

Pet Age

Sept. 2014

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72

4 Publisher's Letter

6 Editor's Letter

13 Storefront

- Projections for the Pet Marketplace
- Cardinal President Wins Award
- WPA Donation
- Movers and Shakers

30 Stockroom

56 Management

- Keeping Your Store Safe
- Marketing for Success
- Behind the Counter
- Offering Good Customer Service
- Facebook Tips and Tricks
- How Retailers Can Work With Veterinarians
- Spotlight on: Pets Global

80 Trends & Products

- **Dog:** Agility Products; Collars, Leashes
- **Cat:** Gifts for Cat Lovers; Eco-Friendly Products
- **Aquarium:** Nano Tanks
- **Pond:** Preparing for Winter
- **Reptiles:** Medications
- **Bird:** Feather Care
- **Groom and Board:** Rustic Breeds; Shampoos and Conditioners
- **Small Animal:** Hamsters
- **Natural:** Treats

118 Community

- RFG Open House
- Phillips Mid-Atlantic Show
- Backstory on: Sojos

Features

72 Crowdfunding

By Rebekah Harrison

Your next best-selling item may be on Kickstarter right now

76 Products for Senior Pets

By Rebekah Harrison

New products for senior dogs range from foods to shampoos and ramps.

107



87



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Rest and Relaxation

Sometimes we all need to take time to recharge ourselves.

By the time this issue lands in your mailbox, I'll be back from a two-week vacation at the beach with my wife, daughter, and some friends.

It can be hard to step away and put down the smart phone—to unplug yourself from the daily grind. But, we all need some downtime. Taking that time is well worth it. It may sound silly but when I come back from vacation, I'm more energized and clear headed. I'm ready to get things done.

You may feel like you can't get out of your store to take a vacation, but I urge you to try it. Maybe you can't take two weeks, but even a few days off will leave you refreshed and more creative. It will help you shrug off any burnout you may be feeling. Studies have shown that overall productivity goes up when people take vacation time. After all, we aren't just machines built to work and

work without stopping to enjoy what we are working for.

Of course, you have to have trusted people take care of your business while you're away. A vacation won't do you any good if you spend the whole time anxious about what could be going on back at the shop.

Taking time for yourself to relax and spend time with loved ones at this time of year may be especially important. The busy holiday season is just around the corner, and then you really will be unable to get away from the store. If you take the time to get in a little R and R before the crunch time hits, you'll probably find it to be a little less crunchy.

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■ Editor's Letter



Kickstarting Ideas

The benefits of crowd funding.

I am always coming up with new ideas. Ask any of my close friends about this and they will likely roll their eyes, and make a face. I can't tell you the number of times they have gotten an email from me that starts out with, "I have this idea."

Actually, you could just ask my boss the next time you see him. Almost every time Craig sees me, I have this new idea or project we should do for the magazine.

Some of them are good ideas, others are pretty bad, but they all come down to one problem – money. Or, more specifically the lack of it.

Pet product entrepreneurs are solving that problem by turning to crowd funding sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, which is why we decided to talk about it as this month's cover story. You might be wondering why this would matter to you, an independent retail store. Well, the answer is opportunity.

It is the chance to offer your customers something completely different that

they can't get anywhere else. You can even create marketing campaigns around it. The words, "limited-edition" or "be the first to have" always create good buzz.

On a different note, September means that summer is over and the holidays are approaching. If you haven't already, now is a perfect time to start ordering holiday pet items.

When you do this, don't forget to order pet items for people, too, such as pet-inspired wine charms, note cards, mugs and more. Need some more suggestions? Stacy Mantle talks about stocking products for cat lovers in her trends and products story in this issue.

Then, in your holidays ads remind people they can not only pick up their regular items like food and treats, but they can also stop into your store to do all their holiday shopping for their favorite pet lover.

Michelle Maskaly
Editor

michellem@journalmultimedia.com



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03:56 PM - 04 Aug 14

BRONZE: Dogtopia

Amy Nichols, CEO | Vienna, Va.

Achievements: Offering a high level of day care and boarding services to dog owners; founding a nonprofit arm, K-9 Support, to aid military, police and service dogs; partnering with local rescue groups to host adoption events, raise money and collect needed items.

Description: Dogtopia was founded in 2002 and began franchising in 2005. It has grown to 29 locations throughout the U.S., offering day care, boarding and spa services.

What do you wish you had known when you started?

"Though I researched the pet industry extensively, and created a detailed business model before opening the first store, I wish I would have known that creating an equally detailed operations plan would save much time and energy later. In 2003, I went on maternity leave and realized the store would have to run without me. That can be scary for an entrepreneur who's built her business from square one. By detailing day-to-day operations I knew that anyone could follow it, even if I took a vacation or a long leave. It also made me aware, on a larger scale, that I could enter the franchise industry and feel confident empowering others to follow in the footsteps of that flagship store."

What's your favorite aspect of the pet industry? "I love that the pet industry continues to grow and rapidly innovate, as new businesses and products are always entering the marketplace to advance the industry."



Pictured is Dogtopia's flagship location, which opened in summer 2002 in Tysons Corner, Va.



Cardinal Crystal
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petage.com/cardinal-pet-h...

10:19 AM - 29 Jul 14



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12:58 PM - 05 Aug 14



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10:34 PM - 08 Aug 14

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TECHNOLOGY

Who's Afraid of Technology? The Essential Tech Tools for the Non-Techie

Robert Allen, New Media Connection

Friday, 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Social Media and Content Marketing: Perfect Together!

Gene Sower, Samson Media

Friday, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.; Saturday, 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Online Video: Taking Your Business to the Next Level

Robert Allen, New Media Connection

Friday, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.; Saturday, 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.; Sunday, 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Top Tips for Effective Websites

Gene Sower, Samson Media

Friday, 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.; Saturday, 3 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.

How Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Can Bring You More Business

Gene Sower, Samson Media

Saturday, 1 p.m.; Sunday, 11:30 a.m.



MARKETING/MERCHANDISING

Off-line Low Cost/No Cost Marketing

Vicki Lynne Morgan, Animal Brands

Friday, 11:30 a.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.

Putting Sizzle on Your Sales Floor

Linda Cahan, Cahan & Company

Friday, 2 p.m.

Should You Open an Online Storefront?

Brian Ewing, Snap Retail

Saturday, 2 p.m.

Transitioning from Puppy Sales to Adoptions

Greg Gordon, Dog Patch Pet and Feed

Friday, 1 p.m.; Saturday, 3 p.m.

Event Marketing: The Secret to Busy Sidewalks

Brian Ewing, Snap Retail

Sunday, 11:30 a.m.

Top Visual Merchandising Tips

Linda Cahan, Cahan & Company

Saturday, 1 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Shopper Marketing

Vicki Lynne Morgan, Animal Brands

Saturday, 11:30 a.m.



All sessions will be held on the exhibit floor in the **Smart Zone**.

For more information, see our website at www.totalpetexpo/education14, including any schedule changes.

Education Stations

Note: Complete descriptions, speaker bios and signup information are available at www.totalpetexpo.com/education14. Sign up in advance or drop by on site. Space available on a first-come, first-served basis. Limit of four stores per session.



ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Next Wave of Natural

Anthony Bennie, Clear Conscience Pet
Friday, 11:30 a.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Understanding Pet Food Ingredients

Nancy Hassel, Long Island Pet Professionals, LLC
Friday, 1 p.m.; Saturday 11:30 a.m.; Sunday, 11:30 a.m.

Targeting Health—Ten Ways to Help Your Customers' Pets Stay Fit and Live Longer

Krista Wickens, PetZen Products/DogTread
Friday, 3 p.m.; Saturday, 2 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.

The Importance of Promoting Good Dental Health

Nancy Hassel, Long Island Pet Professionals, LLC
Friday, 2 p.m.; Saturday, 3 p.m.



AQUATIC

Aquatics Idea Share (open forum discussion)

Joe Olenik (moderator), Hoffer's Tropic Life/Aquatic Environments
Friday, 2 p.m.; Saturday, 2 p.m.; Sunday, 11:30 a.m.

Ten Ways to Keep Fish Alive

Joe Olenik, Hoffer's Tropic Life/Aquatic Environments
Friday, 11:30 a.m.

The LED Lighting Revolution

Les Wilson, Cobalt International
Friday, 1 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Improving Your Aquarium Maintenance Business

Joe Olenik, Hoffer's Tropic Life/Aquatic Environments
Saturday, 11:30 a.m.



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

How to Keep Good Employees

Vicki Lynne Morgan, Animal Brands
Friday 1 p.m.

Foundations for Launching a New Business

Vicki Lynne Morgan, Animal Brands
Friday, 3 p.m.; Saturday, 3 p.m.

*Remaining sessions conducted by **Karl Stearns** of Profits Plus*

Pricing Strategies for Profits Plus

Friday, 11:30 a.m.

Managing Your Finances in a Challenging Economy

Friday, 2 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

What It Takes to be a 5-Star Business

Friday, 3 p.m.

Characteristics of a Successful Business

Saturday, 11:30 a.m.

How to Get Extraordinary Results from Ordinary People

Saturday, 1 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.

Numbers Gibberish and the Profit Secrets They Hide

Saturday, 2 p.m.

How to Win the Battle With Your Competition

Sunday, 11:30 a.m.

All sessions will be held on the exhibit floor. For more information, including any schedule changes, see our website at www.totalpetexpo.com/education14.

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Storefront

Pet industry news and management tips



Pet Market to Reach \$73 Billion

Study says pet humanization is driving industry growth.

BY REBEKAH HARRISON

The pet market is expected to have projected sales of \$73 billion by the end of the 2014, with pet humanization being the driving factor, according to a study by Packaged Facts.

"U.S. Pet Market Outlook, 2014-2015" reports that pet humanization has given rise to premium pet product shoppers across all platforms, and these consumers are influencing the industry.

"This is a trend where pet owners think of their pets as family," said George Puro, Packaged Facts report author. "They are purchasing products that are similar to things that they might purchase for themselves."

A large advertisement for Mammoth Dog Toys. It features a close-up of a light brown dog's head and front paws. The dog is wearing a black collar with a silver ring and is playing with a black, tire-like toy that has the word 'MAMMOTH' printed on it. The background is a green lawn. At the top of the ad, the text 'MAMMOTH. DOG TOYS FOR LIFE.' is displayed. At the bottom right, there is a cartoon illustration of a happy dog. The bottom of the ad has a red background with the Mammoth logo and website address, and a line of small text providing contact information.

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Their \$73 billion projection includes pet products such as pet food and nonfood pet supplies, such as toys and chews, cat litter, bedding, house-breaking and clean-up products, houses and carriers, grooming products, leashes and collars, feeding/watering devices, and apparel. It also encompasses services, such as veterinary services and nonmedical pet services like

grooming, boarding and training.

Pet humanization not only includes giving pets human-quality products, but also veterinary procedures like chemotherapy, MRIs and hip replacements, as well as supplements like glucosamine and omega-3 fatty acids.

Oweners are also buying human-grade pet food containing super fruits, and designer beds, bowls and

clothing. Finally, they are also purchasing luxury services like boarding options that are similar to hotel rooms.

"Manufacturers and retailers are really picking up on this trend," said Puro. "We are seeing all sorts of products and services that are otherwise seen for humans offered for pets as well."

For example, Merrick pet care has food with names like Cowboy Cook-out and Grammy's Pot Pie.

"That sounds like something that you might want to eat yourself," said Puro. "They have special grooming now where they can do chalking and feathering with your dogs."

Licensed gear is also part of the pet humanization trend.

"Their dog or cat doesn't know anything about their favorite football team but certainly when they are dressing their pets in those things, they are humanizing them," said Puro. "If they are doing this for themselves and they are doing this for their children, why not do it for their pets?"

Packaged Facts surveys have tracked the emergence of premium pet food shoppers for years. In 2013, the survey found that 70 percent of pet owners would be willing to spend extra money to ensure the health of their pet. It also found that 30 percent of pet owners would prefer to shop at retailers that offer the best products available no matter what the increase in cost.

"What's so fun about this is seeing all the creative ways that manufacturers and retailers are trying to engage pet owners," said Puro. "They look at what pet owners are interested in and pick up on trends going on in the center aisle of a supermarket."

According to the report, premium pet product shopping is most common among higher income households. U.S. households earning \$70,000 or more account for 54 percent of pet market expenditure.

According to Packaged Facts, these consumers are responsible for a large share of the bill for premium pet products and services. These consumers are also more likely to have been less affected by economic downturns and are recovering more quickly.



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Cardinal President Wins WPA Award

Tony de Vos received the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award



The World Pet Association has recognized Tony de Vos, president and CEO of Cardinal Laboratories with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award was presented during SuperZoo's Doobie Brothers concert at the House of Blues in Las Vegas.

"Over the past 42 years, Tony de Vos has selflessly led and mentored those in the pet business on natural pet products, and ecological and sustainable business practices," said Michael Twain, vice chairman of WPA. "He worked tirelessly in the formation of the American Family Pet Expo, the Sustainability Coalition, and acted as a wonderful past chairman of WPA. His work speaks for itself; it was an easy choice."

The WPA's Lifetime Achievement Award, also known as the Matsui Award, is meant to honor lifetime contributions in the pet industry. It is awarded only when the WPA feels someone is worthy of the distinction. The Matsui Award has been presented 31 times since its inception in 1969.

"It's an honor to receive such a prestigious award, especially from my fellow WPA members," said de Vos. "I've always felt it was important to stay active in the

industry, especially with organizations like the World Pet Association that do so much to bring the pet world together through events and information."

De Vos is not only a member, but has twice served as president of the WPA (formerly the WWPSA). He founded the America's Family Pet Expo through the WPA. He is a member of the American Pet Products Association and the Pet

Industry Joint Advisory Council.

De Vos is also a member of the Pet Industry Sustainability Coalition, American Solar Energy Society and International Solar Energy Society. He has overseen Cardinal Laboratories' transition to a fully solar-powered office complex and has implemented many green practices at the company, including the use of recyclable packaging materials.

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K9 Fit Club Now Offers Online Certification

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SPOT



to getting – and keeping – both dogs and owners healthy,” said Tricia Montgomery, founder and president of K9 Fit Club. “The new online certification program allows flexibility for those who work full-time or part-time, or who exercise with their dog as a hobby or just for fun. We want to give everyone the opportunity to make money doing what they love and loving what they do.”

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K9 Fit Club currently has numerous certified trainers across the country, with many more now enrolled in the program. Online certification typically takes anywhere from a weekend to one month to obtain, depending on the flexibility of your schedule and costs \$599. A \$200 discount is applied for certified personal trainers.

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The company is also expanding

with 18 additional franchise stores opening in Florida, North Carolina, New Jersey, Nevada and Texas.

Woof Gang Bakery is a leading retailer in raw frozen diets, kibble, canned and dehydrated dog and cat food. Woof Gang Bakery also carries pet essentials,

fashionable accessories, dog and cat toys and a wide range of dog spa products. Head-to-tail grooming also is also offered.

Since the first Woof Gang Bakery opened in 2007, the company has expanded across nine states.

Fromm Launches New Website

In celebration of 110 years of business, Fromm will launch a completely redesigned consumer-facing website.

The new website will showcase Fromm's history through photos and videos as well as recipe analysis and product descriptions.

"The last decade has seen an explosion in the premium and independent pet food market and as a company, we've experienced stellar growth that has allowed us to create new jobs, design news recipes and grow this brand that has defined my family for generations," said Tom Nie-man, owner of Fromm Family Foods. "This new website is another step forward for our brand as we continue to engage and build relationships with customers, both new and existing."

There are future plans for site expansion to include Fromm's non-profit partners as well as future events and brand news.

Fetching Communications Adds Six Clients

Fetching Communications, the PR and marketing agency for the pet and veterinary industries has added six new clients.

These clients include Pet Sitters International, an educational association for professional pet sitters; Farewell Products, manufacturer of the Farewell Pet Kit; Waggers, Inc., a treat company for cats and dogs; Washington Lighthouse Business Solutions, LLC, created to assist and counsel veterinarians on their business; K9 Fit Club, an indoor facility dedicated to dogs and their owners and Nutrilife Health Products, Inc., who manufactures dietary supplements for pets.

For more information, please visit www.fetchingcommunications.com.

Continued on p. 22

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Center for Pet Safety Releases Certification System

The voluntary program will provide guidelines for pet product manufacturers



The Center for Pet Safety published a landmark certification system called the Safety Harness Crash Test Protocol and Rating system.

The Safety Harness Crash Test Protocol and Rating system provides guidelines for pet product manufacturers. The test protocol, which is the result of the 2013 Harness Crashworthiness Study conducted by the Center for Pet Safety ensures pet safety harness restraints offer crash protection.

While the certification is a voluntary program, pet product manufacturers are highly encouraged to participate in order to qualify for a Safety-Certified Seal on their product packaging.

"The Center for Pet Safety took great care evaluating the data returned from our 2013 study to understand what safety harness products should do to protect life," said Lindsey Wolko, founder of Center for Pet Safety. "Pet product manufacturers have a responsibility to ensure that these safety devices protect human life and provide the best chance of survival to the pet in the case of an accident."

The Center for Pet Safety will accept pre-orders from test facilities on a limited production run of the version 2.1 CPS Crash Test Dogs.

PureLife 4PETS

"I started my 7 year old cat with hip issues on the PureLife 4PETS Joint Mobility several months ago. He use to never be able to jump up on anything high. Now he acts like my 1 year old cat, even jumping up on the kitchen counters! I have definitely seen improvement in his mobility and energy level!"

- April Phillips (Cape Coral, FL)

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WPA Makes \$25,000 Donation to HABRI

The money will help research the benefits of pet ownership.



The World Pet Association donated \$25,000 to help gather, fund and promote scientific research that demonstrates the human health benefits of pet ownership.

"The World Pet Association's commitment to researching the human-animal bond helps demonstrate the value of pets and the pet industry to society," said Steven Feldman, HABRI executive director. "Support and active participation from leaders like the World Pet Association is vital to advancing the science that demonstrates the positive roles they play in the integrated health of individuals, families and communities."

The HABRI Foundation maintains an online library of human-animal bond research and information, funds research projects to demonstrate the health benefits of pets and other animals, informs the public about human-animal bond research and advocates for public policies that support the beneficial role of pets in society.

"WPA is pleased to be able to assist HABRI fulfill their mission of providing information about the benefits of pet ownership," said Doug Poindexter, WPA president. "Having these resources in one place and readily available is critical to the long term welfare of the industry."

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BRIEFS

Continued from p. 18

Jolly Pet's, Inc. Launches New Website

Jolly Pets, Inc. has launched a fully redesigned website.

Jolly Pets goal was to design a website that was simple to navigate and had easily accessible product information.

The new site contains product information, retail locators, interactive social feeds, videos, images and a

blog full of all things dog.

Jolly Pets have also added a "Find Your New Toy" feature which prompts the website visitor to talk about their pet and then the site will suggest toys suitable for the pet based on the information provided.

Please visit www.jollypets.com.



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Lincoln Bark Wins Award

Lincoln Bark has received the Abe's Golden Bear Award given by Abe's Market for excellence in pet products for 2014.

Each year, Abe's Market selects 13 companies in different product categories for their excellence in natural qualities and eco-friendliness.

Lincoln Bark, a family-owned company, manufactures snacks containing no wheat, corn, soy, artificial preservatives, gluten or added hormones. Lincoln Bark also features a signature ingredient of chia seeds to promote cardiovascular health, joint mobility, improved digestion and healthy skin and coat for dogs.

Northstar Investors Acquires Pet Buddies

Pet Buddies has been acquired by NorthStar Investors.

"The acquisition of Pet Buddies was a natural for the company," said Sean Rowe, general manager for Pet Buddies. "We have been in the pet industry for more than a decade and are thrilled to have taken on this unique, high-quality line of pet toys and grooming products for dogs and cats."

Sean Rowe has spent the past 13 years in the pet industry. His primary achievement in that time was the growth and development of Veterinary Ventures, Inc., makers of the Drinkwell brand of pet water fountains. Sean Rowe designed and developed more than a dozen new products, was awarded six patents and grew sales ten times before the company sold to PetSafe.

Coby Rowe has been named the company's sales manager. With more than 15 years experience in sales and operations, he most recently served as business development manager for North-Star Investors.

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Pet Food Packaging Predicted In the Billions by 2018

A study found that the demand for packaging will rise 5 percent annually.

U.S. demand for pet food packaging is expected to rise almost 5 percent annually to \$2.5 billion in 2018, according to a re-

cent study published by The Freedonia Group Inc.

Growth is based on the use of higher-value packaging and continued

strength in the pet food shipments fueled by an expected rebound in the pet population, the study found.

“Plastic pouches will be the primary beneficiary of the trend toward more advanced pet food packaging,” said Joe Pryweller, analyst at The Freedonia Group Inc. “Pouch demand in pet food packaging will rise 8.3 percent per year to \$540 million in 2018, the fastest pace of growth among pet food packaging types.”

According to Pryweller, pouch demand will be bolstered by features that are inherently convenient for consumers, such as zippered closure mechanisms, and be lightweight in order to reduce shipping costs.

Tubs and cups will continue to supplant metal containers in wet food, growing in popularity due to peelable lids that are easier to open and allow the consumer to avoid cuts from metal edges.

Dry food will continue to represent the largest food segment in pet food packaging with a share of 49 percent in 2018. Bags are the largest packaging type in this segment due to the dominance of bulk items, those weighing 16 pounds or more, in dry pet food.

Multiwall paper bags are the preferred packaging type in the dry food packaging category, but woven polypropylene bags are gaining favor, with demand expected to expand 8.6 percent annually through 2018, according to the report.

Chilled and frozen pet food products offer another area of opportunity for pet food packaging growth. This category has developed from a small base and is expected to more than double in size through 2018, boosting demand for pouches, bags, tubs and cups and chubs. Consumer interest in raw pet food products with prolonged shelf life will fuel growth in this category as retail stores increase freezer and refrigerator shelf space, according to the study.

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GOOD DEEDS

In Home Pet Services Helps Donate Supplies

The fourth annual Mayday for Mutts held by Robyn Elman, president and founder of In Home Pet Services, Inc.,

raised \$3,000 worth of products for two local animal rescue groups.

Mayday for Mutts is a month-long pet product drive to collect and donate pet products to a local rescue

group. This year's recipients were Second Loves Chance and Un-chained New York both located in Long Island, N.Y.

"Every year we have done this drive, I am elated by the amount our clients, franchises and friends are able to donate," said Elman. "We are so happy that we could collect enough to help two deserving animal rescue groups that are in constant need of supplies and don't have the budgets to purchase them on their own. Both groups do a tremendous amount for our shelter animals."

Pet Valu Holds Successful Litter Drive

Pet Valu recently held a litter drive to help local shelters.

Pet Valu asked their customers to purchase a 40 pound bag of Kitty's Best Litter to donate to a local shelter. This resulted in 500,000 pounds of donated litter. The litter was delivered to local animal shelters to benefit cats with cleaner spaces to live.

Coastal Pet Products Awards Scholarships

Animal Behavior College has announced the winners of its first sponsor-supported scholarship essay contest.

Coastal Pet Products Inc., a pet collar and leash manufacturer provided two ABC Dog Obedience Program students scholarships of \$500 each. The recipients, Ashlie Bonicelli of Aurora, Colo., and Paul D. Lopez of Homestead, Fla., were selected for their unwavering commitment to the dog training profession.

"Coastal Pet Products is pleased to have the opportunity to support educational opportunities such as this one," said Diane Thomas, marketing manager. "We are dedicated

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Continued on p. 28

The Natural Pet Product Expo Will Showcase to Retailers

The expo will allow retailers to learn about new products.



With the natural products industry expanding because of consumer demand, retailers are always looking to find new products for the customers.

To help them, Long Island Pet Professionals and Whitegate PR, will be holding another NYC Re-tails & Sales Expo, Oct. 16, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City.

This one-day event will have a patriotic twist, as the vendors at the event will feature Made-in-America pet products on display and for sale exclusively to retailers.

New York City and tri-state area retailers, pet influencers, pet celebrities and the media are invited for this exclusive event, to meet and learn about natural pet products.

"The event in October will feature Natural Pet products that are Made in the USA and if you have been paying attention to the industry this is a booming area as the demand from retailers and pet parents for such products is growing daily," said Nancy E. Hassel, founder and president of Long Island Pet Professionals.

After a similar and successful event in February, organizers decided to hold it at

a larger venue to allow for more people.

"We are excited to be in a bigger venue to allow more vendors for retailers to meet and a later time to accommodate more people to attend later in the day," said Dana Humphrey of Whitegate PR. "And we are thrilled that to once again have Pet Age Magazine as our Presenting Media Sponsor."

Retailers and members of the me-

dia can request an exclusive invite by calling Nancy Hassel at 631-446-1105 or Dana Humphrey at 619-414-9307. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

To learn more about the event, register a retailer to attend or to become a vendor go to www.RetailsandSalesPetExpo.com.

Pet Age is the media sponsor of the event.



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GOOD DEEDS

Continued from p. 26

to supporting programs that enrich the lives of pets and their owners."

The purpose of the essay contest was to provide financial assistance and sup-

port for future student pet professionals enrolled in ABC's dog training curriculum. The scholarship recipients had to convey a commitment to using their skills and expertise to help owners achieve a harmoni-

ous human-to-canine relationship.

"We commend Coastal Pet Products for providing scholarships and demonstrating a commitment to helping students become certified dog trainers," said Steven Appelbaum, president and CEO of Animal Behavior College. "This investment represents and reaffirms their dedication to supporting and advancing dog training education."

To qualify, applicants needed to demonstrate a financial need and submit a 500-word essay that clearly explained why they want to become a dog trainer. Judges reviewed each entry and selected applicants who communicated their objectives best.

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MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Wright Joins Vital Essentials

Jon D. Wright was hired to join the Vital Essentials sales management team.

Over the past 20 years, Wright has held marketing leadership positions with Kimberly-Clark, ConAgra Foods, Birds Eye Foods and Nature's Way most recently serving as senior marketing consultant for Kaytee Pet Products.

"This is part of our long-term growth strategy" says Lanny Viegut, CEO of Vital Essentials.

New Additions at Nature's Logic

Nature's Logic Pet Food hired Rebecca Gaudet and Wes Hoen to join their eastern territory team.

Gaudet will serve as northeast territory manager and has a history in dog training as well as the pet food industry.

Hoen will serve as southeast territory manager and has a history in pet health.

World's Best Cat Litter Sponsors Cat Training Program

The online program teaches students proper cat socialization techniques.

World's Best Cat Litter is now a sponsor of Animal Behavior College's Cat Management and Training Education Program.

The Cat Management and Training CEP is an online program that teaches students the proper socialization techniques for developing human-to-feline and feline-to-canine interactions.

Additionally, students learn cat behaviors, training techniques and common commands such as to come, sit and stay. They learn how to interpret feline body language and vocalizations, and positive ways to address problem behaviors.

"World's Best Cat Litter is excited about partnering with Animal Behavior

College and providing support to their Cat Management Program," said Jean Broders, brand manager for World's Best Cat Litter. "Our goal is to share feline information and provide support to program participants by helping them optimize their learning opportunity. We are excited to see the growth in this program and are glad to be a part of this exciting endeavor."

Additionally, through the company's GiveLitter charity, World's Best Cat Litter donates and allows cat owners to donate free cat litter to shelters in need. Selected charities can receive anywhere from 1 pound to up to 15,000 pounds of litter each. GiveLitter has donated more than 346,600 pounds of

cat litter.

"This new sponsorship with World's Best Cat Litter provides yet another opportunity for the college to promote cat management education and training while offering course graduates some of the best cat product choices available in the industry," said Steven Appelbaum, president and CEO of Animal Behavior College. "ABC enrollment in the Cat Management and Training CEP has grown significantly, and the majority are dog trainers or in the process of becoming one. With more than 40 percent of dog owners in the U.S. also having cats, these dog trainers have an opportunity to enhance their service offerings."



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EDITOR'S PICK



2



3



1 Bagel Bed from Bessie + Barnie – editor's pick

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the depth of the bed.
www.bessieandbarnie.com

2 Daily Menu Stone-ware Collection by Petrageous

This collection offers both a classic and trendy look. Its eatery-themed chalkboard design and basic black and white colors coordinate well

with modern kitchen décor. This is a four piece assortment including a 2-cups capacity bowl, 3.5-cups capacity bowl and coordinating dog and cat mugs.

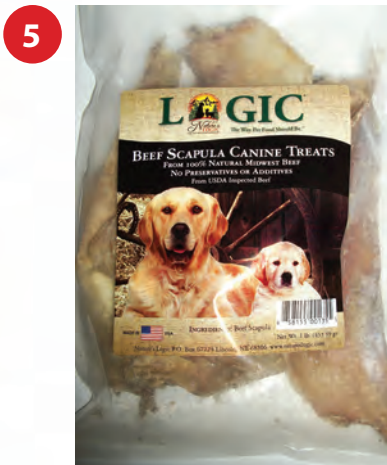
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3 TenderMoist Cat Food by Waggars

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6

free, high-meat, low-carb, semi-moist cat diet. This all-natural premium cat food is made in the U.S.A. and contains more than 90 percent protein, less than 10 percent carbs, and three times the moisture of kibble. TenderMoist comes in three varieties packaged in

3 pound bags.
www.waggers.com

4 ChuckIt! Indoor Fumbler by Petmate

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chenille fabric is great for petite dogs and puppies.
www.petmate.com

5 Canine Beef Scapula Treat by Nature's Logic

The newest entry in Nature's Logic line of all-natural, single-ingredient dog

treats. The treat comes from Midwestern beef sources and cattle graded as USDA Prime. Keeps dogs busy and promotes good dental hygiene.
www.natureslogic.com

6 Cool Pet Pad by The Green Pet Shop

This eco-friendly cooling pad doesn't use water or electricity to prevent pets from overheating. The bed is pressure-activated; the non-toxic cool gel works on contact as soon as the pet lies down.
www.thegreenpetshop.com

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7



8



7 Super Boost Squares by Dogswell

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8 Dozer Throw by Arts & Sciences

The Dozer Throw by Arts & Sciences is comfortable and cozy with odor eliminating freshness. It keeps pets warm while protecting and keeping a pet owner's furniture, car interior and pet beds from undue wear and tear, hair, dirt and stains. It is machine washable, soft, quilt stitched and a generous 36-inch-by-29-inch size www.who-rae.com

9 Fetch'n Fillet Dog Treats by Look Who's Happy

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11



12



ada and New Zealand, and all treats are made in the USA to the highest quality standards.
www.LookWhosHappy.com

10 KleanBowl with Nourish-Pet KleanBowl Refills by Kinn, Inc.
 The Nourish-Pet Klean-

Bowl Refills make the KleanBowl a convenient and no-wash bowl for busy pet owners. The refills are made of eco-friendly, biodegradable and compostable sugar cane fibers. Available in three sizes and each comes with seven KleanBowl Refills.
www.kinninc.com

11 iFetch Automatic Ball Launcher
 The iFetch gives owners' arms a rest while keeping dogs entertained for hours playing fetch. It only takes minutes to train dogs to drop the ball into the funnel so it will shoot out to be fetched again.
www.goifetch.com

12 Veterinary Formula Clinical Care by Synergy Labs
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an recommended ingredients. All reformulated options are 100 percent safe and most are paraben, dye and soap-free grooming products.
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14 Redesigned Booda Dome Litter Pan by Petmate
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www.petmate.com.

15 Catty Stacks in Giraffe and Zebra Prints
Catty Stacks is expanding its line of cardboard box cat houses by adding giraffe and zebra prints. The boxes are stackable and durable, allowing owners to create custom, stylish jungle gyms for their felines.
www.cattystacks.com

16



17



18



19



16 Tempt'n Tender Dog Treats by Look Who's Happy

Tempt'n Tenders are made with USA-raised, cage-free chicken and are available crusted with carrot, pumpkin, sweet potato or blueberry for a unique taste and texture. All Look Who's Happy treats are made in

their Georgia facility to the highest quality standards.
www.LookWhosHappy.com

17 Wise Rewards Dental Chews by Pet Edge

Wise Rewards Dental Chews keep dogs' mouth and teeth healthy by removing tartar and plaque while enticing

dogs with an appealing vanilla mint flavor. They are wheat, corn and soy free and made in the U.S.A.

www.PetEdgeDS.com

18 Coastal Pet Products Rascals Dog Latex and Vinyl Toys

Latex is a natural choice while the vinyl toys have just

the right amount of firmness. Safe and non-toxic, both feature inline squeakers for maximum safety.

www.coastalpet.com

19 Wetnoz Flexi Mat by Petmate

The simple yet elegant mat adds flair to pet dinner time. It's double the size of

previous Wetnoz mat—25-inches-by-19-inches. The silicone mat rolls up and tucks away for easy storage. Available in six colors, Flexi Mat is durable, odor free and dishwasher safe.

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20 Ultra "Dirty" Wash by Best Shot Pet Products

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21 Precision Fit Nylon Harness & Precision Fit Rain Slicker by my canine kids

Both products are made in the USA and feature the innovative Precision Fit technology, offering the ultimate in simple adjustability to the dog outerwear market. Precision Fit makes products comfortable for dogs by conforming to

their chest size and shape. www.mycaninekidsinc.com

22 4U beds by DDPlus
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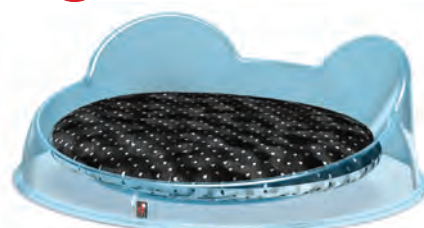
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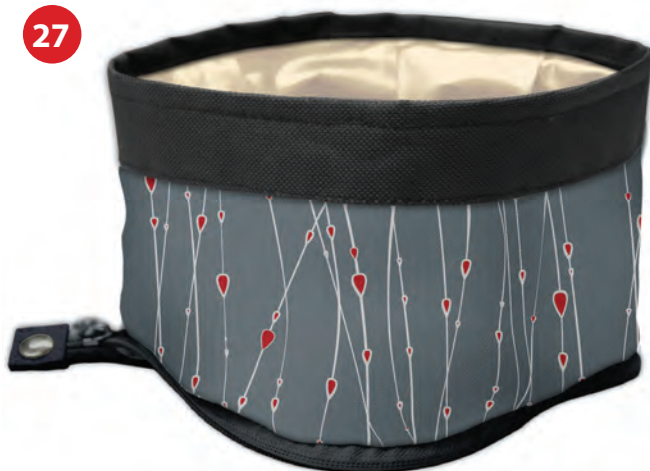
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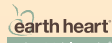


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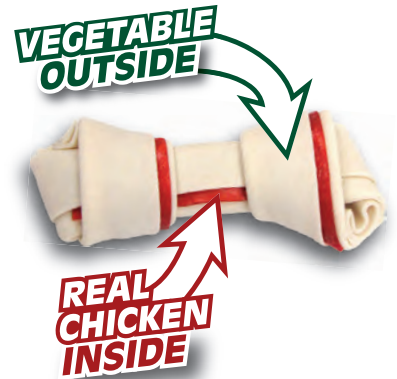


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Don't Take Security for Granted

Retailers must protect themselves from break-ins and other forms of crime.

BY DAN CALABRESE

As a pet retailer, you realize that you have to take security issues seriously. The simple fact that you have cash on hand tells you that.

But how seriously do you take security concerns, really? You figure you keep an eye on your cash. You told your employees to watch the door to make sure no one is walking out with a coat stuffed full of play toys or dog

food – let alone a dog.

And surely no one is going to try to make off with a boa constrictor. So do you really face a serious threat?

The answer is that if you're operating a business with assets on the premises, then yes, you have to assume security threats are real and require your attention.

Shoplifters are one threat, but shoplifters don't have easy access to your cash

drawers and inventory stock. Your employees do. And however much you pay attention or instruct your trusted team members to do the same, there is no way you can be everywhere or see everything.

Luis Orbegoso, president of small business for ADT, advises retailers of every size to recognize they can't take their security for granted.

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sume ‘It could never be me,’” Orbegoso said. “Some may think they are too small. Some assume a door chime or a guard dog is suitable for security measures, but many retail owners without security in place are not protecting themselves, the security of their customers and the protection of their inventory.”

Orbegoso also urged retailers not to take a reactive approach to security – in other words, to wait to deal with it once a security threat is apparent or, worse, a breach has already occurred. He said many wrongly assume that security systems like those offered by

ADT can’t be made to fit into the budget. Given an understanding of your store’s particular vulnerabilities, he said, they can.

“It is critical to partner with experts, like the security advisors from ADT, to come to your business and conduct an in-person, front-to-back-door walk of your store, identify your areas of vulnerability and create a customized solution for you,” Orbegoso said.

Modern security systems give retailers access to real-time video of in-store activity, and can trigger an automatic alert in the event of a breach.

“With this added layer of control, retailers can keep an eye on all areas of their business, helping to ensure greater levels of premise security, inventory protection, and customer safety,” Orbegoso said.

To the extent retailers may be concerned about threats from customers, Orbegoso recommends checking for certain behaviors that might signal reason for suspicion. One example would be when a customer continually visits

Modern security systems give retailers access to real-time video of in-store activity, and can trigger an automatic alert in the event of a breach.

the same area of the store. That could be an indication that he is casing that area or checking patterns of behavior by store employees in search of an opportunity to pull off a theft.

Such a customer would likely be unaware, of course, if he is under surveillance by video equipment. But if store management doesn’t recognize such behavior as suspicious, the ability to observe the behavior might not be as effective as it could in preventing a theft attempt.

At the same time, store managers should look for hints of threats from within, such as cash drawers not balancing correctly at the close of business. That is an indication that, under the best of circumstances, employees are not doing their jobs correctly. At worst, of course, there is the possibility that they are stealing from you.

You’ve probably seen the reality shows in which business owners randomly leave a \$100 bill next to a cash register, then watch via video surveillance to see if an employee under suspicion will pocket the cash or return it to the cash register. Video surveillance can certainly help when you’ve identified a target for your suspicion, although you have to be ready for what you might see.

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The Art of Customer Referrals

Your customers should always have a reason to talk about you.

BY JESSICA FARINA-MORRIS

A small business must be fiscally conservative when it comes to laying out their marketing budget for the year.

Spreading the word about your business is one important component of your marketing plan that you can do relatively cheaply and, in some cases, for free. The Internet age has made this task much easier than it has ever been in the past, and the power of social media goes a long way in your marketing endeavors. Today, small and large businesses, as well as products and services, live and die by sites like TripAdvisor, Angie's List and Amazon reviews.

Most importantly, your customers should always have a reason to talk about you. Maybe it is your exceptional pet food knowledge that helped them pick out a food for their allergic cat, maybe it is the fact that you carry out large bags of dog food to your customers' cars, or maybe it is simply that you remember their dog's name every time they visit. Whatever the experience is, you want to ask your customers to talk about it to their friends and, more importantly, on social sites.

So, what does it take to get a customer to talk about your business? Incentives.

People enjoy winning and being rewarded. Even small, inexpensive physical rewards can be enticing, such as keychains, that give the customer concrete proof of their achievement to show their friends.

You can institute a program that rewards your current customers for

referrals and recommendations that spread the word in exchange for discounts and prizes. Think about the programs that many large companies have in place. If I give my cable account number to a friend and they sign up, both my friend and I get discounts

People are already likely to talk about their experiences, but giving customers an extra incentive to do so can jumpstart a loyal customer base.

on our monthly plans. Get five friends to sign up and get a free month of pay per view. Rewards can build to keep people continually referring.

Companies from all over, both large and small, know the value of referrals and recommendations. It has been reported that some companies even pay bloggers to write about their products or services, as well as write false product reviews. Although this is not ethical or ideal, it does reinforce how important consumers find peer recommendations, and the time companies are spending on making sure their online reputation is a positive one.

People are already likely to talk about their experiences, positive or negative, but giving customers an extra incentive to do

so can jumpstart a loyal customer base. And just like that, at very little cost, your customers will do your marketing for you.

Some stores opt to offer a return customer discount of 10 percent, or a one-time larger discount for a positive comment on a site such as Facebook. Some businesses give a reward to both the referring customer and the new customer. You can make business card-sized referral coupons to accomplish this. You don't have to offer the program to all customers, you can be selective and only offer it to your most loyal customers, if that is what you choose. Regardless, you should always recognize your most loyal referring customers. They will most likely become even more engaged in your business the more you recognize them.

Ultimately, you want to remember to remind customers all the time about the incentive programs in place. Keep your programs fresh and recognize your top contributors. Be sure to regularly review your social media sites so that you can ensure there are positive comments being made, and respond to your customer base to show that you are engaged and care about their feedback.

Jessica Farina-Morris is the director of marketing for Phillips Pet Food & Supplies, a large pet food and supply distributor. Her undergraduate degree is in business, with a minor in psychology, and her MBA is from DeSales University, with a concentration in marketing. Jessica also teaches marketing classes at a local community college.

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Learning to Be a Good Manager

These simple steps can make a big impact.

BY DAVE RATNER

If you are like me, one of the greatest challenges you face is managing people. Great managers are so hard to come by.

And just because you own the business, doesn't mean you are a good manager. There is a huge difference between being a successful entrepreneur and being a successful manager. For me, managing people has been harder than building my business.

When I got the invitation to join a monthly CEO roundtable group, I jumped at the chance. Their meetings are held in New York at different venues each month. Normally, we network for a while and then break into groups for discussions that are about things that will help us run our businesses better.

When I learned who some of the folks at my first meeting were, I was blown away. There were folks in the room that had gigantic businesses – companies that were doing hundreds of millions and billions of dollars. I had to remind myself I was in New York and there were lots of Wall Street types, real estate developers, high-powered lawyers and countless other CEOs and very successful entrepreneurs.

To say that my business is the smallest in the group is an understatement. But the fact is, these folks face many of the same issues and deal with the same stresses that we pet retailers do. I want to share with you what I have been fortunate to learn from some of them.

The theme of our last meeting was “dealing with adversity.” There were 10 people in our forum. We each spoke

briefly about one example of a particularly difficult time in our life or career and how we dealt with it. As my turn was approaching, all I could think about was that in 1995 I had to close a store and it almost put us under.

As I listened to each of the folks in the room, I was stunned by what “real adversity” some of these folks had faced

There is a huge difference between being a successful entrepreneur and being a successful manager.

and – for lack of a better word – defeated. The fellow next to me ran a business that provided software to many of the biggest names in the financial industry.

Guess where his and most of his customers' offices were? Yup, in the Twin Towers. He, and his crew, managed to get the hard drives out of their computers before the towers collapsed. He rented – actually took over – a close-by Staples, put his hard drives in the computers in the Staples store and was able to continue servicing what was left of his customers' businesses without missing a beat. His message was there is always a way to get done what you need to get done.

Another person just expanded his business by buying another business that

had a big new warehouse with lots of needed production capacity. He had just started to process and pack his very seasonal orders when hurricane Sandy hit and completely flooded the building. Everything was ruined. He could have had a huge insurance claim but would have lost all the customers who had placed orders. He rallied his whole team to work around the clock to clean the building and get orders shipped. His message was make sure you treat people well. When you need them, they will be there. He never could have gotten back into business if his team didn't put in the effort.

How do you deal with all the adversity in your business life? The guest speaker in our group gave us his six rules of dealing with problems or adversity.

1. You own the problem. If it is your company, you own the problem.

2. You have to be present. Don't try and avoid the problem or conflict. It is not going away.

3. Be calm to all observers. Your employees don't want to see you freaking out. If you are not calm, don't expect your crew to be.

4. Always ask questions. Nothing is ever as it is presented to you.

5. Focus. You cannot get distracted by other lesser things. Solve the problem.

6. Be decisive. Your crew is looking to you to make a decision. Once you make the decision, stick to it.

A successful retailer, Dave Ratner is the owner of Dave's Soda & Pet City, an award winning seven-store mini-chain.

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What Level of Customer Service Does Your Store Offer?

The difference between success and failure could be the level of customer service you offer.

BY RD WEBSTER

I'm sure you've heard the old cliché about the pet store with half its lights turned off with the clerk sitting behind the cash register reading a paperback book, never looking up once while the consumer walked through the store and finally left without exchanging a word.

That probably isn't as true today as it was many years ago, but there are still stores not stepping up to offer the kind of customer service that will bring the consumer back to their store and build loyalty. Good customer service doesn't stop with asking if you can help. Yes, there is a fine line between assistance and harassment; you don't want to come off looking like a used car salesperson, but just because the customer said they didn't need help when they entered the store doesn't mean they won't after looking around for a while.

Good customer service is an intuitive thing, you should always be aware of any customer in the store. If they pick up an item and look at it, that is one indication that you might offer help. Placing an 8x5 inch sign in each department offering expert advice will make the customer more comfortable when you do reach out to them.

Some stores who are on top of their customer service game offer in-store features, such as a puppy walk, a secure space that allows a prospective owner to meet and bond with a puppy, or a play pen, which lets a customer place their pet in

a secure area while shopping. Other features like a claw clipping station, a water testing station or a help desk and parts center as free services are what will set your store apart from your competition.

I remember one store that I visited while detailing in Spokane, Wash. The moment you walked into their store you were greeted as if you were the most

only those who walk into your store will know about it. If you're proud of your service, advertise that fact. Make a point of your superior customer service on your website, Facebook page and in-store signage, and then of course, live up to your customer's expectations.

Really it comes down to this: The most important component to good customer service is attitude. I can't tell you how many times I've heard from retailers, "They bought the product from (a big-box-store/internet) and expect me to show them how to use it." Then they say how they told the consumer to "Go blow it out their barracks-bag." That, in my opinion, is the kiss of death. The retailer just lost a customer for life, and might even get a bad review about their attitude on Yelp or other review sites on the Internet.

Instead of turning customers away, be patient and helpful and make them want to buy something from you in gratitude for your kind help. Just because they bought something from a discounter doesn't mean they won't buy something from you if you have been friendly and helpful. This is especially likely if you have solved a problem for them.



important customer of the day and that they were glad you stopped in. This store sticks out in my memory because I got very little done there that day; they were so busy there wasn't much time to talk with me. I finally left to call on other stores, but even though they hadn't had much time to talk to me I didn't feel neglected. It was obvious that they were super busy. The other stores in the area weren't nearly as friendly, or as busy.

Something to keep in mind: Even if you have great customer service,

RD Webster is an associate/partner of Market Strategies, an independent rep group which covers all 50 states.



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Creativity Is The New Currency for Facebook

Users need more than just 'likes' to achieve success.

BY ANDREA FISCHETTI

Many of us know that having an active presence on social media is critical for our brands and businesses to remain competitive and relevant. It is equally as important to stay current on what it means to be relevant.

For some time now brands and businesses have focused on attracting "likes" on their posts. These days the playing field has changed.

Earlier this year, Facebook revised the algorithm that decides what posts users see on their news feeds. Now, users will see more posts from companies that include a picture or video. This change was made in response to research showing higher rates of social engagement, specifically comments, were found on more creative posts.

What Does This Actually Mean?

It indicates that pictures and videos, which traditionally are the posts that garner the highest number of comments, will be more effective than words.

This change is also an opportunity

because now a post with more engaging content will have a better chance of making a continued impression on the user.

Here are a few tips to help navigate this new environment.

Comments Are King

When you post on Facebook do so to engage and encourage conversation, not just inform.

Find a funny or even controversial, though not offensive, photo to post.

Post a video from your smartphone – it doesn't need to be a Hollywood movie, just something you made that will engage your community. Be sure to ask for comments on your post.

Get Bumped

A post that generates lots of comments is "bumped" by Facebook and this is a good thing. Being bumped means your post is moved to the top of a news feed, allowing people to see it more often.

This allows your community to post even more comments and pro-

vides another chance for your post to be bumped again.

Sharing Is Caring (About Your Brand)

Link-share is also new and is now the default when you share an article or website in your Facebook post. This new way of posting will include a photo or preview of the link to stimulate visual interest and comments.

Make sure you share links often using this visual tool, and you should see more engagement with each post.

These changes are better for companies and users because they emphasize the social aspect of social media. Being social in our offline worlds means interacting with others – starting conversations and participating in a genuine two-way dialog.

It is nice to see that kind of behavior is being nurtured online too.

Andrea Fischetti is the managing director of ReelPaws Productions. Connect with her on Twitter, @ReelPaws.



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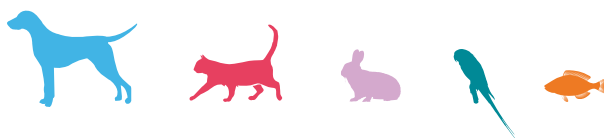
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Working With Veterinary Hospitals

If utilized correctly the results could be worth thousands of dollars worth of business.

BY STEVEN APPELBAUM

This article will be the first of several explaining how pet business owners whom I call “pet pros” can establish working relationships with veterinary hospitals and in doing so help build each other’s businesses.

Veterinarians, and by association their staffs, have long been recognized as effective influencers of pet owners. This should come as no real surprise as the relationship between doctor and patient, or in this case patient’s owner, is based on trust. To put it another way, when an owner is willing to entrust the health and medical treatment of their beloved pet to a veterinarian and/or their staff, they are also likely to be receptive to suggestions about products and services that the hospital makes.

So why is this relevant to a pet pro? Because if you can establish a relationship with a veterinary hospital their referrals of your products and services can be quite valuable to you.

How do you accomplish this?

The simple answer is: You will send chosen hospitals some of your customers. These folks will become clients of the hospital. In return, the hospitals will refer some of their clients to your business.

The strategy is simple, but not always easy. However, if utilized correctly the results could be worth thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars worth of business. Plus it doesn’t typically cost anything other than your time and effort.

First, let’s briefly discuss the veterinary business. This is a highly competitive industry in which high client turnover is a constant challenge. According to

an article by Jeff Rothstein DVM, MBA published on Oct. 1, 2010 in “Veterinary Economics DVM 360,” “client turnover rates have risen. If we used to lose 20 percent of clients each year, we’ve now started losing up to 35 percent.”

I have spoken with dozens of veterinarians about this over the last few years, and while many claim that their client losses aren’t that high, no one disputes that client turnover is a challenge. The reasons for this

If you start sending a chosen hospital new clients, that hospital may be motivated to assist your business as well.

are many, including economic downturns, clients moving and normal pet mortality. They also involve a change in the way new dog owners have their dogs inoculated, which results in fewer pet owners establishing relationships with veterinary hospitals.

In the distant halcyon days of say the early 1990s, when a person got a new dog or cat they took them to the local veterinarian. There, the pet was given an examination and all required vaccinations. This allowed the doctor and staff the chance to build a relationship with the pet owner thus increasing the likelihood he/she would return.

Over the last two decades or so, shot clinics and mobile vaccination services have

made real market penetration into what was once clear veterinary hospital territory. While erosion of the vaccination business wasn’t by itself critical, what is important is the fact that when a new dog owner has their pet vaccinated at a mobile vaccination service, this owner doesn’t build that traditional relationship with the veterinarian.

Some readers might find this interesting but wonder how this is important to your business. The answer is straightforward. Veterinarians need new clients every year in order to remain in business. Many doctors are not as comfortable in their role as business owner or promoter. They didn’t get into veterinary medicine to promote or sell; they entered the profession to practice medicine. So even though most veterinarians understand the critical importance of new clients, they are unsure what they have to do to get them.

Enter the pet pro. You already have them. That’s right, your clients are dog and cat owners. Their pets also get sick and many of them don’t have relationships or loyalties to any veterinarian or hospital.

If/when you start sending a chosen hospital new clients, that hospital may be motivated to assist your business as well.

Now that you have the background, our next article will discuss the best ways to capitalize on these facts and build reciprocal referral relationships with veterinary hospitals.

Steven Appelbaum is the president of Animal Behavior College. Appelbaum is a dog trainer with three decades of experience, a freelance author, and the former editor of Off Lead magazine.

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Committed to Better Nutrition

Industry veteran saw opportunity for change in pet food.

BY MICHELLE MASKALY

We recently spoke with Daniel Hereford, president and founder of Pets Global, Inc. about why he started the company and how he has seen the pet industry change over the past 17 years.

Michelle: Tell me about Pets Global.

Dan: Pets Global was founded in 2010 with the intent to bring consumers a pet food that would meet their pets' nutrition needs and also be palatable and affordable.

We continue to have this focus, but we also are always developing new goals. We rely on consumer feedback to come up with new formulas.

Michelle: You started in the industry in 1997. How have you seen it change over the years?

Dan: In the last 17 years I have seen pet foods evolve from good formulas to great formulas. The perception of our pets has evolved as well. They are no longer viewed as just pets, they are viewed as our pet children and us their pet parents.

The love and friendship of our four-legged companions is unconditional. Think about this; when a dog or a cat is put in a kennel for a few hours and then you let them out they are happy to see you, be with you and love you the same.

How would you feel if the roles were reversed and you were left in the kennel for a few hours by your spouse or friend? This fact alone shows the love they have for us is unconditional.

They say we are trying to humanize our dogs and cats, but I think the evolution of our industry and our four-legged companions is teaching us how to be better pet parents and kinder people.

Michelle: Explain the uniqueness of your food cans.

Dan: At Pets Global we are working hard to bring consumers what they are asking for. At one point consumers wanted grain-free pet foods at a fair price. Now they can go on the internet and research anything and they will not settle until they find what they want.

So to help set our products apart we developed our Zignature dog foods to be low glycemic, potato free, grain free and also chicken free. Our Zignature cans are also guar gum and carrageenan free.

Most of our dog foods are single animal protein as well.

Fussie Cat is not just another little can of some random cat food pate. It is nicely shredded chicken or flaky chunky tuna, hand packed in a human consumable manufacturing plant, with an enticing topper. Fussie Cat has to be one of the most palatable cat foods there is. Don't take my word for it go try some today.

Michelle: What's a typical day like for you?

Dan: A typical day at Pets Global is potato and grain free. What I mean is, we as a company try to practice what we preach (feed our pets). I notice when I took my potato consumption down to zero and reduced my grain consumption I lost 30 pounds of fat in 60 days.

So, all of us at Pets Global try our best to eat a low-glycemic diet like we feed our pets with Zignature and Fussie Cat Pet Foods.

On another note Pets Global is a family-owned and operated business. We are all very hands on with the day-to-day operations. Most everyone here is from the pet industry with 10 to 25 years in this industry.

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Cover Story



Crowdfunding and the Pet Retailer

Your next best-selling item might be on Kickstarter right now.

By Rebekah Harrison

When the topic of crowdfunding comes up, most people tend to associate it with the technology industry or the various businesses they see on TV shows like “Shark Tank.”

But, there is a new crowd in town that is starting to infiltrate the social money-grabbing websites – pet product entrepreneurs.

Websites like Kickstarter or Indiegogo allow entrepreneurs to broadcast their idea to the world and ask for funding to make their idea a reality.

For retailers, these sites offer another avenue to find unique and interesting pet products. Stocking something new that no one else is carrying yet sets a store apart from the competition.

Behind the Product

Most, like Paulette Cohen, the inventor of The Poucheze, a hoodie that also serves as a dog carrier, already have a prototype, but need the financial backing to get their product to market.

She came up with the product that she crowdfunded after bringing home her dog Ivy.

“She was so darn cute, I just couldn’t

put her down,” she said. “Then I would put her down and she would always be getting into something. Consequently, I became very frustrated. Then I stuck her inside my sweatshirt and she fell asleep.”

She put her idea to work and immediately sat down at her sewing machine.

“I found that it turned into not only a benefit and a comfort for me but also makes her mobile for early socialization,” said Cohen. “Then everywhere I went, people would ask me where I got the hoodie.”

As with Cohen, many times these products are inspired by the creator’s own pets, and that makes marketing them a little easier – by owners for pet owners.

The husband and wife team behind The CoatHook, a brush that controls shedding and prevents hairballs is designed to remove a dog’s or cat’s loose undercoat while still maintaining the integrity of the outer coat.

“My wife was crocheting and our cat was sitting on her lap,” said Sheldon Perkins, CoatHook’s business developer. “She used the crochet hook on his matted fur and not only did he love it, it also got rid of the matted hair in his undercoat.”

Another crowdfunded project, the

CleverPet, is a wifi-connected device that automatically entertains and educates pets when they are home alone.

CleverPet’s CEO, Leo Trottier, was completing a doctorate in cognitive science at University of California, San Diego and experimented in training cats. That was how he came up with the idea for CleverPet.

“I actually taught them to use the toilet,” he said. “So that was pretty cool. I also taught them to feed themselves.”

Trottier exhibits the fact that pet product designers don’t need a background in venture capitalism to fund the production of a product.

After perfecting an idea for a product, manufacturers can then begin the process of getting the product displayed on a crowdfunding site.

Learning the Ropes

The process requires a lot of time and research and isn’t as easy as one might think. It goes far beyond just getting funding for a project.

“We looked at hundreds of Kickstarter projects to determine their strengths and weaknesses and studied different resources about Kickstarter

strategy,” said Yaroslav Azhnyuk, CEO and co-founder of Petcube. “We paid a lot of attention to our presentation video and planned the PR campaign in detail. Basically, going to Kickstarter is all about preparation.”

On most crowdfunding sites, a video is beneficial to explain the product and exactly where the funding is going. The video could be the difference between hundreds of project backers versus thousands of project backers.

After a project is fully funded, the product manufacturers start work on production of the pet product. Each project will have a different goal or different plans for the future.

The CoatHook has finalized production files and has set up various meetings.

“We are having a meeting this week with the mold maker and we will start building the mold,” said Perkins. “Then our first run of production where about half will go to our Kickstarter backers.

According to Perkins, the other half will be a starting inventory. He plans to market to retailers as well as consumers.

“We will have countertop displays for retailers,” he said. “Lisa and I own a marketing firm so we are able to generate packaging and point-of-purchasing materials and do PR. That was another part of the allure of developing a product in general. It allows us an opportunity to see a product through conception to launch.”

Petcube reached successful funding months ago and is in the last stages of production.

“The first batch of Petcubes will be shipped directly to our Kickstarter backers,” said Azhnyuk. “We are now in talks with a number of distributors around the world to get Petcube on retail shelves.”

According to Trottier, CleverPet has both retailers and consumers as a marketing goal.

“We are going to try to get our product out there in as many ways as possible,” he said.

Bonnie Wang, founder of Well-spring Pets, an all-natural supple-

ment-infused nutrient water for dogs, is already in several retail stores in the San Francisco area.

She still has expansion plans for the future.

“I would like to develop a full line, sticking to the core tenets of being all natural and having no preservatives, being made in the USA,” she said. “I have also already had requests for larger sizes. I would like to plan to have different skus.”

Choosing This Direction

Crowdfunding offers a number of benefits to entrepreneurs. This type of fund-raising seems to be a huge advantage for independent pet product producers who don’t have a lot of experience with investors and business loans.

Wang saw the benefits of crowdfunding as twofold.

“I thought the crowdfunding would not only offset the expenses, it would also help in getting the word out there,” she said. “Crowdfunding is a great way to do both. I think sometimes people underestimate how valuable it is as a marketing tool.”

According to Wang, she was able to build from the marketing and funding from Indiegogo.com.

On the other hand, Cohen needed to know if she had a marketable product with The Poucheze without facing any financial consequences.

“I wasn’t willing to put my family in any kind of economical position and hinder them,” she said. “At the same time, I wanted to test the product to see how much interest there really was.”

Azhnyuk had similar questions about CleverPet.

“Crowdfunding helps you understand whether people are interested in the product you invented and if they are willing to pay a certain amount of money for it,” he said. “Kickstarter is also a good way to present your project to media and public. The idea of Petcube is so viral and media-friendly that starting a crowdfunding campaign was obviously a good choice.”

Trottier also got a lot of press and response to the CleverPet campaign on Kickstarter.

“You can really prove that there is a market for what you’re doing without spending a million dollars developing your product first,” he said.

According to Perkins, crowdfunding allowed him to gauge the enthusiasm for the product. “You get to test your marketing messaging,” he said. “We got to explain the benefits of the product. It was all very validating.”

Perkins also enjoyed the social aspect of Kickstarter. It seemed like a good idea to build up enthusiasm.

“Crowdfunding is a very social process, so we could engage with a lot of people before ever even introducing a single unit,” said Perkins. “We built up an audience of eager and interested, literally invested customers before we ever made product.”

Wang liked the access she had to a specific demographic.

“Younger users are active in social media. These sites are just another way to get the word out to those users,” she said. “Traditional financing would tend to be older. They would typically require equity. But these are contributions with a perk.”

Not only does crowdfunding offer a look into the industry, it also allows ultimate control over product production.

“Crowdfunding allows us to have much more control over the process,” said Perkins. “It’s still our product. We aren’t beholden to a board or to outside investors. We can raise funds to cover the upfront costs of developing the final production.

Perkins also enjoyed the benefit of being exposed to industry opportunities.

“Within the first 24 hours of campaigning, we were approached by an ‘As Seen on TV’ infomercial company that thought the CoatHook would be perfect for that channel,” he said. “The second week of the campaign, we were contacted though Kickstarter by a pet product company that was interested in exploring a licensing deal to sell the CoatHook under their brand.”

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Number, and Variety, of Senior Dog Care Products Growing

New products for senior dogs range from foods to shampoos and ramps.

BY REBEKAH HARRISON

Aging is just a part of life. There is no way of aging without health issues. There are countless remedies for human senior care, but what about senior dogs?

“Senior pet owners need to have a better visual of what is available,” said Susan Weiss, president of Ark Naturals.

Dogs need special care when they reach a certain age. From joint issues to

heart problems, there are many products to encourage a healthy lifestyle for a dog who is entering the golden years.

Solvit makes a variety of products to help with senior pet access and

mobility, like their ramps, which are specifically designed to help pets reach the bed or car with ease.

Their newest ramp, the Wood Bedside Ramp, is a good solution for pets unwilling to use stairs to access a bed. It even features ribbed carpet to provide sure footing.

Solvit makes pet stairs that offer an affordable way for pets to reach their favorite places. One such product, the Decorative Pet Steps, can be purchased in multiple heights to provide custom help to your pet feel at home.

Alternatively, Solvit also offers the CareLift Lifting Harness. This harness provides a convenient and safe way to improve pets' mobility by allowing owners to help pets up stairs, into vehicles, onto furniture and many more. The CareLift supports dogs from both hips and abdomen, resulting in less stress than similar items which only lift from either the legs or the abdomen.

Keep Them Moving

For dogs needing a little help with joint care, Ark Naturals offers the Sea "Mobility" Joint Rescue. Along with a great taste, these treats are an easy way to deliver glucosamine to dogs. They increase dog flexibility, mobility, range of motion and joint comfort.

Ark Naturals also has an entire product line dedicated to senior pets. The Gray Muzzle line offers the Old Dogs! Happy Joints supplements that maximize joint mobility with glucosamine and turmeric.

Ark Naturals Gray Muzzle line also offers Heart Healthy! Wags Plenty!, which is a natural supplement that helps promote healthy heart function, healthy heart muscles and heart rhythm, as well as blood pressure and circulation. Each soft chew contains taurine, dandelion extract and other ingredients that support heart health.

Gray Muzzle also features a cognitive function supplement.

"Like humans, animals as they age have very similar brain issues," said Weiss. "They may forget where they are.

The purpose of this product is to help with this cognitive disorder."

Gray Muzzle's Brain's Best Friend! is a bite-size soft chew that supports memory. The chews include fish oil, resveratrol and other ingredients to encourage recognition and learned behavior.

Zuke's Hip Action is also a treat that helps maintain hip and joint function and features all natural ingredi-

droitron. The Happy Hips line includes both canned and dry food.

Supplements are important in caring for a senior dog. They offer vitamins and minerals to help with aches and pains, coat problems and many more senior dog ailments.

NaturVet makes Bladder Support Tablets specifically formulated to help dogs maintain healthy bladder control.

"Like humans, animals as they age have very similar brain issues,"

- Susan Weiss

ents, so it's totally okay if the dog even eats the whole bag. Co-factor vitamins and minerals support the absorption of nutrients and antioxidants.

Dogswell offers a full line of glucosamine and chondroitin products. There are jerky treats that come in regular, bar and strips. There is also Veggie Life Treats that offer a vegetarian alternative to meat treats while also offering the same benefits of glucosamine and chon-

They also offer Digestive Support Senior tabs and powder with special prebiotics and probiotics targeted for senior dogs.

In addition, their Quiet Moments Calming Aid Chews help support the nervous system in reducing stress and tension often associated with senior dogs.

Feed Them Well

When it comes to food, it is important to feed senior dogs a diet that supports a



more sedentary lifestyle.

Fromm's Gold Holistic Reduced Activity & Senior Dry Dog Food offers dogs a reduced calorie dry food with added ingredients to protect overworked joints and ease inflammation.

All these products are meant to help senior pet owners prolong the life of their dog. These products are not meant to serve as vet care.

Nutro Natural Choice Senior Dog Food comes in a wide variety of options depending on dog breed. The ingredients support the immune system, promote brain and cellular function, maintain healthy joints and promote healthy



skin and a shiny coat.

Orijen Senior Grain-Free Dry Dog Food offers high levels of dietary pro-

tein that enables senior dogs' peak conditioning.

In canned food, Wellness Senior Canned Dog Food contains phosphorus and increased fiber. It is also great for senior pets with diminished sensory abilities.

Another senior care canned food is Merrick's Golden Years Senior Medley. It contains no artificial colors, flavors or preservatives.

Senior pet care can go beyond foods and supplements. Gray Muzzle now offers No Shampoo! Shampoo!, a grooming product for pets with difficulty standing.

"It's really a natural product and it solves the problem of how to keep a senior animal clean without stressing them any further," said Weiss. "You don't have the issue of putting them under the water. You can put this product on them and it's really refreshing. It's rinseless and odorless."

All these products are meant to help senior pet owners prolong the life of their dog. These products are not meant to serve as vet care.

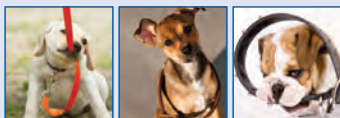
"In these cases, these products are not replacements for quality, veterinary care between the pet guardian and the vet," said Weiss. "This is not about never seeing a vet. We are just promoting good health for senior animals."



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Trends & Products



A Mind and Body Workout

Agility products help promote a healthy lifestyle for owners and their pets.

BY MAGGIE MARTON

Agility is a high-intensity dog sport that's become increasingly popular among dog owners who aren't looking to compete, but just want a fun, interactive game to play with their dog.

"There is a common misperception that dog agility is only for serious trainers and certain dogs, but it's actually a very accessible sport," said Kyle Hansen, founder and CEO of The Kyjen Company. "With a few treats and basic commands, anyone can practice agility in their own backyard. Explaining the benefits of agility can also be very helpful. In

this sport, dogs enjoy a mind and body workout that they just can't get from other toys and activities."

Kyjen offers a starter kit for owners interested in trying agility at home. Hansen described the popular kit.

"Our Dog Agility Starter Kit includes high jump, tunnel and weave pole obstacles," he said. "Pet parents tend to start out with the tunnel because it's really fun and the easiest obstacle to master. But once their dogs figure it out, the high jump and weave poles are great next steps. All of our

obstacles are similar to those used in professional agility courses."

In addition, Kyjen's recently launched its new Outward Hound Indoor Agility Kit, and the Outward Hound Outdoor Agility Kit has been redesigned. The Indoor Agility Kit will be priced at \$39.99 MSRP and the Outward Agility Kit will be priced at \$49.99 MSRP.

At Lixit Corporation, the best-selling product is the Agility Bar Jump.

"Our Agility Bar Jump is popular as it is easy to set up," said Sonia Wertz, Lixit's sales manager. "The bar is very

easy to adjust for the dog's height – large or small. Some of our competitive customers use them when out practicing with their dogs as the equipment is lightweight and easy to transport with an included carrying bag.”

Practical Use

The retail store, Fit for a Pit in Dallas, which operates both online and as a pop-up shop at events, carries items specific to high-energy activity.

“I think most people looking for equipment they can set up in their own backyard are looking for something that doesn't take up a lot of space and isn't bulky or ugly,” said Heather McClain-Howell, owner.

Because her customers are interested in this type of product, she said she has spent years testing every available type.

“Right now, we carry the Agility-in-a-Bag set from Affordable Agility,” she said. “We sell quite a few of these sets because they're great for beginner to intermediate agility work and the pieces are remarkably easy to assemble, disassemble and transport. The kit includes an 8-foot chute, 3-foot tunnel, set of six 30-inch weave poles, pause box, an adjustable jump and adjustable tire jump, all in a nylon travel bag,” McClain-Howell said.

She mentioned, too, that kits appeal to customers because purchasing each piece contained within a larger kit would increase the overall cost.

However, McClain-Howell articulated one concern shared among retailers, many of whom said they don't sell these items for this specific reason: It's impractical to stock larger agility obstacles like A-frames and seesaws. Instead, they look for individual items or kits that are easy to stock on the shelves.

In addition to stocking items that fit practically on the shelves and in the storeroom, it's also important to understand the customer when choosing what products to stock.

For example, Lixit's products appeal to a specific customer: someone looking for interactive play with their pet.

“The agility equipment we provide are for backyard fun,” said Wertz. “A lot of pet owners have dogs that need to be active. Our agility equipment provides

an outlet for their pent up energy.”

However, she mentioned that the equipment could serve as a starting point for owners looking for more intense agility.

“If a pet owner finds their dog has a real knack for it they can move on to competitive agility and equipment,” she said.

Selling It

Wertz shared her recommendations for merchandizing agility equipment.

“An end cap for specialty items such as agility equipment will help with your sales,” she said. “In many parts of the USA, agility equipment is a seasonal item that you might want in an end cap up from April to August. A pet travel section with the agility equipment and other items for outdoor/travel use would be ideal.”

Another successful sales strategy is to host an event.

“Some stores selling agility equipment have an event, setting up and

demonstrating the equipment that they are offering for sale,” Wertz said.

Hansen suggested interaction within the store. “We recommend that retailers merchandise our Dog Agility Starter Kit with their training and exercise toys. For retailers who also provide training services, we recommend incorporating the obstacles into classes. In fact, we are launching an Indoor Agility Kit later this fall, which is a great option for indoor training sessions. Once customers see how fun and stimulating agility can be, the kits are easy sells.”

Choosing the right agility equipment to stock starts with assessing how much space you have to dedicate. Then, choose appropriately-sized items that appeal to your customer base. It's likely that most customers simply want a fun backyard activity – and will seek out specialty retailers if they choose to get involved competitively – so choose from the single bestselling pieces or at-home complete kits.

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Style Leads the Way for Collars, Leashes

Fashionable, brighter color palettes tend to be the most popular.

BY SANDY ROBINS

For pet specialty retailers, keeping up with the latest fashions in collars and leashes is a constant challenge to ensure they are offering customers a good representation of the constant changing trends.

"Pet owners are always shopping in this category," said Bruce Haas co-owner of Tails In The City boutique in Chicago. "For most of our customers purchases are about keeping up with the latest fashion colors and simply spoiling their pet by increasing their personal selection of collars and leashes. It's more about a color fashion wardrobe than simply the need for something new.

It's also a way of constantly generating sales.

"A new collar requires a matching leash and we recommend a color-matching ID tag too," he said. "Most of our

customers realize the benefits of having identification for every collar rather than having to deal with the hassle of switching out every time you change collars."

Petmate has released a large selection of new products in this category both under the Petmate and the Aspen Pet labels.

"Consumers are being drawn to innovative designs and more fashionable, brighter color palettes," said Emilye Schmale, manager of corporate communications for the company. "Fashion has become the number one driver in collar and lead selection, and our new collections reflect some of the hottest trends in both home décor and fashion."

"There is no question that consumers are conscious of attributes such as secure fasteners, reinforced stitching and overall durability," Schmale said.

When it comes to combining ma-

terials, Petmate has produced rubber collars in vibrant colors backed with durable webbing, others feature an embroidered ribbon overlay. Their new reflective sport mesh dog collars and matching leads have a patent-pending, easy-release buckle in two-tone colors and are padded for additional comfort.

New from Cetacea is what Sean St. Cin, vice president of sales, described as the company's "traffic/drag-free leashes" made from a tubular webbing with a self-contracting coil. It has a side buckle which allows the dog owner to reduce a four-foot leash down to less than a foot in order to have full control of the dog in heavy traffic situations.

"We added a large rubber handle for a really comfortable grip and the stitching on the leash is polyester which is more durable than nylon," he said. "There are



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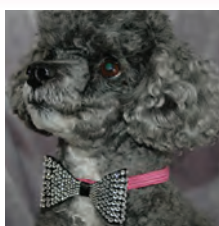
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collars to match the leash, which is available in a variety of colors such as purple, orange, white, black, red and green.

The Gunmetal Collection of collars, leashes and harnesses from Hamilton Pet Products compliments all dog coat colors. They are made from a durable vinyl with secure metal closures and a logo accent. The range is available in gemstone colors such as amethyst, jade, rose and moonstone and comes in all sizes from extra small through large.

New, Old Favorites

When it comes to innovative designs, the focus is on convenience and versatility and this sums up the Reflect and Protect Quantum Leash from Kurgo, a multi-purpose leash that transforms from a traditional hand-held leash into a hands-free leash for convenient walking, jogging and hiking. It can also be used to walk multiple dogs and works well as a training leash too.

According to Sharon Romero, designer and president of the New York-based company Around the Collar, top quality imported Italian leather embellished with Swarovski crystals and studs continues to be a perennial favorite for both big and small dogs.

"Swarovski crystals falls into the classic and timeless category," said Romero. "Another perennial is the biker chic look. We have used crystals to 'soften' the hardcore stud and spiked look. Traditionally, this look was all about black collars. But now it's very popular on all colors including pastel pink, blue and lemon.

As for the top accent colors, Romero is predicting pewter and gold and that includes rose gold – a popular color in human jewelry and fashion accessories that is fast becoming ideal for all seasons.

When it comes to retractable leashes, flexi, the originators of this design are showcasing their new Vario System, which allows the user to add a lot of accessories to the leash such as a the LED Lighting System for evening walks with a dog, and the MultiBox for waste bags or treats.

"Each accessory attaches conveniently to your flexi leash," said Manfred Bogdahn, founder and chief operating officer of flexi. "Such add-ons make the line a very complete and comprehensive leash system."



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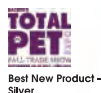


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Gifts Can Bring In Added Revenue

Holidays are a great time to add gifts for cat lovers to a store. **BY STACY MANTLE**

Feline aficionados can be as finicky as the felines they love when it comes to receiving gifts. For many, cats are their passion, and retailers should keep this in mind when stocking and promoting store items.

Especially as the holidays approach, customers will start looking for items to get their friends, family and co-workers who have cats. Oftentimes, they will turn to their local pet store to find these items.

Do the Cat Walk

Feline fans have taken to the streets to show off their feline-inspired fashion. Cats inspire the messaging on Cat Is Good's line of comfortable, fashionable clothing.

"Our products don't speak to who

they are, it speaks to what they are," said Gila Kurtz, founder of Cat Is Good. "The role of the family pet has changed so much in the past 10 years; we now look to our pets for general companionship. We wanted to provide people with a way to express their love of cats in a way that is stylish."

Another popular item sweeping the cat fancy world is the sophisticated, yet functional line of designer handbags and accessories from Triple T Studios.

Triple T Studios' popular Hipster bag is a perfect example of feline finesse, featuring sleek black fabric and the hands-free practicality of a cross-body purse.

"My goal was to create uniquely designed handbags with a subtle cat pattern,

more feline finesse than crazy cat pattern," said Joanne McGonagle, founder of The Tiniest Tiger and owner of Triple T Studios. "Our line is for cat lovers that prefer a more sophisticated style. Triple T Studios creates fashion with a passion for global conservation, with a portion of our proceeds supporting big cat conservation. Our bags are made in the USA and are vegan friendly."

Got a thing for bling? Cat lovers enjoy designer jewelry as much as the next person, and the Cat's Meow Pendant from Wags & Tags is a perfect way to show style.

"Our pendant is made from the finest 925 sterling silver," said Sandy Hirsch, owner of Wags & Tags. "Par-

ents can choose a style from hand-set diamonds or cubic zirconia, this fine jewelry will display your feline fancy in the most stylish way."

"Our decorative dish towel makes a great gift item for any occasion; housewarming, thank you, hostess or a gift exchange,"
— Mary Badenhop

Technology Ticket

The popularity of cat videos and the technology boom in the pet industry means that "cat cams" are big ticket items these days. Wireless cameras such as the motion-activated Motorola Scout 1000 Digital Wireless Video or the Samsung SmartCam HD Pro 1080p Full-HD Wi-Fi Camera afford easy ways to monitor cats while their owners are away from home.

For those who want to be more interactive, the Social Pet Camera & Treat Dispenser System from PetSafe lets cat owners see, treat and share their cat's best

moments. The interactive installation tool is very intuitive, allowing owners to dispense treats remotely while watching on a live video feed. Owners can choose to share the video, allow others to treat their cat and share photos.

Luxury Lifestyle Products

Storing treats can be challenging, even more so if a customer has multiple pets. Now, owners can keep all the treats in one area with a Bella Treat Canister from Loving Pets.

"Cat lovers adore the Bella Treat Canister because it's a perfect blend of fashion and function," said Eric Abbey, founder of Loving Pets. "Each Bella Treat Canister combines a bacteria-resistant, veterinarian recommended stainless steel interior with a polyresin pawprint exterior in best-selling colors like Espresso, Merlot Red and Copper to fit any home's decor."

For the most finicky of felines, the Wetnoz Cat Food Dish offers a flat surface to help avoid whisker stress and encourage eating. Beautifully designed, the low sides and oval-shaped saucers are made from stainless steel and come in six stylish colors. "Petmate's Wetnoz collection melds easily and stylishly into pet homes," said Ann Hanson, director of marketing and innovation

for Petmate. "Taking its inspiration from the home design trend of using bright, saturated hues, the Wetnoz Cat Food Dish and Cat Saucer are perfect options for cat parents looking to complement any home décor."

From cat-themed aprons to customized cards, Pipsqueak Productions offers a wonderful way to tell the cat lover in your life you care.

"My cat cards and gifts also help raise funds for shelters and humane societies," said Mary Badenhop, artist/owner of Pipsqueak Productions International.

"Our decorative dish towel makes a great gift item for any occasion; housewarming, thank you, hostess or a gift exchange," she said.

Books

Cat lovers tend to be well-read. The bookstores are exploding with great reads for cat lovers. From mysteries to thrillers, inspiring stories to nonfiction, there is a book to please every cat fan.

Darlene Arden's new book entitled, "Beautiful Cats" is the ultimate picture book for a coffee table. Combine that with a copy of "The Complete Cat's Meow," which is the owner's manual to living with a cat.

New releases include "Catification: Designing a Happy and Stylish Home for Your Cat (and You!)" from Jackson Galaxy. Galaxy joins Kate Benjamin of Hauspanther.com to help cat owners everywhere design a happy feline home that is both functional and chic.

Chicken Soup for the Soul released, "The Cat Did What?" with a foreword by Miranda Lambert.

"The Cat Did What?" just hit the shelves and we are proud that a portion of the proceeds go to the American Humane Association," said Chris Mitchell, CEO of Chicken Soup for the Soul Pet. "At Chicken Soup for the Soul, we recognize the unique relationship between pets and people and we celebrate that relationship with our all natural pet food made here in the USA, our wonderful best-selling pet books, and our newest gift item - our book and frame sets."

With so many gifts to choose from, for a variety of budgets, it's easy to stock gifts that any feline aficionado will love.

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Saving the Planet

Eco-friendly cat products have come a long way.

BY SANDY ROBINS

There is no question that cat owners are going to great lengths to ensure that their cat has an eco-friendly lifestyle just like they do.

Helping drive this trend is a slew of eco-friendly products that work to reduce the feline carbon paw print and generally befriend the environment.

Litters That Litter Less

Litter leads this category as more companies vie for space in the eco-friendly, biodegradable line-up in the litter aisle.

"More than ever, consumers and retailers are seeking out eco-friendly pet product solutions that still provide high performance and exceptional care for our cats," said Jane Wasley, ökocat brand manager for Healthy Pet the company that manufactures this new product line. "We believe that our four formulas of ökocat natural cat litter not

only offer superior odor control and absorption, but also a cleaner, more sustainable alternative to clay."

The new ökocat litter line-up includes the Natural Wood Clumping Litter with seven-day odor control, and absorption that is able to hold 500 percent its weight in liquid. The Natural Wood Long Hair Clumping variety is specially designed for long-haired

cat breeds that tend to get cat litter stuck in their fur. The Natural Wood Pine Litter relies on the natural smell of fresh pine to destroy ammonia odors for up to seven days and the Natural Paper Dust-Free Litter has been created for cats with respiratory ailments or people with allergies.

Ökocat will be shelf neighbors with such brands as Swheat Scoop, World's

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According to research into the natural litter market conducted by Healthy Pet, formerly Absorption Corporation, natural litters currently hold 10 percent market share against clay litter and continue to grow.

the annual clay litter purchase is \$40 versus \$100 in natural litter products and, the survey also indicated that such customers are also willing to pay 20 percent more for other eco-friendly products that meet key attributes that are important to them.

Beds are becoming another big

eco-friendly category as companies look to recycled plastic bottles and hangers to create “green” fillers for pet beds. Several years ago, Worldwide

"More than ever, consumers and retailers are seeking out eco-friendly pet product solutions that still provide high performance and exceptional care for our cats," - Jane Wasley

Inc. structured a deal with Walmart whereby the retail giant forwarded all their discarded plastics to the company and they then re-emerged on pet retail store shelves in the form of pet beds filled with Worldwise's trademarked EcoRest filler.

Similarly, recycled corrugated cardboard has been a boon for the eco-friendly cat industry.

“Recycled cardboard is a cheap and easily available material,” said Fred Silber, chief executive officer for Enchanted Home Pet that makes a range of corrugated cardboard cat furniture that doubles up as both scratching pads and snooze zones. “One of the reasons it’s so successful is that it replicates natural bark which cats are intuitively drawn to in order to scratch.”

Cardboard, combined with the feline love for boxes, brings Catty Stacks into the eco-friendly mix. These specially designed boxes are made from industrial strength recycled corrugated Ultraboard, which is colored with nontoxic vegetable-based inks. The boxes link to each other to form a stable structure and can be easily moved and rearranged, helping maintain feline interest.

"They are ideal for felines that enjoy an indoor lifestyle and need to be compensated with games that offer both mental and physical stimulation," explained Frank Callari, chief stacks officer.

A similar product from Quaker Pet Group under their Supercat brand is the

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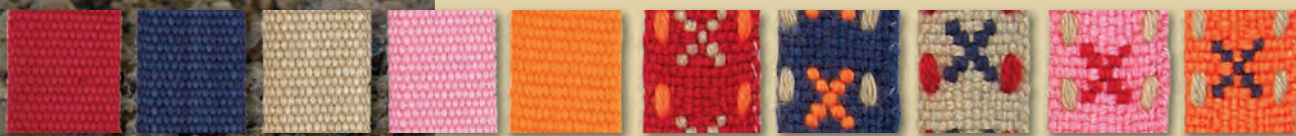
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Kitty Condo, a system that links huts with tubes to amp up the feline fun.

"It's a customizable system that allows pet parents to create play areas of any shape and size to fit a home space that is small to large," said Cristen Underwood, the company's marketing director. "The system also works with the Supercat catnip infused stickers that can be applied to the condo construction."

Play Time

In the cat collar aisle, Petmate has a new eco-friendly collar. The webbing is made from 100-percent recycled plastic bottles and the packaging is recycled cardboard.

When it comes to toys, recycled cotton is becoming a popular "fabric" that

can be dyed with non-toxic vegetable dyes and stuffed with eco-friendly catnip.

Recently, Worldwide Inc. doubled its popular Petlinks organic catnip toy line. The new products – namely Pudgy Pals, Crinkle Buddy and the Bug Catch – contain only leaves and blossoms with no inert fills.

"This makes it exceptionally potent and ideal for attracting and stimulating those crazy felines," said Kevin Fick, the company's chief operating officer.

From The Field, an eco-friendly cat toy company based in Seattle, uses hemp for their catnip toy products. Their newest toy is a pillow filled with a mix of catnip and silver vine, a plant that is popular in Asia with similar stimulating effects to catnip.



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Small Tanks Can Equal Big Sales

Nano tanks are appealing to customers who want a smaller-scale setup.

BY TOM MAZORLIG

It's relatively easy to notice that the popularity of nano aquariums has been growing, but it's more difficult to define what a nano aquarium actually is.

Different people have different definitions. The general consensus is that a nano tank is any tank under 20 gallons in size. The term is more often applied to saltwater setups than freshwater ones. Very small tanks – 5 gallons or less – are often called

micro or pico tanks. In this article, nanos, picos and micros will be lumped together.

"Nano tanks encompass many smaller sizes of tanks and having that extended variety of aquarium options doesn't seem to be diminishing their popularity," said Cameo Konfrst, chief operating officer of The Wet Spot Tropical Fish in Portland, Ore. "People have always loved little bowls but now they

are able to have the same size requirements while having a full aquarium setup. We carry full nano-tank setups, we call the 'drain and go' and people love that an eye-catching aquarium can exist in such a tiny framework and they don't have to maintain a huge setup."

Konfrst added, "Nano tanks sell very well for us. They easily supersede the standard aquariums in regards to sheer volume of purchases."

Kits and Accessories

To get a customer started with a nano tank, consider suggesting an aquarium kit, such as the Contour Aquarium by Marineland, available in 3- and 5-gallon sizes.

Another nano option comes from BioBubble.

"We currently manufacture the BioBubble Aquarium," said Daniel Bzdyl, director of business development at BioBubble Pets. "However, we are working on two others, a 15 gallon and a 20 gallon. The current unit is 3.5 gallons with over 60 GPH [gallons per hour] of filtration and high-tech lighting."

There is also the Cue Desktop Aquarium by Aqueon, available in 2.5- and 5-gallon sizes. Both of these kits come with LED lighting and filtration.

In the realm of slightly bigger nano tanks, there is the Bio Cube by Corallife. This all-in-one aquarium system comes in 14- and 29-gallon sizes and includes LED lighting. JBJ-USA Aquarium Products offers a sharp-looking rimless 8-gallon cube with an included filter.

Small tanks need small filters, but it's important to not use too small of a filter. Due to their smaller water volume, the water conditions in nano tanks are less stable than in larger aquariums. So, it's critical to use excellent filtration but not such a powerful filter that the water movement is too vigorous for the tank's inhabitants.

The Fluval Nano Aquarium Filter is an excellent choice for aquariums up to 15 gallons in size and is ideal for keeping small fish species and shrimp. Eheim offers the Aquacompat 40 external filter for aquariums up to approximately 10 gallons. It has an adjustable outflow and comprehensive range of accessories to fit any nano-hobbyist's needs.

For lighting these small tanks, consider the Mini Aqualight from Coralife. It includes two six-watt T5 lamps, a 10,000K and an actinic blue lamp. Fluval Nano Aqualife & Plant Performance LED Lamp is perfect for the planted nano tank, as it produces the full-spectrum light plants need for photosynthesis.

When it comes to selling nano tanks, it's important to educate customers on

"People have always loved little bowls but now they are able to have the same size requirements while having a full aquarium setup." - Cameo Konfrst

the pros and cons of these small tanks.

"Education is the key word," said Bzdyl. "To retain customers, the stores should be explaining the features [of the nano kits] and explaining what things to look out for such as is the type of filtration provided right for the type of fish the customer wants to keep in the tank? Is the LED lighting adequate for the types of animals that the customer wants to house in the tank? And the one that almost everyone forgets, how stable can the tank being sold hold the temperature inside if the room temperature varies dramatically?"

Eheim office manager Jenny Georgiopoulos also stressed the importance of education, saying "If buyers are given good information at the outset, this will go a long way towards guaranteeing a positive experience for all."

This is especially true for saltwater nano hobbyists. "Retailers should also impress upon saltwater nano tank enthusiasts the importance of testing water chemistry parameters, as small tanks tend to fluctuate more than larger systems when it comes to salinity and pH, for example," said Georgiopoulos.

This type of education can result in upselling, such as adding on the Saltwater Master Test Kit from API or the In-

stant Ocean Saltwater Hydrometer.

Tiny Livestock

If you are selling nano tanks, you should definitely be selling the animals, and plants, to put in them.

"There are several good species for nano tanks that pet retailers can stock without too much difficulty" said Konfrst. She suggests, "the micro rasboras."

"Another group of fish that works wonderfully are the small danios," she said. "Lastly, do not neglect suggesting small tetras, killifish, and shrimp as well."

For saltwater nanos, Bzdyl recommends, "smaller clownfish such as the percula; shrimp, crabs and other inverts; smaller varieties of wrasses, blennies and gobies; as well as many of the corals and anemones."



Ask the Expert



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Q: What does outreach mean for an aquarium shop?

A: Most of you with fish stores have registered your business with google maps, you're watching your yelp ratings and you are actively engaged on Facebook, twitter and maybe more social media sites (instagram and vine are very useful). But social media alone isn't enough to reach all your customers, and doesn't always generate new ones.

This is where "outreach" comes in. Your local area almost certainly has at least one hobbyist club, and you should be at those meetings or better yet, hosting them at your store. Another avenue for finding customers is partnering with schools. QM gets approached by science programs all over North America with requests for livestock and equipment, and we've signed up to help just about as many as we can.

There are needy science programs in just about every city across the country, and each is a tangible opportunity for local retailers to help their area educators and to build clientele. The teacher gets a great mechanism for teaching biology, chemistry and problem solving and you get to show every teacher and high school/college student how easy and cool it is to have a marine aquarium, with your business name attached to the experience.

This general information is not intended to provide individual advice. PAID CONTENT



Preparing Ponds for Winter

Knowledgeable employees help customers keep their pond healthy. **BY JOE OLENIK**

With winter approaching, pond owners, particularly those in northern climates, need to begin preparing for the cold weather ahead. Store employees should

be knowledgeable in helping hobbyists prepare their fish, plants and equipment so they make it through to spring.

Ben Miller, trade marketing manager at TetraPond UPG Aquatics, recom-

mends that in areas where the temperature drops below 32 degrees, pumps and UV sterilizers should be removed well before water freezes and stored indoors. Some manufacturers suggest

storing submersible pumps in a bucket of water to keep the seals and o-rings from drying out. Water lines and filter compartments should be drained and valves left open to prevent them from bursting when water freezes.

In climates where the surface will freeze over, aerators or deicers should be employed to keep a hole open in the ice. This will ensure a constant supply of oxygen for fish, and will also allow toxic hydrogen sulfide gas from decompos-

ing organic material on the bottom to escape. Pond owners should be advised never to use force to keep an opening in the ice as the concussive shock can be extremely harmful, if not fatal, to fish.

Ponds should have an area at least 4-feet-deep if fish are to be left out over winter in cold climates. Miller recommends moving fancy varieties of goldfish such as orandas, bubble eyes and lionheads indoors, as they can develop swim bladder issues and other problems in severe cold.

Any fish that are to be wintered indoors should be moved well before temperatures begin to drop, to avoid thermal stress. Comet goldfish usually do fine over winter, as long as the pond is deep enough and a hole is kept open in surface ice. Koi that have been raised in southern states or southeast Asia should be moved indoors in areas of the country that experience severe or long periods of cold.

As water temperatures drop, fish's metabolisms slow down and they become less active. They begin to eat less and eventually stop eating altogether. Hobbyists should feed only what

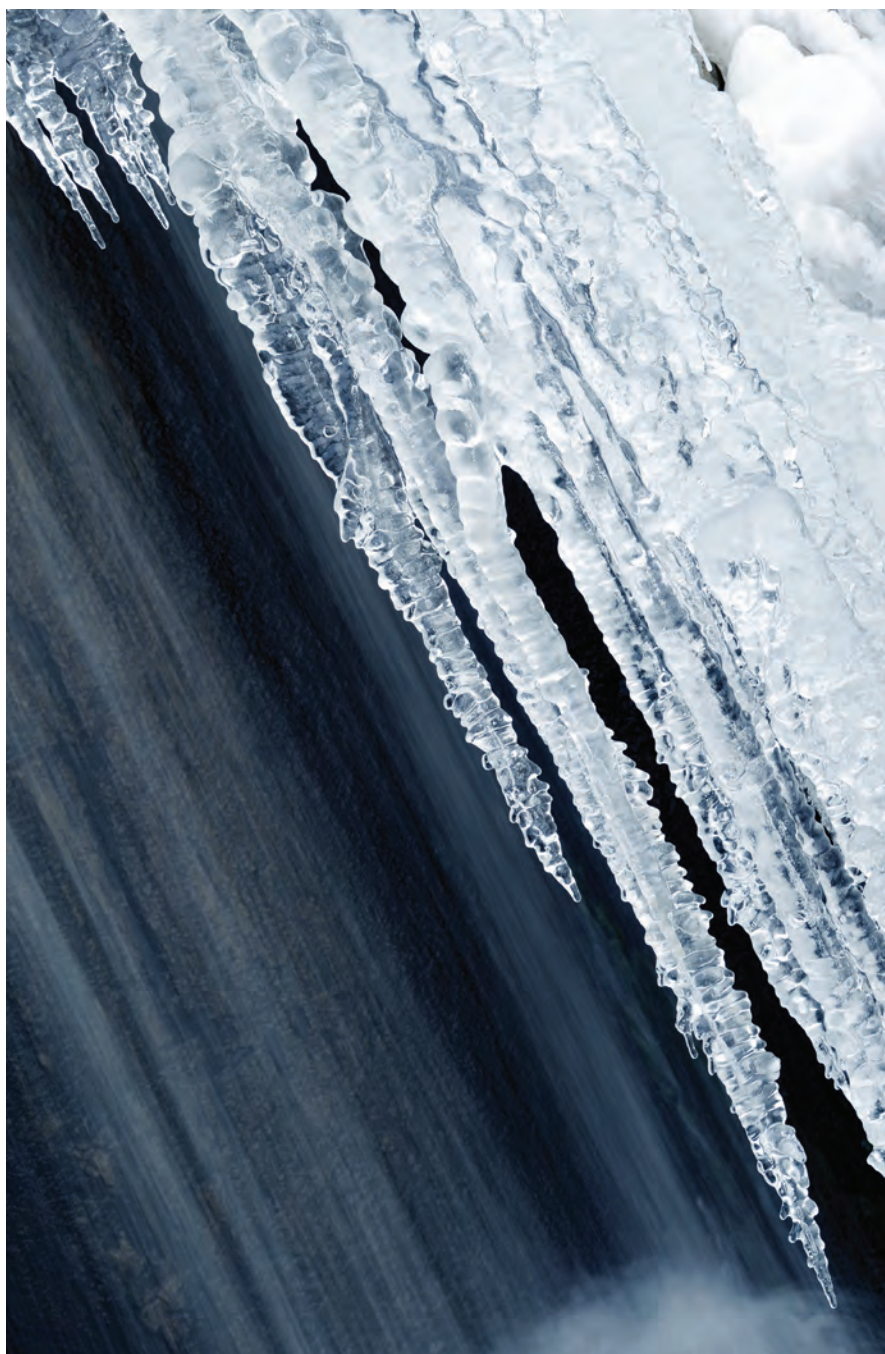
As water temperatures drop, fish's metabolisms slow down and they become less active.

their fish will eat in a few minutes, and stop feeding when the fish stop eating. Wheat germ foods are considered ideal transitional foods as they are thought to be more digestible at lower temperatures. TetraPond's Spring & Fall Diet helps bolster fish's resistance to thermal stress and helps prevent disease.

Fish aren't the only living things that need attention in fall. Tropical lillies and emergent plants should be brought indoors and placed in buckets of water. They can be placed in an area that receives direct sunlight or under appropriate artificial lighting. Remove all leaves and blooms from hardy lillies and move them to the deepest part of the pond.

Hardy emergents can usually be left in the pond, however, they should be placed in deep enough water that the roots will not freeze. Water hyacinth and water lettuce should either be disposed of or brought inside and placed under strong artificial light.

Ponds should be left filled with water over winter, even if there are no fish or plants in them, to prevent cracking and other damage. If fish are to be left in the pond, remove organic material from the bottom by vacuuming with a Python Ultra-Vac or similar device.





Herp Health Aids

Supplements and medications worth stocking. **BY ERIK J. MARTIN**

An apple a day may keep the doctor away, but for reptile owners eager to prevent a rush visit to the vet, supplements and medications could help make this less likely. And judging by the proliferation of products in this category carried in pet stores today, more owners and retailers alike are making herp health a top priority.

Supply-Side Supplements

The trend in dogs and cats eating more natural foods, taking supplements and

getting regular vet visits has become commonplace, said Bob Smith, owner of Jungle Bob's Reptile World in Centereach, N.Y.

"But in the reptile world, it's been slower to come, although it's evolving before our eyes," he said. "We have long understood the need for calcium with vitamin D3 as a mandatory supplement, along with UVB lighting, particularly for diurnal herbivorous animals. Now, we are seeing species-specific supplements from quality companies."

Reptile supplements are typically offered in a handful of key categories, including calcium (liquid or powder), vitamins, multivitamins, probiotics and enzymes.

Clint Sell, co-owner of Reptilian Paradise in Wheatridge, Colo., said the go-to supplement he continues to stock and suggest to patrons is Zoo Med's ReptiVite, which has been a mainstay on store shelves for 30 years. ReptiVite provides a complete vitamin, mineral and amino acid complex spe-

cifically formulated for reptiles. This calcium-based powder, available with or without vitamin D3, ensures healthy bone growth with the correct two-to-one calcium to phosphorus ratio.

Many retailers continue to like Fluker's Repta+Boost, a popular high-energy supplement specially formulated to give an extra boost of energy to bearded dragons, geckos, chameleons, boas, ball pythons, monitors, frogs, corn snakes and other insectivorous and carnivorous reptiles and amphibians.

"A lot of other manufacturers have also perfected and improved their (supplement) formulas, so the products are even better now than they used to be," said Sell, who mentions Zoo Med's Repti Shedding Aid spray, Repashy Super Foods' Calcium Plus powder supplement, and Exo Terra's Aquatize terrarium water conditioner supplement as good examples.

Reptile Rx

It's smart for retailers to also stock necessary reptile medication products, said Ashley Rademacher, animal care and education coordinator with Zoo Med Labs, Inc. But they also need to encourage customers to minimize the need for these products by maintaining healthy environments.

"Retailers should become educated on the proper care of reptiles and the potential illnesses they can become infected with," said Rademacher. "Seek to find the ultimate cause of health problems and correct those conditions."

In other words, promote health supplements and other proper nutrition products so that many medications aren't necessary.

Still, there's a wide variety of medications and first aid/emergency products offered that retailers should consider adding to their supply. Smith cites Dr. Emmo's Pet First Aid Wound Care as a good example. It's a product offered in both liquid spray and topical gel that is a reasonably priced item effective in treating a variety of minor cuts, skin irritations and scrapes.

"It's our first line of defense before calling in the vet," Smith said of Dr. Emmo's, which is now available in a handy travel pack that clips to a keychain, leash

or belt buckle for easy access when an emergency arises. "It's a powerful astringent, yet harmless to amphibians and reptile eyes. We have small bottles of it at our counter in a nice display, along with literature on how and why it works."

"A lot of other manufacturers have also perfected and improved their (supplement) formulas, so the products are even better now than they used to be," - Clint Sell

Smith says he also continues to stock strong medications like Panacur (liquid fenbendazole) dewormer for certain reptiles, including bearded dragons.

Merchandise to Entice

When it comes to showcasing reptile supplement and medication products for maximum effect, Sell suggests placement diversity.

"These are typically lower-priced items compared to big-ticket items, so I would mix them in near cool-looking

products like terrarium waterfalls, lights and foggers to increase impressions, catch the eye, and stand out as price differentiators," said Sell. "A customer who comes in the store looking to purchase a higher-priced item would see a supplement priced at only a few dollars and perhaps be more inclined to purchase it because it stands out as relatively affordable."

Sell further recommends bundling supplements and medications into starter kits and beginner setups so that first-time reptile owners come to associate these add-on products as essential staples that shouldn't be forgotten about. Proactive retailers can put together a reptile first aid kit.

It's also good idea to talk to manufacturer reps and ask for signage, posters and literature on supplement/medication products that a retailer can display and distribute at the store, experts say.

"In addition, it's a good idea to teach your staff how to properly upsell customers on these products by encouraging them to stock up now versus waiting until a pet gets sick," said Sell. "That means making sure your employees are very familiar with the [medication and supplement] items you carry so that they can answer any questions shoppers have about them."



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Bearded Dragons

They continue to dominate the reptile market, outselling their closest reptile kin by a sizable margin.

BY JOHN MACK

In some of our previous articles, we examined the veiled chameleon and the ball python as potential high-selling reptiles. This time around, we'll take a closer look at a reptile that could very well form the backbone of your store's reptile sales: the bearded dragon.

Bearded dragons (genus: *Pogona*) are natives of Australia's deserts, particularly the Northern Territory and eastern South Australia. Bearded dragons vary in size based on their species, though average around 18 to 24 inches, with males often larger than their female counterparts. Bearded dragons received their name from a series of spiked scales on the underside of the dragons' jaw, which darkens and puffs up during breeding, resembling a beard.

Because of their point of origin, bearded dragons have adapted to live in an arid, desert environment. Some native bearded dragons may even go for years without being exposed to liquid water. While many other reptiles require significant humidity in their cage, bearded dragons prefer warm, dry temperatures with a suitable basking spot. Depending on their species, bearded dragons tend to vary in color. The most common form (*Pogona vitticeps*) typically appear in shades of gray and brown, though other species and morphs can vary from red and orange hues all the way to the pale, bleached look of a hypomelanistic dragon.

Aside from their preference for dry environments, bearded dragons have few specific care requirements differ-

ing from typical reptiles, making them an appealing pet. We do recommend that a bearded dragon owner have a secure lid for their dragon's enclosure, as bearded dragons can be accomplished climbers and may pry loose an ill-fitting lid and escape.

Bearded dragons have been on the receiving end of some poor press in re-

Their natural curiosity, coupled with their general predilection towards handling, make bearded dragons ideal pets for your customers.

cent months, due to a series of news articles linking them to a salmonella outbreak affecting approximately 130 individuals. In light of this, we continue to stress that personal cleanliness and safety are paramount when dealing with any animals, not just reptiles. Proper hand-washing and animal care minimizes the risk of any disease transmission, regardless of animal.

Further, a properly trained staff can share their own knowledge with your customers, ensuring that the animals you sell remain in the hands of responsible, well-educated consumers. The best counter-measure to the spread of disease is prevention, which stems

from a properly trained staff that follows sanitization protocols.

In addition to educating your staff on proper hygiene technique, ensure that your staff has the necessary tools to both keep themselves safe and keep reptiles happy and healthy. Ensure that cages are cleaned regularly with disinfectant. During cleaning, mandate that your staff wear gloves and other protective gear and wash their hands thoroughly before moving onto another task. Consider installing hand sanitizer stations near your reptile displays, so that both customers and staff can clean their hands at any given moment.

Despite the recent bad press, bearded dragons continue to dominate the reptile market, outselling their closest reptile kin by a sizable margin. One massive reason for this comes from the bearded dragon's general temperament. Bearded dragons tend to be docile and personable, often enjoying being touched and handled by their owners.

Further, bearded dragons are diurnal, rather than nocturnal, meaning that the dragons are active at the same time as their owners. Their natural curiosity, coupled with their general predilection towards handling, make bearded dragons ideal pets for your customers.

John Mack is the founder and CEO of Reptiles by Mack, is on the board of directors for PIJAC and is also on the CDC Zoonotic Diseases Committee. His Ohio-based company is widely recognized as one of the largest reptile breeders and suppliers in the USA today.



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Still a bit skeptical? Take a look at the pics below. These are the results of an independent study conducted by Brian Barczyk at BHB Reptiles. One animal has been raised on a combination of Vita-Bug® crickets and CalciWorms®, the other on regular crickets and a calcium supplement. As you will see the results of his study are remarkable. To see the complete study results go to www.timberlinefisheries.com/vitabug.

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Leaving a Legacy

Steps must be taken to make sure future generations enjoy the same reptiles we do.

BY ROBERT STEPHENSON

As I was thinking about this article, Father's Day was approaching [production on *Pet Age* starts a minimum of two months in advance] and it made me think about the legacy I'll leave behind for my children.

Certainly they'll never know what many of the things I grew up with were, but one thing I'd like to still be able to share with them and even my grandchildren one day, is the passion I have for responsibly keeping and breeding reptiles.

We are in a time right now where the word responsibility is dying and falling from our vocabulary but it is essential nonetheless. With more animal rights agencies being born every day and more and more sensational headline-hunting reporters on the street, it is up to us to operate and maintain good quality animals in good quality enclosures in good quality stores, or perish. Of course, it is also up to the hobbyist to continue the dedication on the husbandry side as well but it all starts at the source.

Part of being responsible includes sourcing the best animals available. We all know there are many wholesalers and breeders of reptiles and amphibians

out there, but the number shrinks when you talk about quality ones. As a store owner or reptile buyer, and even as a hobbyist, one should always look for captive-bred animals first. These almost always will be parasite free and legally obtained.

That's not to say good quality imports/wild-caught stock should be ignored but a preference should lie with captive bred. Unfortunately, many of the more obscure animals are still not bred in any great numbers, which too often leads to poaching and smuggling. We, as an industry, cannot support this behavior.

I personally keep several different types of turtle and tortoise as well as some very rare rock iguanas and spiny-tailed iguanas. I've paid, in some cases, as much as three times the cost of "legal imports" for captive-bred stock just for the security reduced health concerns and the guilt-free conscience of keeping animals that were not pilfered from the wild. I think, in regards to stores, it's much better to be famous as "that store" for a variety of legal and healthy animals than to be infamous as "that store" for the opposite.

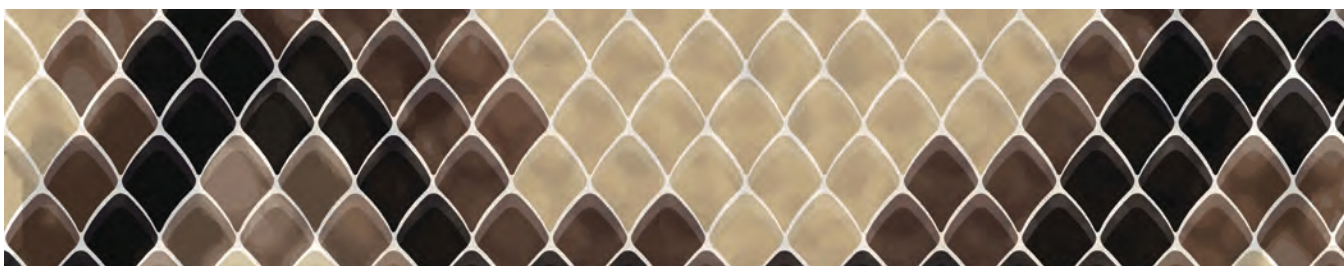
Whatever you do decide to keep and

sell, there simply needs to be an emphasis on the proper husbandry and making sure your customer gets the absolute best animal and products you can provide them with. This will help them in turn learn the value of the life they've just chosen to be responsible for and to stop looking at their animals as commodities.

Through being selective and responsible, we can avert and overcome most of the attacks thrown our direction by media groups looking to spice up their papers or broadcasts and the animal rights groups who don't understand our community. The buck has to stop here, with us. We have to police ourselves.

If we don't fix it, no one will, and our children and grandchildren will know and learn less than us and for that, and we'll be responsible.

Rob Stephenson has been keeping and breeding reptiles for more than 30 years. He has worked in, managed and owned a pet store in NYC, as well as owned a reptile wholesale business called City Serpent. He is the former Eastern U.S. regional manager for ZooMed. Rob has been traveling abroad for the last 10 years in search of reptiles in foreign lands to photograph and write about.





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Healthy Feathers, Healthy Bird

Proper feather care can be just a spray, seed mix or plaything away

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

They say birds of a feather flock together. But when those bird feathers aren't looking so fine, owners of avian companions will flock to their local pet stores for solutions.

Knowing how to address their needs and which products to carry can turn perturbed bird owners into content customers.

Quill Queries

Sooner or later, many winged species encounter feather problems that can be a sign of a disease or disorder that shouldn't be ignored. Two common issues observed are feather plucking, which can occur due to medical causes like malnutrition, parasites, allergies or cancer or as a result of boredom or stress,

and cysts caused by ingrown feathers.

While it's wise for retailers to first refer owners experiencing these problems to a veterinarian. It's also smart to know what to recommend regarding common sense care. That includes suggesting to customers that birds get ample exposure to light and dark, plenty of playtime and socialization, and reg-

ular bathing and misting via bird baths and spray bottles.

“To ensure healthy plumage, bird keepers must provide a healthy, balanced diet, a clean habitat and a stimulating environment,” said Ashley Rademacher, animal care and education coordinator with Zoo Med Labs, Inc. “There are many causes of feather problems, so retailers should become educated on the care of birds and their feathers. Seek to find the ultimate cause of feather problems and correct those conditions.”

For example, if the animal’s diet is deficient in vitamins or amino acids, “correct that deficiency by regularly using a multivitamin on the animal’s food to promote the growth of new, strong feathers,” said Rademacher.

Sprays and Drops

Mary Wyld, owner of Wyld’s Wingdom said several commercial bird bath sprays and shampoos made for different species can help resolve some feather problems. Case in point, Mango’s 100 percent naturally pure Bath Spray, offered in bottles for African greys, cockatoos and other parrots, which each moisturizes skin, provides scratching relief and soothes to decrease molt stress.

“Calming nutritional products are worth exploring,” said Wyld, who recommends stocking Avitech AviCalm, a supplement added to the bird’s food, and Pluck No More, an herbal liquid by Kings Cages that is added to the bird’s drinking water.

Soothing sprays with aloe vera can work wonders. One worthy example of the latter is 8 in 1 Ultra Care Bird Bath Spray, which contains natural preen gland oil, lanolin and aloe vera that conditions the skin and brightens and softens plumage.

Vitamin Matters

Brian Wittcop, manager of Steve’s Won-

derful World of Pets in Williamsville, N.Y., said he estimates that 80 percent

“To ensure healthy plumage, bird keepers must provide a healthy, balanced diet, a clean habitat and a stimulating environment,” – Ashley Rademacher

of feather-related problems among his customers are attributed to improper nutrition, while 20 percent stem from boredom. To alleviate the former, retailers should promote high-quality seed mixes that can fortify plumage with necessary fats, in addition to a well-balanced and

lism, strong bones, egg production and feather growth,” said Rademacher. “And

proper exposure to UVA may result in reduced feather plucking.”

Playtime Power

Meanwhile, to resolve avian ennui, it’s smart to stock a good variety of toys.

“In recent years, we’ve seen a lot of improvements to toys that can curb feather-related issues, especially preening toys made from wicker, rope, leather and cotton,” said Wittcop.

Wyld agrees.

“Offer an assortment of toys that encourage preening of the toy instead of self over-preening of the bird’s body,” she said.

Smart Merchandising

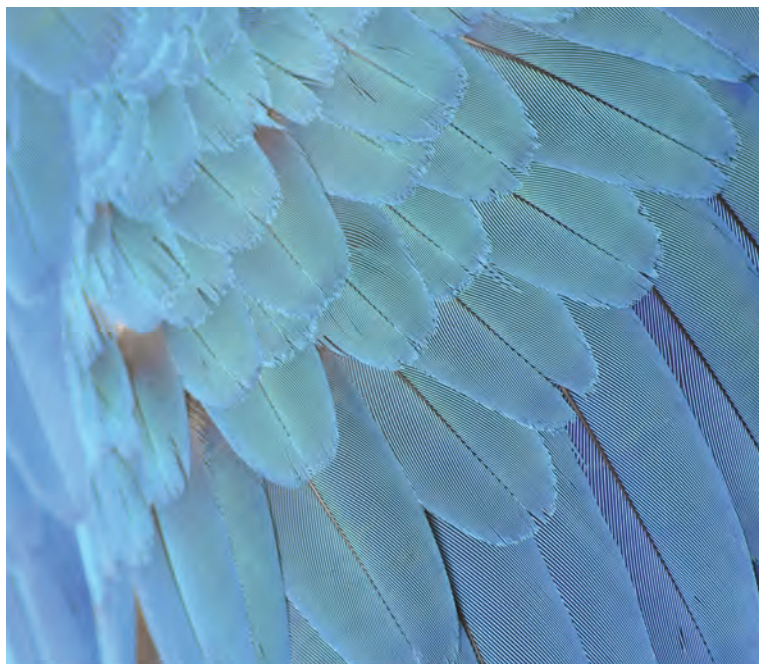
Wyld said retailers should create a designated feather care section in their stores, as feather problems like plucking are common enough to command significant shelf space

in a set area for related products.

Alternatively, Wittcop suggests peeping feather care products throughout a store, even in non-bird areas.

“Many pet owners have more than one kind of pet, so you might get their attention by displaying a feather care product in a dog product aisle and placing them in other high-traffic spots,” said Wittcop. “It’s also important to move these products around to different areas every so often in order to get the customer’s attention.”

Lastly, don’t forget to adequately educate staff on how to screen customers for feather problems and solutions and train them to recommend appropriate products you carry.



species-appropriate pelleted diet.

Wittcop prefers carrying products available in nitrogen-flushed resealable packaging, such as LM Animal Farms bird foods, to prevent oxidation of the vitamins and minerals inside.

Another way to foster proper plumage is to promote non-edible products like Zoo Med’s AvianSun 5.0 Compact Fluorescent Lamp, designed to provide pet birds with the essential UVB, UVA and visible light they need for vitamin D synthesis and psychological well-being, both vital for feather health.

“Proper exposure to UVB can allow birds to manufacture vitamin D3, which is essential for calcium metabo-



Grooming Rustic Breeds

Don't be intimidated by unique breeds. **BY DARYL CONNER**

Move over, doodles, there are new grooming challenges in town. Known collectively as “rustic breeds,” these dogs have some specific grooming needs that are important for savvy stylists to know about.

Just what is a rustic breed? One definition of the word “rustic,” is simple and artless. And that is a good thing to keep in mind when working on breeds that fall under the rustic category, breeds such as the Spanish water dog, pumi, barbet and lagotto romagnolo.

Keep It Simple

One thing that attracts fanciers of these breeds is the unkempt, natural appearance of their coats.

When it comes to grooming these breeds, “less is more,” said Sheryl Gaines, of New Jersey, who breeds and shows Spanish water dogs.

“This breed has a single coat, somewhat like a poodle, but you will find different degrees of curl and texture from dog to dog,” she said. “The coat can be described as ‘wooly.’”

Gaines keeps her show dogs in corded coats, but for pet groomers her instructions are simple.

“Take everything off one length all over,” she said. “If the dog is matted, use a 7F blade, nose to tail. If it is not matted and the owner wants a bit of length you can use a 4 or 5F blade.”

The problem is that groomers take a

look at the whimsical faces of this breed and want to style them.

“No poufs,” said Gaines. “No long ears, no sculpted head, no brushing, no combing, no drying.”

On its official website, the Spanish Water Dog Club of America states, “The Spanish water dog should never be aesthetically groomed.” This goes against just about everything any groomer has been taught.

For the Spanish water dog pet, breed fanciers are adamant: Keep it simple. Put the dog on the grooming table, take every bit of hair off at the same length all over the body. Then wash, towel and let the dog dry naturally. For groomers who itch to create a “look,” this simplicity can be hard to grasp.

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One hint given by Groom Team USA member and industry educator Kendra Otto is this:

"The key to properly maintaining many of the rustic coated breeds is the raking and combing before the bath," said Otto. "This will keep the pet happier for the grooming experience. They're also air dried to keep the curls. You want the breed to look messy and unkempt."

Otto is featured in several educational videos produced by Learn2groomdogs showing the proper way to groom several rustics, including the pumi and the lagatto romagnolo. Groomers can purchase a subscription and watch Otto working on actual dogs while explaining the best techniques and tools to create the signature looks of each breed.

Know Your Limits

When grooming a rare breed that fits into the rustic category for the first time, don't hesitate to admit that you are not familiar with the techniques necessary to

create the correct look. Many pet owners will have specific grooming instructions that came from their breeder. If so, ask them to bring them in with their pet, and take time to read them over.

"Put everything you know about grooming other breeds aside and plunge into the unique world of grooming rustics."

Also remember that help is at your fingertips. Each breed club has extensive websites that all include detailed grooming instructions.

For example, the Lagatto Club of America states on their website, "...The coat should be shown in a rustic style with no fluffing or blowing out. The coat should

match the lines of the dog and the curls should be evident. The dog should have the appearance of the working dog that it is."

The breed club for the Hungarian pumi offers that, "In order to achieve the characteristic corkscrews and curls in the coat, the hair is allowed to dry naturally. The coat must never appear fluffed and blown dry, obscuring the characteristic curls."

The message is clear, put the blow dryer away. Tools that are helpful for styling these breeds are clipper blades that leave coats as long as possible, as well as snap-on combs and chunker-style thinning shears, all of which allow groomers to remove excess coat while maintaining the correct natural appearance that these breeds require.

Don't be daunted if your appointment book has a rare and rustic dog on its pages. Simply do a little research on the breed. Learn what their standard calls for and brush up on the grooming requirements. Then put everything you know about grooming other breeds aside and plunge into the unique world of grooming rustics.

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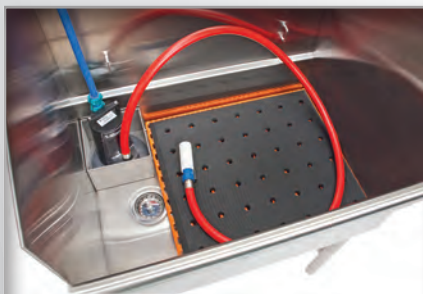


Shampoos, Conditioners Combine Technology and Natural Ingredients

Health and beauty trends in the human market are trickling into the grooming industry. **BY MAGGIE MARTON**

Consumers have become educated about ingredients in their personal grooming and now expect the same healthy, safe, technologically-ad-

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vanced formulations in pet grooming.

Petology Founder Rick Ferritto came to the business from health and beauty care, working with companies like L'Oreal and Revlon. He applied that background, along with Dr. David

Jarvis, the executive director of technology, to create a line of pet shampoos and conditioners.

"This is an interesting time," he said. "Dr. Jarvis and I collaborated on pet shampoo. We had some technology

that was brought to our attention from an efficacy point. It forced us to put our eyes on an industry we didn't know a lot about – we're personal care guys."

But, he noticed gaps in the pet grooming industry.

"We didn't seem to find any product that was driving functional benefits to the dog's skin or coat," Ferritto said. "We had the opportunity to fill a

Because customers are starting to look for the same quality in grooming as they buy in personal care, it's important to stock an array. However, as Rick Ferritto pointed out, price is still a critical component.

void that was remarkably empty – an opportunity to deliver a healthy alternative for pets."

Petology's focus is on unique ingredients.

"Petology is the science of pets – it's simple and expresses what the company does, but the big difference between existing pet care products and the ones produced by Petology is simply technology," said Jarvis. "When you look at existing pet care products on the market, 80 percent is marketing. What's inside the package is basically 1960s technology. When you look at our products, you see 2014 technology, and you see technology that is geared toward the pets and the groomers."

Petology's offerings include their Professional Line, Oatmeal & Honey Line, and Sensitive Line.

The Quest for Natural

In addition to advanced technology, natural ingredients drive a large, growing part of the segment.

Brands like Organic Oscar, Reliq and earthbath all have natural or organic offerings that appeal to health-con-

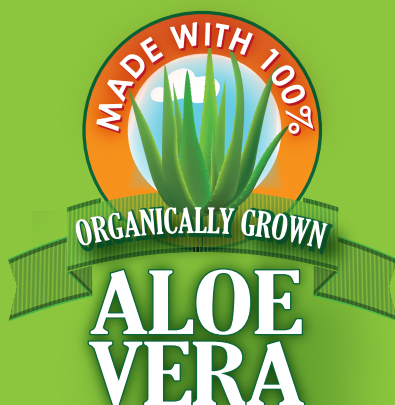


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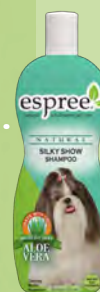
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scious consumers. Some brands like Reliq are combining technology with naturally-derived ingredients, with their nano-enhanced volcanic minerals. Further, two-in-one products, like Organic Oscar's 2-in-1 Shampoo & Conditioner, appeal to customers who don't want to use a two-step system with a separate shampoo and conditioner, but who still want the benefits

of organic ingredients.

"Our best-selling shampoo and conditioner lines are the Tropiclean products," said Paul Allen, CEO of Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming. "They are popular because they're totally soap-free, better for dogs, free of any harsh chemicals, and they're so easy to rinse out of the dog when washing at home, which is super important

when home grooming."

Tropiclean's ingredients are all naturally sourced in the United States.

Brand Recognition

One way to leverage that consumer affinity is by stocking brands that cus-

"We preach about feeding our pets things that are grain and oat free, so we strive to use products that are also equally as healthy for dogs."

- Marla Magel-Suglia

tomers already recognize.

Large, powerhouse brands like Wahl succeed in this way, as do health-and-beauty-aid favorites like Burt's Bees. However, smaller boutique brands deliver custom solutions.

For example, Isle of Dogs allows customers to create a customized grooming system for their dog, based on breed, habits and coat type. To make the sale, focus on educating the customer on the benefits of a particular line of shampoos and conditioners.

In the grooming salon, specialized products can create customer loyalty.

For instance, Marla Magel-Suglia, a groomer at Woof Gang's Orlando location, explained they like to use Envirogroom, a product they discovered last year at SuperZoo.

"Again this is soap-free and free of any harsh chemical products," she said. "We preach about feeding our pets things that are grain and oat free, so we strive to use products that are also equally as healthy for dogs. A big thing about why we love Envirogroom, though, is the incredible smell. We have clients come in specifically looking to have their dog smell that way, so we only use it on the grooming side and we don't sell it so they only get that Woof Gang smell by visiting our groomers."

The grooming salon at Woof Gang sells the products they utilize to their



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customers, except the Envirogroom because they want to keep that as an in-house specialty.

"We do sell Tropiclean and Epi-Pet which some of our groomers will use," Magel-Suglia said. "Epi-Pet ... was developed by a vet and great for dogs with all sorts of skin conditions. We highly recommend that one and use it when we can. We also use Tropiclean and again encourage dog owners to use it for its many benefits. Since it's our most popular selling product, they seem to listen to our advice."

Because customers are starting to look for the same quality in grooming as they buy in personal care, it's important to stock an array. However, as Ferritto pointed out, price is still a critical component.

Choose a mix of big-name brands and mix in high-end specialty products, which include a selection of all-natural ingredients, to cover your customers' bases.



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The Hamsters Have It

From treats and bedding to food and water bottles, hamsters can help ring up sales. **BY KAREN M. ALLEY**

When it comes to the small animal category, hamsters are major players.

One reason might just be the simple fact that these little animals are downright cute. Additionally, their size and ease of care also makes them a good animal for classrooms, families with small children or people who live in urban settings, which helps boost their popularity.

There are a lot of fun habitats and accessories specifically for hamsters. Pair that with the healthy options for food and treats and the new innovations in bedding that aid in clean up, and retailers have a category primed for growth.

Making It Fun

Create your own hamster circus with the new Critter Trail Circus Habitat from Kaytee. Hamsters can play under a big top tent, which includes a cannon-themed hideout. Kaytee also has a new two-level, round habitat, which is great for viewing the hamsters at play and also makes clean up easy.

"People often will buy more than one cage and connect them with our tubes, which expands the hamster's living space, giving the animals more options and keeping them occupied during the day," said Mary Ann Loveland, associate brand manager, Kaytee Hard Goods.

Keep the fun going with Radical Sips from Lixit. These BPA-free plastic water bottles are transparent so pet owners can easily see water levels, but they feature colorful graphics including skulls, sharks and polka dots.

And of course, no hamster habitat is complete without some fun accessories.

In addition to water bottles, Lixit makes hundreds of products, one of which is a Hamster House, a small, cozy

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house made of cardboard that can be decorated with stickers. Hamsters love to burrow in it and nest, and will also chew the house, which is non-toxic, so it's both edible and interactive.

Another edible accessory is the Timothy Hideout from Oxbow Animal Health. Made of hand-woven, Timothy hay, the tunnel is the perfect size for hamsters to burrow in, or you can stuff treats in it for more interaction.

Good Nutrition

According to the latest survey from the American Pet Products Association, 88 percent of hamster owners purchase treats. In addition to the fun factor,

According to the latest survey from the American Pet Products Association, 88 percent of hamster owners purchase treats.

treats are a necessary element of hamster health, as the gnawing necessary for enjoying some treats helps keep teeth trimmed.

Oxbow Animal Health's new Timothy Twists are a great example of fun and health rolled into one. Made of all-natural timothy hay, they are a perfect size to be played with by hamsters while they gnaw on them.

Keeping a variety of treats available for customers to choose from is important, and Vitakraft has retailers covered with their ever-popular Hamster Drops and Hamsters Sticks. The drops come in strawberry, yogurt and milk and honey flavors, while the sticks are honey, fruit or nut.

"Our treat sticks have a wooden core dipped in a batter coated with seeds and grains, that's triple baked for long-lasting flavor and to help hold it together," said Lisa Kniceley, marketing and trade specialist at Vitakraft. "They're popular because they're appealing to customers, hamsters love them and it's a nutritious treat. They're

familiar to customers, and sometimes the tried and true works best."

As the treats show, good nutrition can be fun, and that's not limited to just between-meal snacks. Hamster foods are packed with fruits, vegetables, grains and seeds that are fun for hamsters to eat because the blends allow them to mimic the foraging these animals would do in the wild. And today's discerning

customers are looking for natural items that are good for their pets.

The new SunSations line includes an all-natural hamster diet containing 20-percent fruits and vegetables, high-fiber hay and grains, seeds and pellets to make it a fortified diet high in protein.

"This is a good option for pet owners looking for something without the artificial colors or preservatives,"



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Kniceley said.

Vitakraft is also launching a new diet, the Vita Prima Dwarf Hamster Formula, designed specifically for dwarf hamsters and containing omega-3s, pre-biotics and probiotics.

For customers who are dedicated to the Carefresh Complete Menu, the hamster formula has recently been enhanced with whole seeds and grains to

encourage the animals' natural foraging instincts. Scarlett Pet Food also offers formulas specifically for hamsters in its Mardi Gras, Nutra and Naturals lines, all made with natural ingredients and providing a variety of texture and flavors.

Clean and Fresh

Most people dread cleaning out the cage, but it's a necessary evil in order to

keep the animal healthy and the house smelling fresh. Luckily, some new products make it less of a chore.

The Critter Trail Bedding Tray is one of them. Rather than having to take apart the cage and relocate the animals for a routine cleaning, the tray allows owners to slide it out, pull a layer off and put the tray with now fresh Clean and Cozy bedding back in the cage.

"It's a lot like a frozen TV dinner, where you just pull the top protective

Hamster foods are packed with fruits, vegetables, grains and seeds that are fun for hamsters to eat because the blends allow them to mimic the foraging these animals would do in the wild.

layer off and it's ready to go," said Jason Casto, director of Kaytee Hard Goods. With three removable layers, it allows for convenient clean up in between major sanitizing.

Both Carefresh and Oxbow Animal Health have introduced new bedding for hamsters.

"Carefresh Custom Bedding is designed specifically for hamsters and gerbils as it caters to their instinctual burrowing behaviors like never before," said Jim Gorrell, brand manager, Healthy Pet. "Unlike other wood shavings or paper products that easily collapse, we have designed a paper product that uses correctly sized pieces that are comfortable and secure, supporting hamsters all day long."

Oxbow's Pure Comfort bedding also provides a great option for active nesters such as hamsters who require a constant supply of clean, soft bedding.

"The 100-percent pure paper absorbs up to 800 percent of its weight in moisture," said Melissa Ross, director of marketing and education.

Ask the Expert



Micah Kohles, DVM, MPA
Director of Veterinary
Science & Outreach

Oxbow Animal Health
29012 Mill Road
Murdock, NE 68407

(800) 249-0366

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Q: We recently purchased a hamster for my daughter. What should we include in his cage to ensure that he's healthy, happy, and safe?

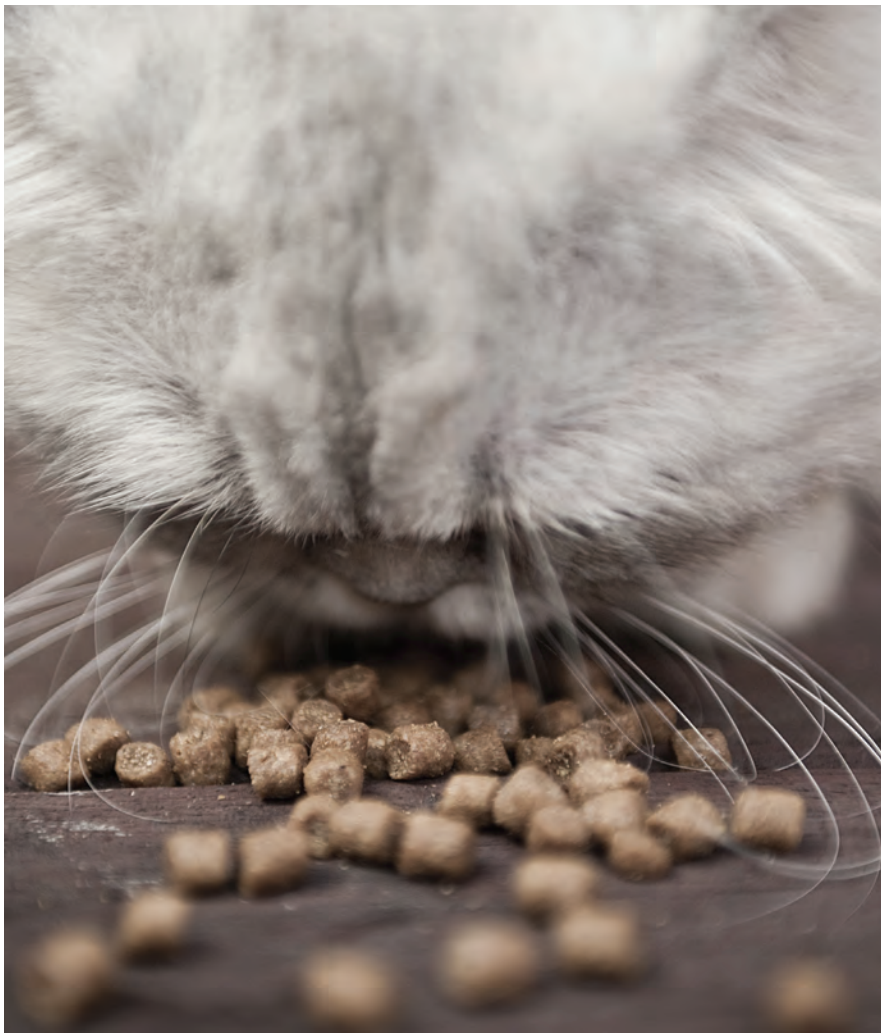
A: Like all pets, hamsters benefit from a thoughtfully assembled living space filled with healthy nutrition and enriching accessories. Starting with the habitat itself, hamsters can live comfortably in a wire habitat with a solid floor or in a glass aquarium. Structures made completely of plastic are not ideal, as your hamster could easily chew through the plastic and escape. Provide a generous layer of bedding, avoiding aromatic cedar and pine shavings which contain resins that can irritate your hamster's skin, eyes, and lungs. Be sure to supply plenty of high quality grass hay in your pet's habitat. While hay is not essential to hamsters from a nutritional perspective, it helps to stimulate your pet's natural foraging and nesting behaviors. Oat hay is a favorite, as hamsters enjoy foraging in it and eating the immature seeds that are found in premium oat hays.

Hamsters require a diet composed of a complete fortified food, plus small amounts of fruits, veggies, and seeds as well as an occasional insect. It's best to avoid food mixes with a variety of seeds, nuts, and dried fruits. Hamsters will pick out their favorite bits and leave the healthy pieces behind. Hamsters are infamous for hoarding food, so don't be surprised to find stashes around their enclosure and be sure to only feed the recommended daily amount of food. Healthy treats are fun and encourage enrichment, but only feed in moderation (no more than 5% of your pet's daily diet).

Hamsters benefit greatly from opportunities for enrichment, so be sure to include plenty of safe, healthy items to meet this need. An exercise wheel is an obvious choice. Include a woven hay tunnel or hideout to provide a safe space to get away and also to satisfy your pet's urge to chew. Finally, fresh water should always be available in both a sipper bottle and a tip-proof bowl that is an appropriate size for a hamster.

Dr. Kohles is the Director of Veterinary Science & Outreach at Oxbow Animal Health as well as a practicing veterinarian specializing in companion animal medicine and care.

This general information is not intended to provide individual advice. **PAID CONTENT**



Stocking Natural Treats Is a Natural Choice

More customers are seeking out all-natural, healthy treat options. **BY STACY MANTLE**

When it comes to pet treats, natural is the name of the game.

Consumers are becoming increasingly savvy about sourcing and packaging. They want fair-trade sources, eco-friendly packaging and treats made with organic ingredients. Fortunately, pet treat makers understand this need and are performing well under pressure.

"The natural treat category has exploded and I feel we can attribute this to the perpetual trend of treating pets like a member of the family," said Rob Ca-

denhead, vice-president of research and development at Spring Naturals. "If your customers seek out all-natural, healthy treat options for themselves, they undoubtedly will demand the same variety for their furry family members."

Treats as Supplements

Manufacturers are seeking out ways to supplement a pet's diet through treats. From glucosamine and probiotics to trendier ingredients like green tea, bee pollen and seaweed, expect to see all manner of sup-

plements appear in your pets' treats.

Ark Naturals is a leader in the natural supplement arena.

"We've grown a significant audience of dogs that live active lives – therapy dogs, agility dogs, dock dogs, service dogs," said Susan Weiss, president of Ark Naturals. "They are burning many more calories than the average dog – it is very helpful to add additional vitamins and minerals to help support their active lifestyles. The nutritional needs of these animals are different than the needs of a dog who hangs out, goes for a few walks, plays Frisbee occasionally."

Zuke's also offers natural treats that double as supplements. Their Hip Action line of treats offers daily hip and joint support in a naturally delicious moist dog treat.

"From the farm to your dog's bowl, the meat is so fresh it arrives and is cooked, packed and shipped within two days from PetSafe's human-grade facility," said Tracey Quillin, PetSafe category manager.

PetSafe's indigo Smokehouse Strips only uses all-natural ingredients such as rosemary and green tea, and all of the meat used is USDA inspected and vacuum sealed to lock in the freshness.

Whether a consumer's pet prefers alligator jerky or crawfish treats from Delcacorp, or bison from Tasman's, there is a unique protein source in treats available for every type of appetite.

"Over the past 20 years, we've found that many pet parents are on the lookout for the latest innovation in products for their pets, especially when it comes to treats and food," said Blaine Sherwin, sales director for key accounts at Delca Corporation, developer of the think!dog line of Louisiana Alligator dog treats. "When we discovered that alligator was a sustainable protein source that dogs loved, we created our new dog treat line around it and it has been extremely well received. People are looking for items that are made in the USA, offer something new and contain healthy ingredients for their pets."

Also on the menu is Tasman's new Bison Goodie Bites. Perfect as a training treat, Goodie Bites are made from real bison.

"The most important thing in any



"The natural treat category has exploded and I feel we can attribute this to the perpetual trend of treating pets like a member of the family,"
-Rob Cadenhead

"Our products begin as single-ingredient treats and we only add ingredients that supplement an already perfect protein."

Good Ingredients

"We feel that it is important to feed our dogs with not only the best food you can provide them with, but also

with the best treats that you can give them," said Adrian Pettyan, CEO & co-founder of Caru. "At Caru Pet Food Company, our philosophy towards feeding our furry companions is to provide them with good wholesome food and treats that do not contain any of the fillers that are found in so many commercial products in the marketplace today."

Other companies feel the same way and focus on sourced ingredients that are simple and direct.

"Look Who's Happy treats only contain carefully selected, all-natural ingredients, which are significant selling points for parents who care for the health and happiness of their pets," said Tommy Gay, president of Look Who's Happy. "I personally avoid eating foods that contain fillers and ingredients that are hard to pronounce, and I believe my dog deserves better, too."

There is an overall movement towards better quality foods on the hu-

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man side that is naturally flowing over to the pet side.

“Treat selection is a natural extension of these better food choices,” said Bette Schubert, Co-Founder of Bravo!. “All of the things that are important in a food, such as all-natural, quality ingredients and made in the USA, are going to be equally important in the treats they select for their companion animals. As a result, sales of all-natural and organic treats have been steadily rising.”

Slim Down

Natural treats often mean fewer calories and this can go a long way towards helping owners lower their pets’ weight without feeding a low-calorie diet that may be a more difficult sell.

The Company of Animals created Coachies Training Treats that boast only one calorie per serving and are 100-percent grain free and sugar free.

“Coachies were created from scratch to be a smart, healthy solution for training and treating that’s both motivating and size appropriate,” said Dr. Roger Mugford, pet psychologist and founder of The Company of Animals. “Based on their incredible popularity in the United Kingdom, we’re expecting these ‘mini motivators’ to quickly become a favorite among pets, plus their parents and trainers.”

Sustainable Treats

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

“We are proud to know that our Beyond Fair Trade policy is contributing to the economic development ... in Nepal,” said Brandon Barney, marketing associate for Himalayan Dog Chew. “We purchase directly from the farmers, and help them make that extra money in one year that they would have needed five years to make by selling the chews. We work with about 3,000 family farmers who make these chews for the Himalayan Dog Chew brand.”

The company recently introduced Yakky Charms, small yak and cow’s milk cheese nuggets which become a tasty puff when microwaved.



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News and Events in the Pet Industry

RFG Open House RFG Distributing (Animal Supply Central) hosted its 6th annual open house June 12 and 13 in Bloomington, Minn. This year's open house attracted 90 vendors and more than 500 attendees representing 200 retail stores. Themed "The Price Is Right With RFG Distributing," the open house featured aspects from the hit television series, including themed games, color schemes and more. In addition, customers and vendors enjoyed a show environment with high energy and great deals.





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5 Ross Johnson of NEMA, Jenny Ashley of Fluker's and Rob Stephenson of NEMA.

6



7



8



9



6 Richard Bruns, Lorenzo Capellino, Nancy Black, Richard Charney and Dominique Martin of Almo Nature.

7 Kevin Gaines, Piscine Energetics.

8 Bette Schub and Beth Gallison of Bravo!

9 Cole Meierstein and Tom McCrossen of Cloud Star.



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Sept. 6-7 Chicago Pet Show, Darien, Ill. Contact: Chicago Pet Show, 630-385-4000, www.chicagopetshow.com

Sept. 6-7 North American Reptile Breeders Conference, Anaheim, Calif. Contact: www.narbc.com

Sept. 16-17 Pet Food Experts Buying Show, Uncasville, Conn. Contact: 866-708-1340, www.pfxne.com/buying-show-reg

Sept. 19-21 Backer Total Pet Expo, Rosemont, Ill. Contact: H. H. Backer Associates Inc., 312-578-1818, hbacker@hbacker.com, www.totalpetexpo.com

Sept. 20 Fromm Petfest, Milwaukee. Contact: 920-350-FEST, info@petfestmke.com, www.petfestmke.com

Sept. 20-21 Fredericksburg Pet Show, Fredericksburg, Va. Contact: Fredericksburg Pet Show, 540-548-5555, www.fredericksburgpetshow.com

Sept. 23-24 Petfood 2.0, Chicago. Contact: petfood2info@vpico.com, www.petfood2.com

Sept. 27-28 North American Reptile Breeders Conference, Arlington, Texas. Contact: www.narbc.com

October 2014

Oct. 2-3 Phillips Southern Buying Show, Orlando, Fla. Contact: 800-451-2817, info@philipspet.com, www.philipspet.com

Oct. 11-12 North American Reptile Breeders Conference, Tinley Park, Ill. Contact: www.narbc.com

Oct. 16 NYC Retails & Sales Expo Natural Event Showcase for Made in the USA Pet Products, New York. Contact: Dana Humphrey, 619-414-9307, info@

longislandpetprofessionals.com, www.RetailsandSalesPetExpo.com

Oct. 18 Northern California Pet Expo, Santa Rosa, Calif. Contact: Amazing Pet Expos, 800-977-3609, ext 108, www.northerncaliforniapetexpo.com

Oct. 25-26 Reef-A-Palooza, Costa Mesa, Calif. Contact: reefapaloozatheshow@gmail.com, www.reefapaloozashow.org

Oct. 30-Nov. 1 Barkworld, Atlanta, Ga. Contact: www.barkworldexpo.com

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Nov. 7-9. Aquatic Experience, Chicago. Contact: 800-999-7295, 626-447-2222, info@wpamail.org, www.aquaticexperience.org

Nov. 20-22. National Cage Bird Show, Dayton, Ohio. Contact: www.ncbs.org

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Automated Pet Care Products 20 www.litter-robot.com 877-250-7729	Fetch...for Pets! C4 www.fetch4pets.com 212-244-2456	Legitimutt 3 www.legitimutt.com 866-933-4215	PetRageous Designs 31 www.petrageousdesigns.com 800-893-9893	Sojos/Sojourner Farms 28 www.sojos.com 888-867-6567
BarkWorld Expo 22 www.barkworldexpo.com	Fluff & Tuff 34 www.fluffandtuff.com 248-705-5601	Lixit 113 www.lixit.com 800-358-8254	PetSafe 37 www.petsafe.net 866-738-4379	Sweet Scoop 91 www.sweetsscoop.com 800-794-3287
Barkworthies, Naturally Delicious! C2 www.barkworthies.com 804-612-4390	Forever Stainless Steel 107 www.foreverstainlesssteel.com 866-774-3837	Loving Pets, Inc. 63 www.lovingpetsproducts.com 866-599-7387	PetSport USA 5 www.petsportusa.com 800-936-4432	Timberline Fisheries 99 www.timberlinefisheries.com 800-423-2488
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Cloud Star 21 www.cloudstar.com 800-361-9079	Grandma Lucy's 75 www.grandmalucys.com 800-906-LUCY (5829)	NYC Re-Tails and Sales Expo 22 info@longislandpetprofessionals.com 631-446-1105/619-414-9307	ProLabs 61 www.prolabs.com 800-367-6359	Zignature/ Fussie Cat 29 www.zignature.com www.fussiecat.com 888-897-7207
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The Company of Animals LLC 45 www.companyofanimals.us 203-345-1234	H.H. Backer Associates Inc. 10, 11, 12, 25, 67, 69 www.hhbacker.com 1 (312) 578-1818		QT Dog 116 www.qtdog.com 800-297-1998	Zymox/Pet King Brands 24 www.zymox.com 888-752-5487
Conair Corporation 9 www.conairpet.com 866-771-7092				

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Bessie + Barnie 30 www.bessieandbarnie.com 212-764-8757	Ethical Products Inc. 38 www.ethicalpet.com 800-223-7768	Look Who's Happy 32, 35 www.LookWhosHappy.com	Top Dog Kitchen 41 www.topdogkitchen.com 239-331-8143	Who-Rae Australia LLC 32 www.who-rae.com 747-220-6755
Best Shot Pet Products 36 www.bestsotpet.com 800-735-5251	Garmin 40 www.garmin.com/dogs 913-397-8200	my canine kids 36 www.mycaninekidsinc.com 888-505-8892		
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DDPlus 36, 38 www.ddplus.it	iFetch... 33 www.golfetch.com 512-219-3271	Petmate 31, 34, 35, 46 www.petmate.com		
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Helping Pets Live Healthier Lives

Sojos continues to grow at a fast pace.

BY MICHELLE MASKALY

We recently sat down with Ward Johnson, owner and president of Sojos, to talk about how the company got started and what it's like working in the pet industry.

Michelle: Tell me a little about Sojos.

Ward: Sojos has been around since

1985. Our first products were pre-mixes that people add to meat to create their own fresh, home-prepared meals.

These products are still popular today, though in the last decade we've introduced complete diets containing freeze-dried raw meat in the bag, which is helping to take wholesome foods with real ingredients to the mainstream.

Michelle: One of your tag lines is "raw made easy." How does Sojos live up to that?

Ward: Because our Sojos Complete is made with unprocessed ingredients, our customers can know that their dogs are getting the naturally-occurring enzymes and nutrients found in raw, human-quality ingredients.

And, because they simply add water to rehydrate Sojos, there's none of the

mess or difficulties that people normally associate with feeding a raw diet.

Michelle: What is a typical day like for you?

Ward: Busy, busy, busy.

There's never a dull moment when you own a company that's growing as fast as Sojos is. It can be a little crazy at times, but it's a fun, dynamic work environment that has an energy all its own.

Michelle: What's the best part about working in the pet industry?

Ward: When you see the changes that occur when a dog or cat is transitioned to a raw diet — it's simply amazing. Pets bring joy to our lives, and it's incredibly rewarding being able to give back to our four-legged friends that give so much to us.

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