal from a sales call costs almost twice as much as closing an exhibition lead.

So if you ever think you can afford to "sit this one out," I urge you to think again. Spending a little time on your business, rather than in your business can pay off all year long.



Doug Poindexter, has been in the pet industry since 1969 and president of the World Pet Association, since 1990. Poindexter also served on the California Association of Pet Professionals Board of Directors as president from 1989-1991.

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From Grandfather to Grandson

Loving Pets owner comes from long line of industry innovators.

We recently sat down with Eric Abbey, president of Loving Pets Corp., based in Cranbury, N.J., to talk about his long-time involvement in the pet industry, and learn a little bit more about his company.

Q: *Some might say the pet industry is in your blood. How long and in what capacities has your family been in the pet industry? What made you decide to stay in the industry?*

Abbey: My grandfather Lou Dalwin was one of the original founding members of APPMA (now American Pet Products Association). Working for Aquarium Stock Company, an aquatic company founded in the early 1900s, my grandfather took over that business around 1930 and owned it through the 1980s. It was a whole city block in Manhattan and had over 10,000 aquariums and aquatic products. Before there was a New York Aquarium, bus and school tours used to visit ASC to learn about fish, plants and aquatic species. ASC partnered with the Sears Roebuck catalog starting in the 1950s, so for the first time, people could order aquatic products including live fish all over the United States. My father, Kenneth Abbey worked for Lou (his father-in-law), and then launched Petcetera in 1972 and operated that until 2006. I started working with my father in 1994 doing sales, marketing and product development.

What made me stay in the pet industry is the incredible people and the industry itself. Our industry is unique in that there is always a positive energy from the development level to the manufacturing level to the store level to the end-consumer. It's full of passionate and creative people that care about pets.

My mother is a world-renowned nutritionist, radio show host, researcher and author, and was a huge influence on me and my education about healthy, all-natural ingredients and their corresponding health benefits, which I know translates every day into the ingredients used in Loving Pets treats.

Q: *Tell us about your company. What made you start Loving Pets?*

Abbey: I started Loving Pets in 2005 because I wanted to develop new products and take them to market.

I saw such a huge opportunity to offer real solutions to make life better for pets and the pet parents that love them.

Coming from my dad's business, I wanted to

develop new products that were different than what was already out there. I was eager to have the ability to help support the industry by creating healthy and affordable marketplace solutions. This is the mission of our company: Bring healthy, all-natural treats to the masses at price levels that people can really afford.

Q: *As an entrepreneur, what's the number one lesson you've learned about business, the pet industry and running your own company?*

Abbey: As an entrepreneur, the biggest lesson I've learned is this: If you really want your company to have longevity and be successful, you have to stay true to your identity and to who you are each and every day. With what we're experiencing in a changing global economy, it's harder than it has been in previous years to manage rising costs with raw materials and stay committed to pure natural ingredients because of the distractions of cheap, unhealthy additives. Although it's frustrating on certain days, the long term picture and the mark that distinguishes us is being true to who we are and staying on the course no matter what.

Loving Pets is committed to really doing the right thing. It may start with me and our products, but it carries to our employees, our distribution partners, our retailers and our global community of pet-loving customers.

To find out what's next for Loving Pets, and to read the rest of the interview, visit <http://www.petage.com>





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