





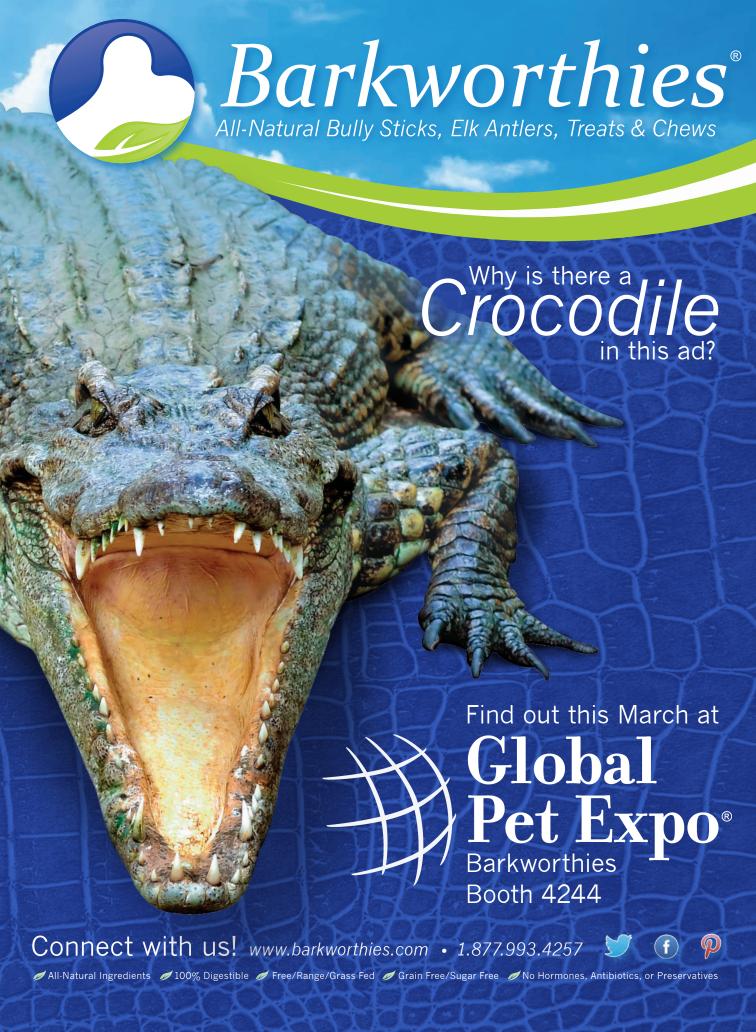
'DAVID'
THE INDEPENDENT
RETAILER



# **GAINING AN ADVANTAGE**

INDEPENDENT OVERCOME THE COMPETITION | ALL SEATS RETAILERS OVERCOME THE COMPETITION | RESERVED





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# Worldwise® is introducing 350+ innovative NEW products under REIMAGINED brands



Visit us at the Global Pet Expo, Booth #1367 to see what we're talking about!



1-800-Worldwise I www.worldwise.com

We're also excited to introduce our newest family member,

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# Publisher's Letter



# Competition

It's such a double-edge sword.

ith it, your business will face ups and downs and you may have months of struggle but then again, you could be extremely successful against it. Without it, you don't have the drive to continue to improve yourself and your business and be the best person and business that you can be; and if you produce your own products, there will be less of a drive to improve it.

It's something that every business, no matter what you do, will face. That's why this month our cover story is about the strategies independent retailers have used to "beat" the competition.

The competition can be a wide range of things, even though most tend to think of the larger competitors. While those stores may be your main competition, there is also competition online and with other stores in your local area. In the end, you have to do what is best for your store.

We have spoke to several retailers about their store, the adversities they have faced and how they overcame them. Because of this, we have set up the cover story a little bit different, in hopes that it will be easier to read. We wanted you to hear directly from the retailers themselves and not interfere with the advice they can give you. Hopefully from these stories, it can help you think of new and exciting ways to improve your business.

We have also put up on our website a few other retailers that wanted to share their stories. Feel free, and it's something we strongly encourage, to comment on our webpage, Facebook page or anything you want to, to share your success stories. The more ideas that people put out there, the more people will be willing to share and in return, help you with different ideas of beating the competition. Also, if at any point as a retailer you are struggling with a problem with your store, feel free

to post it on our social media channels. We have grown those channels to help network retailers together and we will do our best to help you find an answer.

Pet Age is a small business and we understand the struggles you may face. There are challenges at every turn and we at Pet Age spend a lot of time learning different ways to improve our business. Besides the advice you will read in the cover story, my other big advice is to prepare and prepare early.

With the new calendar year, we prepare for the different trade shows and open houses we are going to visit. It's something we start to plan out months in advance and continue to work on until the day it happens. We constantly think of things we can do at shows, such as Global Pet Expo, to give you the full experience.

For retailers, start making plans and figuring out who you want to sit down with at Global, whether it is current companies you work with or ones you hope to work with soon. Figure out your schedule now, before the hectic schedule starts.

The more planning you can do ahead of time, the better, because it's only going to get crazier as we get closer to that March date.

In the *Pet Age* office currently, I am planning out the different companies and friends I will see at Global, not including the time I enjoy walking around the showroom floor saying "hi" to everyone I pass. Also, our sales and editorial staff have been planning on whom to see and the new products to check out.

I could go on about this forever but the long story short, start planning now it's going to save you a headache or two down the road, trust me.

Craig Rexford
Publisher
craigr@journalmultimedia.com

# Pet Age

VICE PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER Craig M. Rexford craigr@journalmultimedia.com 732-246-5709

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Ariyana Edmond
ariyanae@journalmultimedia.com
323-868-5038

Joe Hubbard joeh@journalmultimedia.com 630-776-6434

Brianne Molnar briannem@journalmultimedia.com 732-246-5708

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Michelle Maskaly
michellem@journalmultimedia.com
732-246-5722

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Jason Kamery
jasonk@journalmultimedia.com
732-246-5734

#### **CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Karen M. Alley, Dan Calabrese, Daryl Conner, Erik J. Martin, John Mack, Rob Stephenson, Debi Hilley, Dave Ratner, Stacy Mantle, Maggie Marton, Erin Salley, Thomas Mazorlig, Jessica Farina-Morris, Sandy Robins, RD Webster

BLOGGERS:

John Cullen, Dave Ratner, Amy Palmer, Kerry Sutherland

ART DIRECTOR Andrew Ogilvie

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER** Nicole Composto

**CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER** Kevin Paccione

Joe Barry

BUSINESS MANAGER

**WEB SERVICES** 

AnnMarie Karczmit

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**Jessica Perry

PUBLISHED BY JOURNAL MULTIMEDIA David A. Schankweiler, CEO Lawrence M. Kluger, President

#### **HOW TO REACH US**

MAILING ADDRESS PET AGE, 220 Davidson Ave., Suite 302 Somerset, NJ 08873

PHONE: 732-339-3700 FAX: 732-846-0421 EMAIL: petage@journalmultimedia.com TO SUBSCRIBE VISIT: http://www.petage.com FOR LIST RENTALS, DSA Direct: 973-954-2649

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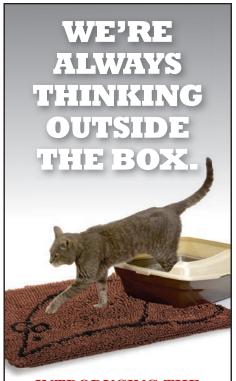






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# Editor's Letter



# **Going With the Flow**

Sometimes you can have the perfect plan, but things out of your control can mess it all up.

ake for example this issue of Pet Age. We planned to have everything done early, because we were scheduled to go to print right after the New Year. Then came extended holidays, snow storms, a broken water pipe that shut our building down and servers crashing.

Not exactly how we planned. But, we, as well as our printer, were flexible and did what we had to do to get it done. None of us freaked out. Instead, we assessed the situation, contacted who we needed to contact and did the best we could, which is all that you can ask from you, and your staff.

We've seen similar things happen at pet retail stores across the country, especially this winter. Photos with Santa were canceled, stores closed early or didn't open at all, because of weather.

It's annoying, upsetting and disheartening, especially because you likely put so much work in it.

But, sometimes you just have to go with the flow. Not everything is going to work out the way you planned.

Whether it be an in-store demo postponed because of icy weather, a canceled flight to a conference you wanted to attend, a vacation that didn't turn out as planned or a shipment of new dog toys that didn't arrive in time for your biggest sales weekend of the year, there is nothing we can do about it.

We've learned, however, the best way to deal with these situations, is to concentrate on what you can control. So, if weather cancels a big adoption event at your store, have your meltdown and then get to work on creating new plans.

Trust me, I understand it is easi-

er said than done. Just ask my staff. I'm not always the best at it, but it is something I strive to get better at, because in the end you can only control so much.

Speaking of new plans, I am very excited to tell you about Pet Age's newest venture, the Pet Age Business of the Year Awards to be presented during a breakfast at this year's SuperZoo in Las Vegas.

Our Business of the Year Awards will recognize independent pet businesses for excellence and entrepreneurial success across the pet industry including, but not limited to: pet retailers, groomers, dog walkers, veterinarians, dog day care centers, boarding facilities and training facilities.

We wanted the categories to not only recognize businesses overall, but for specific programs they do, such as a social media campaign, an awesome website, a natural products section and more. You can nominate yourself, or another business you think deserves recognition.

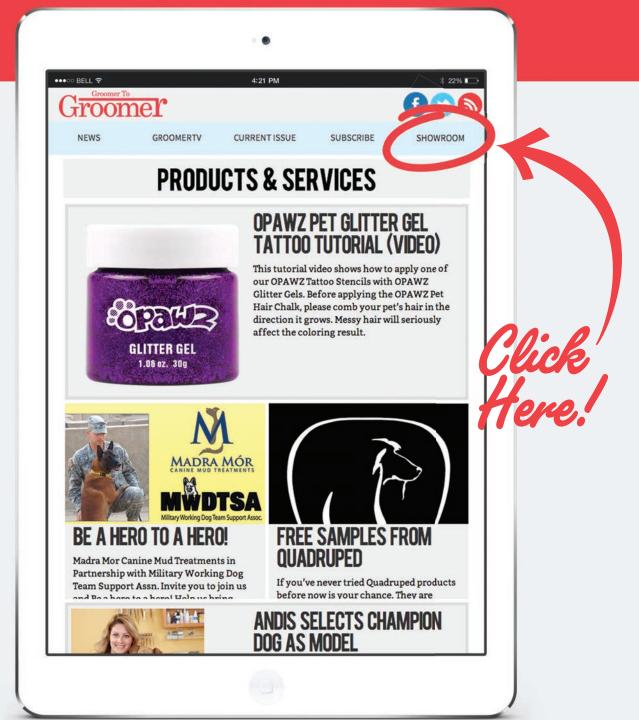
The awards will be judged by an independent panel of pet industry professionals who will be using a specialized scoring system set up by our top-notch events staff.

To learn more about this, head on over to www.petage.com and click on the events tab.

> Michelle Maskaly Editor michellem@journalmultimedia.com

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# S

# **SOCIAL MEDIA**

# + A Look at What Pet Influencers Are Saying Around the Web



#### Nancy Hassel

Thanks to @PetAgeMag our Made in USA NYC Re-Tails & Sales Pet Expo featured today! goo.gl/lpdQUv #madeinUSA #pets

01:38 PM - 10 Jan 14



# WomenInPetIndustry

@PetAgeMag is a sponsor of the 2014 WIPIN conference! Yippee! #WIPIN14

04:30 PM - 03 Jan 14



#### DissolvingDogTreats

@petsweekly @PetAgeMag just subscribed! Thanks so much for such an informative magazine!

01:55 PM - 13 Jan 14



# Zoo Med Laboratories

A New Year means New Shows! Check out our showpage on our website for our current 2014 show schedule:

links.zoomed.com/repshows

06:24 PM - 14 Jan 14



#### PSI @PetSittersInt

Sponsorship & exhibitor opportunities available at PSI's 2014 Pet Sitter World Educational Conference & Expo petsit.com/2014-pet-sitte...

04:43 PM - 14 Jan 14



#### Tidy Cats @TidyCats

Sometimes it's fun to tell someone you have a cat just to watch their face light up #TheMoreYouKnow

05:33 PM - 14 Jan 14



#### John Paul Pet

"The average dog is a nicer person than the average person." ~ Andrew A. Rooney

07:10 PM - 14 Jan 14

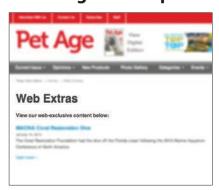


#### @netsweekly

If you have a pet business, you need to be sure you're subscribed to @PetAgeMag - it's free! ow.ly/sdTva

07:35 PM - 07 Jan 14

# + Facing the Competition



Have you always wondered how other retailers create successful programs and strategies to outsmart the competition?

Pet Age spoke with other retailers from around the country to hear about their business, the type of competition they face, and how they overcame it. You will find some of these interviews in our cover story, but there were so many great

responses that we decided to share more of them on our website.

They will be available Feb. 1, at www.petage.com/web-extra.



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





# Storefront

Pet industry news and management tips

# **Pet Costume Business Is Booming**

Creating themes can help pet clothing disappear from the shelf. BY JASON KAMERY

ubie's Costume Company, Inc. is the world's largest designer, manufacturer and distributor of Halloween costumes and accessories and in recent years has broken into the pet industry.

Every year Rubie's has a "sneak peak" before all of the January costume shows.

According to Erin Breig, of Rubies, Rubie's Pet Shop is now treated more like a sister company, because it is now being looked at as its own category.

"An example would be that I am meeting with Spirit Halloween, who is only open September and October and then they will close, and they did really well with pets this past year," Breig said. "They only did five styles with us and now they are looking for something different, they want to see if we can offer them new designs.

That's the idea, what can we do before we are at a trade show.

"I am excited to hear what they hated about the product. I know the sales did well but they are looking for new packaging. This year will be our most solid, organized, clear year in terms of we are a brand now. We have a full product line that is in production and it's not like last year where we only had a sample and couldn't let



people take them."

Paul Schiff, the president of Wholesome Pet Supplies started with Rubie's on a trial basis this past year.

"We thought that the pet costumes, whether they are for Halloween or birthday parties or the actual Christmas costumes, was something that was very underserved in the pet industry," Schiff said. "We are a distributer that primarily focuses on Colorado, so we thought we would try this out and see

what the response was with our retailers and then go from there."

According to Schiff, it was a very positive experience for them and for Rubie's, and they both received some great feedback from the retailers.

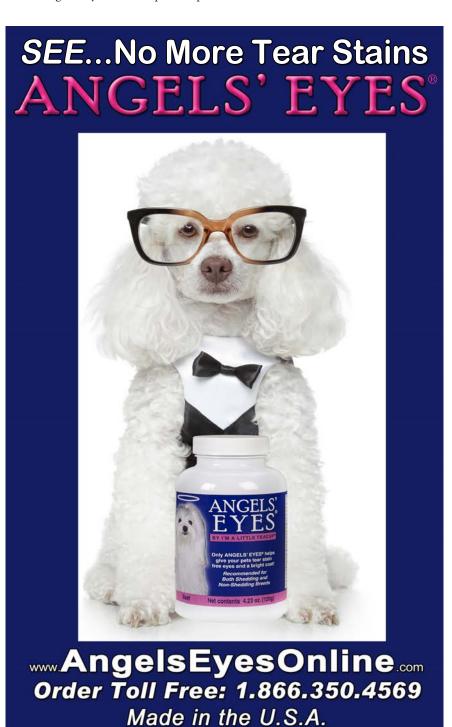
So what was the key to selling them in the store? Themes.

"What we found is that the stores that did well with them, carried them and did theme displays," Schiff said. "A traditional pet store typically throws a bunch of costumes onto one of their racks and there is no creativity that goes into it, it is just, here they are. What I have worked with my team on, is to work with these retailers to think about more themes that people could tie in."

Both Breig and Schiff see the pet costume trend expanding.

"I think the stores that put the investment into it and really do fun creative displays, for example, you can do a Star Wars theme display and pick up a couple of props or something and do various things to help build the theme in the window display or something and you dress up a couple

of dog mannequins with it, you could have a Darth Vader or one of the other costumes that did well," Schiff said. "If you dressed up mannequins and help build that theme it really creates a fun situation. We are still working to explain how much this will increase retailers' sales if they go this path. The ones that have tried it, they already know it."



# **Pet Food Experts Expands**

New distribution center will help accommodate their expanding portfolio of super premium, holistic pet food brands.

Pet Food Experts, a pet food and supply distributor, is expanding by building a 170,000-squarefoot facility on 18.9 acres of land in Denver, Penn.

"Our new facility will allow us to

drastically increase efficiency, reduce our environmental impact, and most importantly, allow us to keep up with the strong growth and support of our independent retailers in the region," Michael Baker, CEO, said.

Glenn J. Frill, president of Professional Design and Construction, said that while the building's footprint will be 170,000-square-feet, a mezzanine would boost the total square footage to 197,000-square-feet.

"The building is being designed so it could be expanded by an additional 58,000 square feet," Frill said.

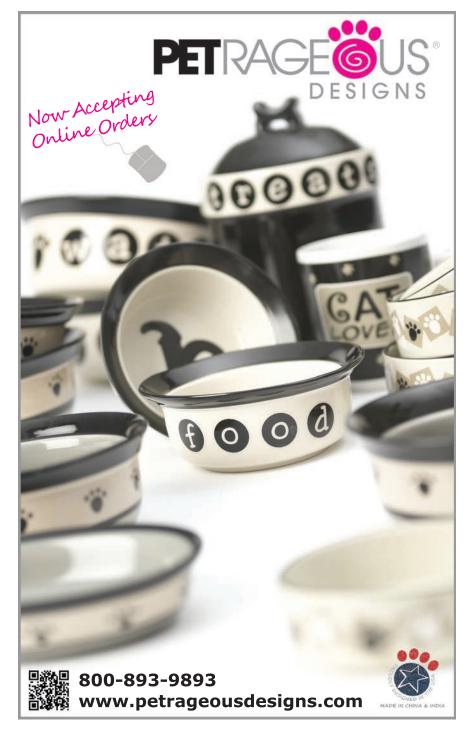


The new location brings the total number of stores to 38.

oof Gang Bakery recently opened their newest store, located in Apopka, Fla., growing their business to 38 locations. It is the ninth one in central Florida.

The store, Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming Apopka, is a locally-owned small business, offering full service grooming, and a wide selection of pet foods and supplies. It is located at 1511 Rock Springs Rd, Apopka, Fla. 32712.

Cari Darias and Julia Meffen, residents of Central Florida for a combined 31 years, are the franchise owners, and are dedicated to the local community, as well as to providing unparalleled service and quality products for customers and their four-legged friends, according to the company.



# **Kathy Ireland Partners With Worldwise**

She will develop a new line of home decor friendly pet products.

orldwise, a leading consumer pet products company, entered into a long term, exclusive licensing agreement with kathy ireland Worldwide.

Under the partnership, Kathy Ireland, CEO and chief designer for kiWW, will develop a line of solution based home decor friendly pet products with the Worldwise team and market the collection under the brand kathy ireland Loved Ones.

"As a company, Worldwise is excited to partner with Kathy Ireland and her team at



Kathy Ireland

kiWW to develop a line of solution based pet products unique to the market," Kevin Fick, Worldwise CEO, said. "Kathy makes a great partner, she brings both her design savvy as well as her knowledge of what it means to be a busy parent to both the two-footed and four-footed child. Kathy's design sense combined with Worldwise's ability to create innovative and solution based products is a winning combination.

"Worldwise and kiWW partnership has evolved naturally and through the shared interest in pet wellness has led to building a significant pet advocacy program that will work to raise awareness of the benefits of pet adoption."

The kathy ireland Loved Ones pet product collection will be both functional and stylish, and will be launching at Global

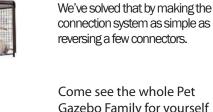
Pet Expo next month.

"It's a joy to partner with Kevin and the extraordinary team at Worldwise to bring our brand into the world of pet lovers," Ireland said. "We have never thought of ourselves as pet owners, rather, we are the trusted guardians for these very special loved ones."



drove us was how difficult and time

consuming it is to connect a kennels together to make a run.



Come see the whole Pet Gazebo Family for yourself March 12-14 at Booth #2775 at the Global Pet Expo in Orlando, FI!





Scan for more information on the Gazebo, Pavilion & Accessories

Advantek Marketing Moorpark, Ca 800.664.4939 www.petgazebo.com www.advantekmarketing.com



**KEEP YOUR PET SAFE** 







Contact Craig Rexford at craigr@journalmultimedia.com or call (732) 246-5709 for more information.



# Pet Expo to Honor **Publisher**

Connie Wilson will accept the award during the annual trade show in March.



onnie Wilson, the founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of Modern Dog and Modern Cat, will be the 2014 recipient of Global Pet Expo's annual, "Excellence in Journalism and Outstanding Contributions to the Pet Industry Award."

"Connie's true passion for pets and their well being comes through in all that she's accomplished," Bob Vetere, president and CEO of APPA, said. "Her magazines and websites are just another way for her to share in the love we have for our pets to be active and enthusiastic group of people, which is the true essence of this award. We congratulate her on her contribution to the industry and the pet-loving population."

Wilson will accept the award March 13 in Orlando, Fla. at the Purina Media Reception during the Global Pet Expo, presented by the American Pet Products Association and Pet Industry Distributors Association.

This media exclusive event is held in conjunction with Global Pet Expo, the pet industry's largest annual tradeshow, taking place March 12-14, at the Orange County Convention Center.

# **Absorption Corp Becomes Healthy Pet**

Healthy Pet will be an umbrella for all of the company's pet products.

bsorption Corp is now Healthy
Pet, reflecting its focus as a pet
products company.

The Healthy Pet brand has been used by Absorbtion Corp for both cat and small animal proiducts, and will now become its corporate brand as well. Healthy Pet will be an umbrella for all of the company's pet products, with major category brands such as CareFRESH and Critter Care maintaining strong product visibility to ensure consumer familiarity and loyalty.

A new logo and website recently debuted to reflect the change.

"Since our acquisition by J. Rettenmaier & Söhne, we have defined our strategic course as a highly effective, consumer-oriented pet products company spanning all categories," Ted Mischaikov, CEO of Healthy Pet, said. "2014 will see renewed innovation in our core small animal offerings along with entry in to the cat category with a line of exceptional natural fiber cat litters. As a platform for pet products, Healthy Pet will focus the global resources and expertise of JRS to effect significant growth."

Healthy Pet, founded as Absorption Corp over 25 years ago, is a multi-category pet product manufacturer and marketer dedicated to helping pets and their owners stay active, happy and natural. The company's popular brands include ökocat, CareFRESH, Critter Care, Puppy Go Potty and Healthy Pet products as well as the Arm & Hammer line of small pet bedding under license.

"Healthy Pet is devoted to a holistic approach to pet care where the pet's physical, emotional and ecological well being are balanced and enhanced," Samuel Cohen, vice president of marketing and sales of Healthy Pet, said. "The Healthy Pet brand is defined by a new and uniquely comprehensive approach to pet products built on three fundamental elements: Active, Happy and Natural. Physically

healthy pets are active, with the energy and strength to play with their human family members. Emotionally healthy pets are happy, finding fulfillment by practicing natural behaviors. Ecologically healthy pets live in natural, clean habitats and environments."

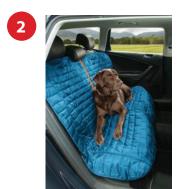


# Stockroom

# New products and special categories

**EDITOR'S PICK** 















#### **Aquatic Life's EDGE** LFD

Aquatic Life's EDGE LED aquarium light fixtures are energy efficient and feature sunrise and sunset functions, built-in moonlights and a three-channel timer. Fixtures are available in 24, 36 and 48-inch lengths.

www.aquaticlife.com

**Loft Line by Kurgo** The Loft Line features five products from Kurgo including: The Loft Booster Seat, The Loft Bench Seat Cover, The Loft Hammock, The Loft Jacket and

the Loft Duvet Cover. The Loft Line is made with durable microtomic Ripstop material and is waterproof, machine washable and easy to spot clean.

www.kurgo.com

#### Slackline Leash

Adjusts from 3.5 to 6 feet quickly, offering customized length depending upon needs. Ruffwear's Tubelok webbing resists snags while the Talon Clip offers a secure connection to the collar. www.ruffwear.com

# 4 Large Brush-less-Toothpaste Chewable by Ark Naturals

The large size chewable measures 4 inches in length and contains proven breath freshening ingredients and Ark's patented toothpaste center to control plaque, tartar and bacteria causing bad breath.

www.arknaturals.com

# **PetsPrefer Soft** Chews for Dogs

The PetsPrefer Soft Chews for Dogs is a new line of functional treats formulated for: Joint, Probiotic, Calming, Skin & Coat, Breath and Senior. Veterinarian formulated, manufactured in the USA, and carry the NASC Quality Seal. www.vets-plus.com

#### **Groovy Gravy**

Each packet Groovy Gravy has 25mg of ultra-pure, health-promoting Omega-3s (EPA/DHA), which ahuman and animal bodies cannot make on their own.

www.groovygravy.com

Sea Buck 7 Complete The Up and About Dog Lifter by Kurgo is designed to help elderly or injured pets get to places they wouldn't be able to otherwise.

www.seabuck.com

# Best Snot Fee Products Intl., LLC **Assorted Essences**

Best Shot Pet Products offers 12 uniquely assorted essences. Each Scentament Spa body spray boasts organic ingredients with advanced hydrating and detangling conditioners that are safe.

www.bestshotpet.com









9 Bravura Clipper from Wahl
The Wahl Bravura Li+ Cord/Cordless Clipper is available in three colors. The Bravura Li+ is designed for long running times of 90 minutes with quick recharges of 45 minutes and operates at full speed until depleted.
www.wahlanimal.com

10 Kibble Kaddie
Portable food carrier for weekend or week-long trips, home or office food storage. Interior fabric is PVC-free, grease-resistant and holds up to 42 cups. Side handle and pocket for storing bowls, secure side chute with magnetic closure pours easily. Roll-down top closure.

www.ruffwear.com



Kitty medication time has never been such a breeze! Pill Paste makes it easy. Deliciously tempting for your cat, Pill Paste works for any size pill, and cats adore its mouth-watering bacon flavor. Non-sticky and low-calorie, Pill Paste fools even the craftiest cats. The struggle is over!

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Kills Fleas on Contact

Natural Chemistry L.P. 1-800-753-1233 naturalchemistry.com





Paw Pods Fish Pod The Fish Pod is constructed with 100 percent biodegradable, all-natural materials such as bamboo and rice husk, and is shaped like a fish. Additionally, each pod and urn comes with a sympathy card and seeded leaf that can be planted with the beloved pet and will bloom into wildflowers year-after-year as a

living memorial. www.pawpods.com

Sebastian & Co. Collars

fashionable tions for a pet owner's dog, Sebastian & Co. is attuned to the values of handsome artisan quality and originality in canine couture. Prices start from \$26 and collars are available in a variety of sizes, colors, and designs.

www.sebastiancollarandsaddlery.

Brookenjack Collars

Brookenjack Collars are designed for larger dogs. They are made from premium leather and are hand-tooled and have a heat-sealed web-





bing. They combine comfort, outstanding strength and easy maintenance. www.brookenjack.com

Petmate See & Stow The See & Stow by Petmate is a multi-purpose carrier that's perfect for puppies and features a zippered EVA storage base for large items like bowls, toys and leashes. www.petmate.com

**Hoopie Collar** While tubular webbing has a tendency to snag, Ruffwear's new Tubelok webbing locks fibers in place, to better handle abrasion. Easy to use buckle, anodized aluminum V-ring for secure leash attachment and tag silencer make Hoopie a durable and attractive everyday collar.

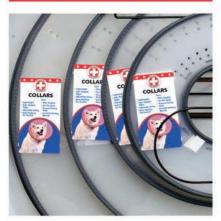
www.ruffwear.com

New product descriptions are submitted by the manufacturer, and are subject to editing for space and clarify. To be considered for inclusion email jasonk@journalmultimedia.com with a 30-40 word description and hi-res image of the product.

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# Stockroom New Products







18







#### **Petmate Fashion** Cat Collars

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# **Management**





# **In-Store Demos Can Mean Fuller Shopping Carts**

Letting the customer try a product before they buy can go a long way.

### BY DAN CALABRESE

n-store product demonstrations can take the promotion of your merchandise to a whole new level. It's one thing to have a product visible on a shelf. It's another thing to have a knowledgeable person offering samples

and explaining to customers exactly what the value of a product is.

But in-store demos are the sort of thing that can reap huge rewards, or can go very wrong depending on how it is done, and especially whether employees or store management are really prepared and bought into the idea of having the demos going on.

Jennifer Houston is vice president of client services at Attack Marketing, which conducts in-store demos for a

variety of different retailers. According to Houston, in-store demos can build customer loyalty to product brands as well as to retailers themselves, if the engagement with consumers is approached effectively. It starts with understanding how to establish a meaningful engagement in the first place.

"We don't want people who have an engagement time of one or two seconds, but if you have someone who can engage them more extensively, even if we can get that up to 30 to 45 seconds, then you would hope a sales comes from that engagement with them," she said.

Getting people to give you their time means offering them something of value, and that is more than just product samples. Often it is information and a greater understanding of the product itself.

"People love to have free treats for their dogs," Houston said. "There was a company doing a demo that gave me a sample bag and a coupon for \$5 off my bag, and I was hooked. I was a customer for life. It's about people who like your dog, and can answer questions about your dog. These people are trained, at least ours were, to answer these questions. They become these trusted advisors, and people look forward to seeing them in the store. That builds loyalty to the brand. You get to know the person that's in there, and you look forward to seeing them on the weekend."

There is probably no establishment that has done in-store demos more successfully than Costco, which has turned them into a destination event. And Houston said that while they may spend a lot of time giving things away for free, the end result is fuller baskets for Costco shoppers.

"People know that if they go to Coscto on the weekend, they can pretty much walk around the store and eat a meal," Houston said. "So now people choose their dates on the basis of when those road shows or demos are going to be there. If you can create something where there are representatives and people know it's going to happen, their basket will be more full."

But, a problem when conducting

in-store demos can be conflict between those staging the demos and everyday employees who are just trying to do their jobs, and sometimes find the demos to be a distraction.

If you can create something where there are representatives and people know it's going to happen, their basket will be more full."

- Jennifer Houston

"The consumer loves it," Houston said. "Most of the time you see samples and the things you get, and people are excited about it. But it's extra work for the employee."

So how do you get employees to buy in to the idea that it's a good idea to have in-store demos, even if they perceive it as interfering with their ability to do their jobs?

"It's a very hard question to answer, because the answer I would give is, in a very high-level way, if we have these demonstrations and our sales go up, our store is more successful and we have more jobs for a longer period of time. But to tell

that to an employee that's making minimum wage, do they really care?"

Houston speculates that pet retailers might be able to learn from the consumer electronics industry, which is known for giving sales incentives to employees and thus tying their own success to the sales performance of the store. That, in turn, allows them to see more of a value in having dealing with a "hassle" like in-store demos.

"They put in incentives for people who are there to push the equipment after the demos are gone," Houston said. "That doesn't happen much in retail overall."

Pet retailers can promote in-store demos in a variety of ways, using social media, traditional advertising, in-store posters and word of mouth. After a while, successful demos on days when the store has heavy traffic can become part of a shopper's routine. While they probably can't consume an entire meal at a pet retailer like they would at Costco, and their dogs are likely not going to be satisfied with treat samples, the demos can serve as an ongoing source of information and education that will help a shopper associate the retailer with the knowledge they need to care for their pets in the best way possible.

That, if done right, carries the reward of loyal shoppers for pet retailers.



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# **Updates to Animal Welfare Act, Pets on Trains**

Bill would allow owners to take their pets on Amtrak. By DAN CALABRESE

ne U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced that it will expand enforcement of the 1966 Animal Welfare Act to now require licensing and inspection of breeders who sell animals online to pet retailers. Prior to this move, breeders who sell exclusively online were exempt from inspection and licensing requirements.

The enforcement move will cover all breeders who sell dogs, cats and rabbits online and own more than four female breeding animals.

USDA estimates that at least 2,600 dog breeders will be affected by the decision, along with 325 cat breeders and 75 rabbit breeders.

One purported benefit of the change as cited by USDA is to reduce incidents of sick animals acquired unwittingly by consumers. In the new guidelines issued by the agency, regulators said:

"When breeding operations for which regulatory oversight is insufficient fail to adequately provide veterinary care for their animals, the buyer

may subsequently incur greater costs associated with providing that care because needed care has been delayed. The rule will benefit buyers of animals by providing regulatory oversight to ensure that breeders provide necessary veterinary care. Animals can carry zoonotic diseases (diseases that can be transmitted between, or are shared by animals and humans). The possibility of an animal carrying a zoonotic disease is reduced with adequate veterinary care, including vaccinations. To the extent that improved oversight reduces the likelihood of pet-to-human transmission of zoonotic diseases such as rabies, the public as a whole will benefit from the rule."

In other news, a bipartisan collection of congressman is sponsoring a bill that would allow, for the first time, Amtrak passengers to bring their pets aboard on specially designated cars.

The Pets on Trains Act, also known as HR 2066, is sponsored by U.S. Reps. Jeff Denhem (R-Calf.), Steve Cohen

(D-Tenn.), Michael Grimm (R-NY) and John Campbell (R-Calif.). If HR 2066 passes, requirements would include:

- Amtrak must designate a "pet car" on each train that has more than one car.
- The trip in which pets are transported could not be more than 750
- · Pets must be crated and stowed in accordance with Amtrak baggage

If the bill becomes law, pet retailers could conceivably take advantage of it as an opportunity to step up sales of pet carriers.

"The pet industry embraces Pets on Trains legislation because we understand the benefits traveling together has to pet owners, as well as the pets themselves," Mike Canning, president and CEO of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, said. "Legislation like this also brings together two powerhouse industries as economic generators, and will have a positive effect on the economies of cities along the rail route."

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The inaugural Pet Age Business of the Year Awards will recognize independent pet businesses for excellence and entrepreneurial success. The breakfast awards ceremony is scheduled for July 23, 2014 at SuperZoo in Las Vegas, NV.

During the event, finalists chosen by an independent panel of judges, will be recognized and a Gold, Silver and Bronze award from each category will be announced. The Business of the Year Awards program will recognize businesses all across the pet industry including, but not limited to: pet retailers, groomers, dog walkers, veterinarians, dog day care centers, boarding facilities and training facilities.

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**SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN** – Honors a business for the best use of social media outlets.

**WEBSITE** – Honors a business for the design and use of a website to include: e-commerce, multi-media, navigation and content.

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# **Getting Into the Mobile Marketing Groove**

The newest, must-have strategy to stay connected with your customers.

BY JESSICA FARINA-MORRIS

ustomer retention is extremely important to small businesses. The cost to retain a current customer is seven times less than trying to obtain a new one.

Mobile marketing is the latest technology that supports your customer retention initiatives and it also increases the number of store visits vour customer makes. Companies both large and small are incorporating mobile marketing into their marketing plans.

In the U.S., smartphones are owned by over 125 million people. And, this year more than 50 percent of adult internet users, or approximately 102 million people will redeem a digital coupon while shopping. Traditional means of communicating offers out to customers, like un-targeted couponing, usually show a redemption rate of around 1 to 2 percent, while mobile redemptions are 17 to 30 percent. This is because you are hyper-targeting your customer that has opted to receive a message from vour store.

This year, mobile is slated to frog leap the desktop computer when it comes to internet use so now is the time to get your store on a plan. And, if you needed another reason to be persuaded, mobile marketing is easy and cheap.

There are a few different ways to use mobile- some companies design apps while others are prospering with simple SMS (text message) programs. When choosing a program that is right for your store, you will want to make sure it supports your initiatives.

You want an easy to use program that allows you to communicate offers to your consumers thus driving them into your store more frequently. You will also want to make sure that the program does not "spam" your customers or become bothersome to

This year, mobile is slated to frog leap the desktop computer when it comes to internet use so now is the time to get your store on a plan.

them. Typically, you do not want to send more than one text message a week to your customer.

Once you have a mobile marketing partner selected, you will start off by advertising the program at the register, on your website and social media, as well as any print marketing that you are doing. Most importantly, be sure your employees understand the program and are talking about it with every customer. They should be letting the customer know that they will receive un-advertised special deals and that you will not be spamming their phone.

To get your mobile club started, you typically offer a one-time deal to your customer to get them to opt into your mobile program-something like

10 percent off their purchase. This is the time referred to as building your club and is thought of as your investment period.

Ongoing, you will now need to communicate store offers no more than weekly and no less than three times a month. Mobile works best when it is used on a regular basis. You want to keep your store top of mind with your customers and communicating out weekly has been found to be the best way to do this. Keep in mind that your weekly store deal does not always have to be a discount off of product; you can also offer a discount on services like grooming or photos.

In the end, one of the most important things to understand is that your mobile program will take time to build, but if it is done right, it will allow you to easily compete with the big box stores. You are investing time and money into this so make sure you are placing the importance on it that it deserves, and also make sure your employees understand the importance

Mobile is a necessity in order to compete, and most of your customers will welcome it.

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.



# Why Retailers Need to Network

Networking should be a big part of your marketing plan.

**BY NANCY HASSEL** 

n the 5 years of running Long Island Pet Professionals, we have had a wonderful turnout of pet professionals attend our networking events and seminars, but I have to say the pet pros we see least at events are pet store and pet boutique owners.

It has been something I could never understand, here you have a great pet boutique or store, and we have tremendous expert speakers here to teach you and help you grow your business.

Yet many of them still don't attend. Not to mention the amount of new people you will meet and that will then know about your store and what services you offer, it's a win-win. I get that as a storeowner it is hard to physically leave your store for every event, but if there were an opportunity very close to you, wouldn't it behoove you to leave for a few hours to attend?

You never know who you might meet that could help your store, your bottom line, and you may actually learn about a new product, service or other pet professional that you want to partner with, have cross promotions with, feature in your store, etc.

I do encourage pet professionals to attend the big trade shows when they can, but to also get out there and network in your own chamber of commerce or business associations. Unless you're completely happy with your salary, your store's yearly income and just have no desire to grow, networking should be a big part of your marketing plan. Also, attending retailer expos, trade shows

are a must if you want to stay alive and competitive and become that "go-to" community pet supply store.

Advertising, hiring a PR person and social media are all great ways to

For 2014, why not make it a goal of yours to attend at least two local networking events or retail expos, even if it takes you out of your comfort zone.

promote your pet boutique or supply store, but in my opinion if you don't actually get out there and meet new peers, how will you grow your network?

For 2014, why not make it a goal of yours to attend at least two local networking events or retail expos, even if it takes you out of your comfort zone. Two events for a year are not that many, stop making excuses and get out there! You are bound to see many new pet products and you will meet pet professionals that want to meet you too.

As a pet retailer I am sure you have you noticed by now how many other stores that carry pet products that are not pet stores. Do you want to grow your business or close up shop?

With the pet industry booming across the board, it is important to stay

competitive, offer items and services in your retail store that the other stores can't compete with. Often a great new pet product made by a local person, that doesn't necessarily have or want a manufacturers rep or distributor, will be at a networking event hoping to meet store owners like you. You may never meet that person or see their product if you don't leave your store.

It is great to hear from retailers after they have attended one of our networking events that they are now carrying another members product that the met at the event. Or how they don't know why they didn't start coming to events sooner and that they learned so much. Just because you have been running your store for 10 or more years, doesn't mean you won't learn, or you know everything about the pet industry and products out there.

As the saying goes, "you can teach an old dog new tricks," so get out there, network, attend a trade show you have been meaning to get to, see what is new, you may just be surprised what you find and learn, and your customers will appreciate it, too.

Nancy Hassel is the founder and president of Long Island Pet Professionals, an award winning networking group for the pet industry with over 200 members on Long Island and beyond, founded in 2009. Hosting seminars, networking events and learning opportunities for pet professionals. Nancy is also a public relations professional in the pet industry and a writer.



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# **Why Should Retailers Attend the Global Pet Expo?**

The answer is simple.

BY RD WEBSTER

have been attending the Global Pet Expo as far back as the early '80s. Back then it was called the APPMA Trade Show, American Pet Product Manufacturers Association, and was designed to showcase manufacturer's new products to their distributor network and retailers were not allowed to attend the show.

That was back then, nowadays, with the advent of market globalization and the consolidation trends that started in the '90s, the APPMA had to adjust with the changing times. In 2005, the APPMA and PIDA Pet Shows were combined and rebranded as the Global Pet Expo. Now, any enterprising retailer can attend and take advantage of the largest international pet trade show in North America allowing them to network with the principals of the vendors whose products they stock in their stores.

When attending the Global Pet Expo, you'll find this show is where new and also established vendors spend their money to launch and promote their lines or new products.

You will also see there is a large international presence of foreign manufacturers from Europe and Asia displaying their wares.

Regional shows have gotten better and better, but company principals are often not present. At the Global Pet Expo, you will find out there is nothing quite like visiting with owners and CEOs of the various companies who design and distribute the products you

buy. It's great to see the new products and to meet people, but why not come prepared to take real advantage of a show like this one? This is the perfect opportunity to discuss your business with the owner or CEO of a company, or their national sales manager. There

At the Global Pet Expo, you will find out there is nothing quite like visiting with owners and CEO's of the various companies who design and distribute the products you buy.

is no better time than the Global Pet Expo to meet this many people, all in one place, who are so important to your business.

Bring a list of questions or issues you may have with specific vendor's products or services. This is also the perfect time to share your calendar of events and promotions that you have planned throughout the year. Why not have organized written programs with associated costs for participation, like discounts and vendor support requests for your anniversary promotion, customer appreciation promotions and emails, or mailers and TV advertising opportunities?

A complete, "ready to go program" in print to hand out at your meetings will increase your chances of success. You will find that if you have well thought out programs, most vendors you approach will treat your proposal seriously.

If they feel you have done the research and they will get a fair return on the dollars or discounts requested for their cooperative participation in your programs, most will help and support your promotions and advertising po-

Don't forget your distributors, as most of them will be attending this show as well. You should consider working with them before, during and after the show, since they will be a major component to all of your year-long promotional programs.

One important tip, start taking care of business on the first day as the exhibitors are ready and willing to talk. Most attendees say they only want to walk the show the first day. It is the perfect day to get quality time with the manufacturer's principals and sales managers, because many may not be there on the last day of the show.

This is a large show, so don't wait to get started or you will be rushed on the last day. Use the last day to follow-up and finalize any business previously discussed.

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



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# BEATING THE COMPETITION

As the economy continues to grow, retailers are looking at how to best the competition.

### BY JASON KAMERY

here are several challenges of owning a business that indepdent pet retailers face.

It could be dealing with the expanding of their business and building a customer base, finding, training and retaining good employees, increasing sales volume or maintain profitability.

In recent years with the 2008 economic crises, the economy has always been one of the biggest concerns to retailers according to the previous years of the Pet Age Retailer Report.

As the economy continues to improve, the biggest challenge retailers now face is competing with independent, big box, mass market and/or online stores. According to the 2013-14 survey, 61 percent of retailers say competing with independent, big box, mass market and/or online stores is their biggest challenge in the coming years.

Pet Age spoke to several retailers all over the country to ask them to talk about how they compete with the competition.

Continued on page 40



### David Hale of SomethingFishy Inc.

### Q: Tell us about you and your store.

My name is David Hale and I Own SomethingFishy inc. in Cleveland, Ohio for more than 22 years now. I have been in the pet industry since I was 15 years old. I have been raising fish for over 36 years. I have been to the Great Barrier Reef and collected in the Amazon. I started doing the maintenance service prior to opening my first full line pet store but focused on aquatics. It was trial and error but learned a lot on the first go around on my own. Fast forward a few years and I went back full time in the business and purchased my own building. This is a specialty store and is all Aquatics and is Fresh water only but have did salt water I the past. We are known for quality cichlids which many are bred within our own hatchery in over 300 tanks. The show room has many display tanks of many types of fish and a planted tank. We also have a fish tank in the wall and in the floor when you walk in.

# Q: Explain the type of competition your store faces.

Everything and everyone is competition these days. The big box stores I do not look at as competition that much and if anything they help my business by referrals because aquatics is not their strong area as it is for us. The obvious is the internet which is our best

friend and our worse enemy. The well known, starting with the letter "A", is a problem not just for us but any business these days. Then we have many vendors, wholesalers, etc., selling online or direct to the consumer which puts more of a squeeze on making a profit. Then there are basement sellers selling everything under the sun while they have full-time job so they do not need to mark up what they sell so they sell cheap to make a buck here and there while they hurt the bricks and motor stores. You can blame the wholesalers selling to these people. You also have local clubs/auctions that can hurt the business. Then you have eBay, Craigslist and now Facebook which is like Craigslist on steroids. There's a Facebook page for everything for everyone selling everything or giving items away for free! It's scary.

# Q: What are some of the challenges you have had to face with the competition?

To sell or not to sell a product? Buy more for less to make less? Being used for my knowledge and lose sales to customers because of the prices that I cannot match on the internet or the guy selling out of his basement of his home.

# Q: How have you overcome those chal lenges?

Always promote knowledge and customer service. We know what we are doing.

It's a constant battle and I am al-

ways paying attention what's going on. I am constantly thinking ahead and planning my next move what to do and not to do. Keep on the distributors on what they are not paying attention to like the basement sellers that are not legitimate businesses. They do not always know unless someone tells them.

I freshen up display tanks with new decor or livestock to give our customers ideas what they can do with their tanks. Buy more that sells more and get rid of product that does not sell or sold too cheap on the internet. Email blast customers on what's new or what's on sale or info about a certain fish or product.

Have healthy stock and clean tanks, Always!

# Q: What advice would you give another retailer who may be facing challenges like yours?

Sometimes you have to reinvent the wheel but at the same time leave some things alone because the customers like the way things are. You have to pay attention what's going on in the industry and watch the internet for what is happening now, tomorrow and so forth. Need to know what's hot and what's not for your location and customer base. It's good to be known for a niche as in knowledge about a specific type of livestock so you become the go to shop for having them in stock and know what you



are talking about. Stream line product selection on what sells and what does not. Price point certain products for repeat visits by your customers. I feel the lost leader sales are not worth it because many customers will hold out to buy something you will not make money on and then they do not buy anything else.

Host a meet and greet from your Facebook page with free donuts and coffee before opening or pizza party after hours. Buy from a local non-chain business or maybe have them sponsor the event. Promote local so it stays local as much as possible. Think outside the box at times to get ahead.

### Q: Explain the type of competition your store faces.

It seems everyone is jumping on the band wagon trying to get more of the pet space. It is no secret the big box stores are getting into the business as well as grocery. This has put pressure on the bigger pet chains of the world to look to find ways to differentiate themselves but they are still caught up in the big box store mentality. We differentiate ourselves by insuring we carry products our customers can relate to. Our competitors are not loyal to manufacturers and will sell what they can make the most money on regardless if it's in the best interest of the pet.

### Q: What are some of the challenges you have had to face with the competition?

More from other smaller independents who try to undercut the pricing, which I believe undercuts the value of the products. Some retailers rely solely on price and that is not a long term or winning strategy. We do not use our size to undercut or overprice. We follow our manufacturer guidelines, smaller retailers appreciate larger independents who do not practice predatory policies and do nothing to increase sales but steal from one another. Independents need to work together. The more healthy independents in a market the better for all and more importantly the pets who benefits from the products we offer pet parents.

Making sure we get our message on, who we are and what we stand for. We are very selective on hiring retail salespeople. Many times the perception of your store is set by the way a customer is serviced by the store employees. Making sure you are slow to hire and quick to fire are the rules we live by to ensure we always have the best qualified people in our stores at all times. We also work with manufacturers to offer our customers the best products and ensure we always have them in stock. Nothing hurts a small business more as when a customer comes in and you are out of stock.

### Q: What advice would you give another retailer who may be facing chal-

Develop your vision and purpose. Stay true to those principals and do not be swayed. If you deviate you just become a smaller version of your competitors and they will "eat you alive". 🦊



### Nancy Okun of Cats n Dogs

### Q: Tell us about you and your store:

Cats n Dogs, Playful Stuff For Humans & The Animals Who Train Them, started in 2006 as a home toy party business selling unique toys for cats and dogs. Within one year, we opened a 300 square foot shop adding quality treats. Three years later the business moved into a 900 square foot location and included premium food. 2011 brought a move into a 1,835 square foot location greatly expanding food brands, treats, natural remedies, pet lover's gifts, bedding, strollers, carriers and a large selection of collars, leashes and harnesses.

South West Florida is extremely seasonal with a large influx of "snowbirds" from November through April. More than 65 percent of the permanent 160,000 residents in our immediate area are over the age of 62, many on fixed incomes and in recent years hard hit by the recession.

# Q: Explain the type of competition your store faces:

As we expanded; other local independent pet supply stores closed their doors due to the economy. The big box stores added premium lines of food and treats. Every time one of the brands Cats n Dogs

offered sold out to a big box; we filled that void with a new brand.

# Q: What are some of the challenges you have had to face with the competition?

One of the biggest challenges was, and has been, introducing new brands to customers. We decided early on not to carry brands big boxes sold. However, we special order food for customers those brands we discontinue and match pricing. Samples of newer brands are placed on countertops so customers who bring their dog into the store can taste test on the spot. Others go home with sample bags even if we have to make samples ourselves by opening bags. Cans of food are often given for free. We remain cost conscious at all times. Items priced too high will sit on shelves. For example, 90 percent of treats sold are priced at \$10, and under.

When a pet has an issue with itchy ears, hot spots or thunderstorms we offer samples of at least two different natural products to test before buying. Our strength is knowledge of the products, how and why those specific ingredients will work.

# Q: How have you overcome those challenges:

Our store guarantees every bag of food and treats. If the kitty or pup de-

cides they don't want to eat that kibble, pet parents are encouraged to bring the bag back and exchange for another. We won't sell any consumable after the expiration date, checking dates on packaging monthly. This helps to set us apart from the big box stores. The store doesn't sell pee pads, litter boxes or dog houses. Much to their surprise, we advise customers where they can find those items at the best price and we even write down directions how to get to other stores.

Because we don't have the advertising budgets big box stores do, Cats n Dogs works hard to keep our name in front of the public. We're active in fund raising for numerous local rescue organizations, have established relationships with local publications, other pet related businesses and vets. Open seven days a week with two full-time owners and one part-time employee, keeps us personally involved with customers and their pets.

# Q: What advice would you give another retailer who may be facing challenges like yours?

I believe you need to have a love of animals and people to enjoy this business. Become an information source and customers will tell others. That's how to complete with the big boxes.



### Mike Grayson of Art in Motion Pets

### Q: Tell us about you and your store.

Our store is 6,000 square feet. We started our business 23 years ago solely as a leasing business.

Our home was zoned commercial and we began carrying pet supplies, actually setting up a \*store\* in our home.

We had 700 sqaure feet of \*store\* in our home when we moved into our first store front approximately one year after we began our leasing business. The first store was 1,200 square feet in a building that was a former car wash across the road from Wal-Mart.

After one year, we outgrew that space and moved eight blocks up the road to a 2,800 square foot building. After one year we began looking at options to expand and had our existing 6,000 square foot building built.

We were rolling the dice on the size of the building. In hindsight, we wish we would have built larger.

# Q: Explain the type of competition your store faces.

The farm stores, Big R and Tractor Supply are within one mile (on the same road as us).

The internet is quite frustrating. We are happy that sales tax is now being applied to online purchases as of Jan 1st.

Wal-Mart is a thorn in the side of every small business, isn't it?

Of course, PetSmart, is always lurking in the shadows.

# Q: What are some of the challenges you have had to face with the competition?

Competing with pricing, advertising and size.

# Q: How have you overcome those challenges?

Educating our customer base on the importance of shopping at locally-owned small businesses. When people understand it, they feel guilty shopping elsewhere for their pet supplies.

I try to buy smart. I scour sale flyers and watch for email deals from our distributors.

We have a loyalty program in place to entice our customers to shop with us.

We have fun at our store. Givers get. Offer something as simple as a raffle for a gift card. Customers remember that kindness.

# Q: What advice would you give another retailer who may be facing challenges like yours?

Play hard. Be competitive - watch your prices. Match prices if asked, match store hours. Shout the shop small message from the rooftop.

Make your store fun with activities and events (in store and on social media).

Be kind to customers. Go out of your way to speak to them, talk to their children, and learn their pets' names.

Most importantly, clean your store. paint. simply changing the light bulbs really brightens up your inventory.

When we travel, we stop in pet stores all over the country and 9 times out of 10 they are smelly, unorganized and a dusty mess.

We are all working our fingers to the bone, dealing with taxes, insurance, shoplifters, and employee issues (should I keep going). There is no excuse to have a dirty store.

Go through this *Pet Age* magazine and grab the name of every store mentioned. Follow them on Facebook. We can get ideas and inspiration from each other. We are all in this together!



# **Pet Advocate Takes Top Honors at Conference**

We recently talked with Darleen Wheelington, who was named Woman of the Year at the inaugural Women In the Pet Industry Network Conference. BY MICHELLE MASKALY

**Michelle:** Congratulations on being named Woman of the Year by Women in the Pet Industry Network. What was your reaction when you won?

Darleen: As for words, shocked, amazed, blessed. These three words come to mind. I almost backed out of going because it is so hard to leave what I do behind. I worry about the babies trusted to my care and posting a photo that I am in Portland seemed like I was just having fun not working. I have read stories about different dog events, expos, etc. in the pet magazines and I have wanted to be in the same room with people who work with and love animals like I do.

I cannot believe it took me 30 years to finally get to a conference. It was so amazing meeting everyone there who loved what they do as much as I do. From the second I walked in the room, until the minute I left, I was just amazed. The funny thing is that each woman I met who was sharing their passion for what they do, I felt like I had known them for years. I kept getting goose bumps with every new story.

Yes, I admit I was way out of my comfort zone with trying to get the perfect outfit to wear, but after meeting these ladies, I knew I could just be me, and that my smile and love for animals would be just the right "bling" I needed to wear.

Michelle: You were nominated in, and won, the advocate category for your work in this area, specifically for helping start the animal shelter/welfare group, OASIS, 23 years ago, as well as being actively involved in forming the South Arkansas Kennel Club. How did animal causes become your passion?

**Darleen:** This area of south Arkansas was typical, in that, animal control entities existed and were controlled by municipalities. In spite of those entities, my phone was consistently ringing with someone on the other end asking me to do something about a stray dog or cat. For a small group of friends and me that was enough evidence to start working to form the Ouachita Animal Shelter Information Society (OASIS).

We have helped curb the stray pet population in this area by a variety of means, the most effective has been our Spay/Neuter Fund. Citizen purchases a low-cost certificate from OASIS for spaying or neutering their pet. After the procedure, OASIS, is billed the remainder of the costs. I am pleased with our progress although it is never enough. We are proud that over 3600 dogs and cats have been sterilized with this program since it began in 2002.

The South Arkansas Kennel Club grew out of a fundamental feeling I have. That is, if it can happen in New York City, it can happen here. Of course, I am referring to the Westminster Kennel Club dog show. I got the idea after showing my dogs for many years that it would be so cool to have a dog show in my home town. I was told that it was impossible to have successful dog shows in Camden because we are 100 miles from the nearest airport.

Again, a small group of friends and I started the process of creating SAKC. It took ten years of fun matches and all the back-breaking work that goes along with that but we completed all AKC requirements and were granted a charter to hold our first licensed dog shows and obedience trials in Camden in 2000. Our show weekend is each year the weekend after Westminster shows in February.

Our 2013 shows attracted over 800 dogs and a gate of 10,000 in attendance. The opportunity to share the sport of dogs and help educate responsible ownership is wonderful and something I am very proud of. We are steadily growing

in entries and reputation with each passing year's shows.

Animal causes became my passion because somebody needed those causes to be important. Dogs, their great lives, and people loving and caring for dogs as much as I do, was and still, is very important to me. Those organizations are just a part of me like my business, Waggin' Tails, is a part of me.

Somebody needed to care and I am somebody. I can work the rest of my life and not do half what dogs have done in my life.

**Michelle:** Tell us a little about your business, Waggin' Tails.

Darleen: Currently, Waggin' Tails is a grooming, boarding and training facility for dogs and cats. WT was a creation of mine 27 years ago. I was working at a local defense contractor. I had a good-paying steady job with benefits, but that was not enough. I also worked part time for my local veterinarian. Working with the animals I soon learned was my passion. A brief health scare and the encouragement of my friend and veterinarian, I decided I wanted to go after doing what I loved and that was, dogs.

I was 22 years old when I quit my job at the defense company and begin chasing the dream of working with dogs.

Camden was a town at that time of about 14,000 population, and we had two groomers in town and two veterinary clinics. I wanted to offer a boarding facility that offered different services than our local vets could offer. I obtained a loan through my local banker, who I had to convince I could make a business out of caring for dogs. I will always remember trying to convince this man who was not a dog owner, that Waggin' Tails was a good idea.

Waggin' Tails started with a small grooming room (12-by-14) and a 20-by-20 room for kennels. Over the years I have been blessed to grow my facility into over with my home being attached to my kennel giving my clients that extra comfort their fur baby has someone with

them 24/7. I added an indoor training room to hold my obedience classes inside, added doggy daycare, dog park and this past summer we added dock jumping with our new pool and dock.

I believe that even though our town is small and our population has dropped to under 10,000 with the closing of the plant I worked for before starting Waggin' Tails plus our Paper Mill that had been the life blood of Camden for over seventy years shutting down and several other businesses followed, the pet owner's deserve a place they can feel good about with their pet's needs and care. My customers are the 4-legged ones and I feel I am not doing my job unless their Tail is Wagging.

**Michelle:** When Hurricane Katrina hit the U.S., you traveled to Louisiana to help with the pet rescue efforts. What motivated you to become involved?

Darleen: Dog People Network. Through that network I knew one of the people who was fervently working to help those pets that were abandoned. I got some kind people in this area to donate money and materials, dog food, crates, water, blankets, etc., to take to the animal shelter in Lake Charles, La. I borrowed a horse trailer, loaded it with goods then my brother and I drove done there.

When the second hurricane, Rita, hit, animals were evacuated to Shreveport, La. Kind citizens of this area donated more money and materials to donate to those animals. Borrowed the same horse trailer, loaded it with goods and set out for Shreveport. This time, we came back with 25 "Katrina dogs" as they were affectionately known. We, members of OASIS, began working to find the original owners of these dogs. We were able to reunite nine Katrina dogs with their original owners. Others we got adopted by kind owners in this area. One Katrina dog is still at my house!

**Michelle:** In addition to all of this, you are also a certified animal abuse officer. Tell is about that.



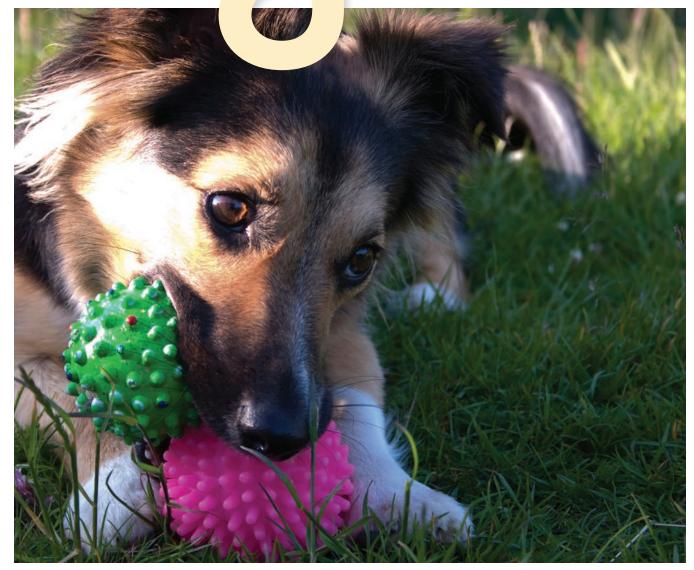
Darleen Wheelington named Woman of the Year.

Darleen: This aspect of my career came about as a result of the close connection I had, and still have, with local law enforcement. Regretfully, dog fighting is popular in this area and coupled with far too many irresponsible owners law enforcement officers were quite busy with dog issues. Law enforcement officials in rural areas do not get much training on dog issues and dog laws.

I wanted to become a certified animal abuse officer to be able to help train officers in proper handling of animal-related calls to the Sheriff's office. We have come a long way, but there is still very much to be done. The law enforcement changes, so then there might be a new person who cares about animal issues, or they might not care at all. I know there has been great change since I started handling cruelty cases in 1995, but there is still so much that needs help.

I call it my baby steps that get me through. If I worry about what is happening to some of the animals, I can't breath. So. I learned to help the ones I can and pray I can help another tomorrow. I have long had a vision of my community becoming one that has zero strays, none euthanized, and people understanding what a privilege it is to own a dog and learning how they should be taken care of.

# Trends Products



# **Solving Common Puppy Problems**

Solution-based products are in demand when it comes to combating puppy issues.

### BY MAGGIE MARTON

uppy owners want products to help get their puppy off to the right start, such as solutions-based products, like items for chewing, potty training and safety.

Many puppy owners are also firsttime dog owners who require guidance in choosing the right mix of products. Jason Hart, director of marketing at PetSafe, sees the pet industry's mega-trends affecting the puppy products category.

"The trends driving development in

the puppy arena are the same as what is driving innovation across dog products, which is a combination of shifting towards smaller dogs, indoor dogs and the continued humanization of pets," he said.

In addition to staple products like food dishes and collars being manufactured from sustainable materials, the toy category is benefiting from the shifting trend toward natural or holistic products. Because many pet owners are concerned about their puppy ingesting parts of toys, nontoxic puppy products are becoming increasingly popular.

Sarah Fuller, owner of NoPo Paws in Portland, Ore., sees similar trends in her store.

"I am seeing trends toward more natural puppy products, which follows



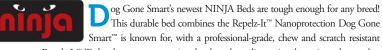
the growth of the natural pet product industry overall," she said. "I'm seeing lots of new toys from recycled or sustainable materials. Boiled wool is a hot one right now and is fantastic for puppies as it's not as easily destroyed as many cotton toys.

"My customers are often searching for products to keep their puppies out of trouble but that are also safe. They want a toy that will keep their puppy entertained but they also want to know it's not full of chemicals that ultimately will harm him or her. I like to recommend products like West Paw Design Zogoflex toys. The toys are incredibly durable, come with a replacement guarantee and are certified non-toxic."



## **SPOTLIGHT**

### When You Need it to be TOUGH!



nylon cover. Repelz-It™ Technology protects against hard-to-clean dirt, stains, bacteria and pet odor. The NINJA bed is designed to withstand the toughest wear and tear and is great for use in kennels or outdoors! NINJA beds come with a 90-Day Chew-Proof Guarantee.\* The non-toxic nylon cover features a hidden zipper to help prevent chewing, and can be removed for washing or hosed down to clean. Filled with a high-density foam insert, dogs will love the support these beds provide. The NINJA Bed is 100% waterproof and its sleek design allows it to be used just about anywhere! Available in Tan, Olive and Black, in a variety of sizes to fit most standard crates. Doesn't everyone know a dog who needs a NINJA?

\*see website for details



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### **EDGE**

**Training Devices Used** 

**Bittering agent: 8%** 

**Calming pheromone product: 1%** 

Clicker/Whistle: 9%

**Containment system: 4%** 

No-bark collar: 7%

Pee post: 2%

**Professional training: 15%** 

**Training books/videos: 8%** 

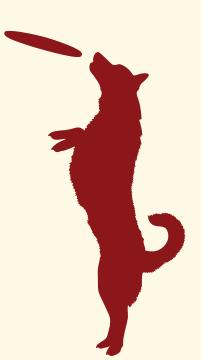
**Training muzzle: 2%** 

**Treats: 57%** 

**Other: 7%** 

Do not train: 29%

Source: American Pet Products Association Pet Owners Survey 2012-2013



Additionally, activity toys perform well in the puppy category because owners want to keep their puppies

"Boiled wool is a hot one right now and is fantastic for puppies as it's not as easily destroyed as many cotton toys" - Sarah Fuller

busy, instead of chewing on household items like the sofa. Plus, puppy owners seek out products to assist in training and socialization.

"I also receive a lot of requests, especially in the rainy climate we live in, for toys that will assist in the training process and help expend energy when the weather prevents several daily walks," Fuller said. "Fortunately, we have seen tons of new product development in terms of 'puzzle' toys for dogs. Nina Ottoson and Kyjen make fantastic puzzle toys. I often recommend these types of products for indoor brain exercise and as a part of a training program that includes daily walks and training sessions."

The shift toward natural products reaches into puppy grooming as well.

"Pets are part of the family and pet





parents are investing further in their pet," Steven Shweky from Fetch... for pets! said. "More and more, they want to provide a healthy start in life to the newest member of their family. Therefore, they are looking to natural

products. As a result, there has been an increase in demand for natural and organic products."

He cites the Burt's Bees Natural Pet Care line, which features two products designed with puppies in mind, the 2-in-1 Shampoo and Conditioner and the Tearless Shampoo, both of which are gentle products with no parabens, phthalates, petrochemicals, synthetic fragrances or sulfates.

Likewise, Carlos Zamora, marketing coordinator at SynergyLabs, noted the same trend.



"It seems that organic and natural puppy shampoos are on the rise due to increased demand in the last year," he said. "Now, natural products like Richard's Organics by SynergyLabs have become a lot more competitive."

Further, according to Zamora, puppy formulations, products with ingredients designed specifically for puppies, are popular among puppy owners.

"When we manufacture puppy products we just don't replicate the same ingredients from those of a dog product," Zamora said. "All puppy product ingredients are well researched in order to maximize its results. For example, there are some ingredients that will dry a puppy's delicate skin or cause irritation."

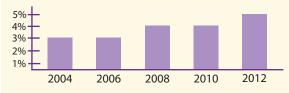
### **Education Is Key**

Shweky said retailers should, "educate customers on the significance of using gentle products that are specifically formulated for puppies."

Because many puppy owners are first-time dog owners, this education

### **EDGE**

### Percentage Of Dogs Taken For Obedience Training





Source: American Pet Products Association Pet Owners Survey 2012-2013

# Ask the Expert



Rick Foster Vice President Sales Cardinal Pet Care

### **Pet Botanics** 710 S. Ayon Avenue Azusa, CA 91702



Q: Why should I recommend specific "dog training rewards," instead of treats, to my customers that want to begin training their new puppy?

**A:** Used in moderation, treats are for customers who want to bond with a pet but they're not the best choice for dog training.

Pet Botanics Training Rewards have a strong meaty scent because meat is the first ingredient. This makes them more effective at attracting the attention of the puppy and focusing it on the task. Focus is extremely important with little puppies that are busy exploring their world. When dogs are focused on performing a task to receive a reward, the learning curve is shortened, although the task needs to be repeated consistently in short training sessions to reinforce the lesson.

Because Pet Botanics Training Rewards are small, and only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  calories each, your customers can use numerous training rewards to repeat a lesson without worrying about weight gain for their puppy. They also have a texture that prevents crumbling, which makes them easy to carry or grab from a pocket or dispenser.

Pet Botanics Training Rewards come in flavors that dogs love – Bacon, Beef and Chicken - so your customers can use the variety of aromas and tastes to entice his attention and enhance the puppy's training experience.



Rick Foster is the VP of Sales for Pet Botanics, a manufacturer of nutritional treats and training rewards for dogs. The solar powered company uses botanical ingredients to enhance product formulas.

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

### DOGS

can spell the difference between making a sale and a confused costumer leaving the store.

"Be your own product advocate,"

Zamora said. "Pet parents prefer to know you've tried a product first before you sell it."

> Within the store, merchandize puppy prodtogether help new owners navigate product choices. "Within toys, I reco m m e n d creating a puppy sec-

tion which would include all puppy-related toys," Hart said. "This makes is easier for consumers to shop and ensures they get the right product for their pet. Retailers should also keep in mind that puppy owners in many cases will be first time dog owners and may be nervous about what to buy. It can be very helpful to provide educational signage to help guide puppy owners in their purchase."

He also said retailers need to understand their consumer by finding out information about the kind of puppy they've added to their family, their living arrangements, for instance, if they have a yard, and the puppy's schedule.

> "The more they understand the consumer, the better they can provide strong solutions," he said.

Because the puppy category is saturated, success requires retailers to offer on-trend products, while guiding puppy owners to choose the right mix of items.







# DIGESTIBITS

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LAMB RECIPE ADULT





# **Keeping Those Teeth Pearly White**

Innovation leads the way when it comes to dental hygiene.

### BY SANDY ROBINS

ebruary is pet dental month. And, while there may be discounts on related products and services for pet owners to take advantage of during this time frame, it's also an excellent opportunity for retailers to educate customers that dental hygiene is something that should be practiced year-round, resulting in perennial sales.

The range of dental care products now available reflects great innovation in this category. It's no longer about ordinary toothbrushes and pastes. Brushes have gone electric and being sold along with other aids such as doggie dental floss, water additives and doggie tongue scrapers. There are even products such as the SilverTails line from the Quaker Pet Group that targets dental care specifically for senior pets.

Orapup is the first canine tongue cleaner geared to beat bad dog breath without the daily use of a toothbrush.

The tongue applicator has ultra-soft, pointed bristles designed to reach deep into the uneven crevices of a dog's tongue and loosen stinky bacteria. The cleaning paste, which is applied to the applicator, contains all-natural enzymes and anti-plaque properties that fortify against gum dis-





# Did you know periodontal disease is the most common disease seen in dogs?

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### Who takes care of Dog's Dental Health: Small Dog

Me/A family member: 55% • The Veterinarian: 35% • A groomer: 9%

Other: 1%

No one:18%

Source: American Pet Products Association Pet Owners Survey 2012-2013

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Pet King Brands

ease and reduce tartar.

"There's no forcing the dog to participate and thus no stress involved in mak-

"Education is key and retailers play an important role in informing pet owners about the dangers associated with poor dental hygiene,"

- Dave Dugan

ing this a daily task," Katy Laine Kenealy, spokesperson for the company, said.

Since launching the Doggie DentalAID dental floss for dogs in 2012, the manufacturing company SER Enterprises, based in California, has expanded from online retailing into selected



pet stores and is looking at overseas markets, too.

"We are selling a lot to groomers, who use the product as part of their grooming service and then offer it to customers as a take-home product for home dental care,"

Rafles Warnars, one of the founding partners, said.

Dental Cleanse for Dogs, a water additive manufactured by Natural Chemistry contains no artificial sweeteners such as Sorbitol and Xylitol, nor any artificial colorants and dyes.

"Its safe for dogs of



all ages," Jeff Fowler, senior sales manager for the company, said. "It's odorless and tasteless and as been very well received by pet specialty retailers who are working to educate their customers about how to eliminate the bacteria causing bad breath and gingivitis in their dog's mouth. When used daily, it



not only helps to fights plaque and tarter, but works to maintain teeth whiteness, too."

### **Keep Them Educated**

Dr. Dave Dugan, oral surgeon and founder of Zututh battery-operated toothbrushes for dogs, agreed about the retailers' role in education.

"Education is key and retailers play an important role in informing pet



owners about the dangers associated with poor dental hygiene," he said. "Veterinarian studies have proven that poor dental health, and periodontal disease can lead to a variety of painful and harmful diseases.

"While it may take a while for a dog to get used to having its teeth brushed, the long-term benefits significantly outweigh any potential short-term discomfort. It's not hurting them; it's just a new sensation that requires some getting used to, just like teaching a toddler to brush their teeth."

To this end, the company produced a video tutorial on their website to offer useful instruction.

Misty Schneider, owner of Pet

# Who takes care of Dog's Dental Health: Medium Dog Me/A family member: 54% • The Veterinarian: 23% • A groomer: 8% Other: 2% • No one:26%

Source: American Pet Products Association Pet Owners Survey 2012-2013





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Kingdom Where Pets Rules in Algona, Iowa, said pet dental care is something promoted primarily by the veterinarians in her area.



"We do sell various products and it's definitely a category that has promotional opportunities during February and beyond," she said. "It's certainly something to consider for the future. And with so much information available online [such as video tutorials], it would be easy to direct customers for more in-depth information."



### **New Options**

Ark Naturals just released a large sized bone in their Breath-less Brushless Toothpaste range. The product, which has earned three awards, is now available in four sizes.

"The product is extruded and not injection molded," Susan Weiss, the company's founder, said. "Extruded products are easier to digest and, with this type of manufacturing process, there is less chance of products breaking off in pieces."

The outside of the chew has breath-freshening ingredients such as chlorophyll, cinnamon, vanilla and



clove. The design of the chew has as "scrub" effect on teeth and gums. And on the inside, Ark Naturals' patented toothpaste center provides three bacteriostats to inhibit the growth of plaque-forming bacteria, as well as to assist with bad breath and tartar and plaque build-up.

According to Steve Shweky, president of Fetch ...for Pets!, trends in pet dental hygiene are following the latest trends in human oral care and says that



the range now available now includes a variety of products aimed at making oral care convenient.

### **EDGE**

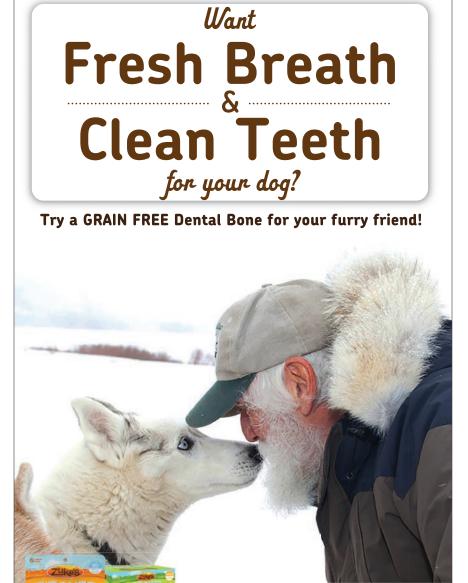
### Who takes care of Dog's Dental Health: Large Dog

Me/A family member: 54% • The Veterinarian: 23% A groomer: 8%

Other: 2%

No one:26%

Source: American Pet Products Association Pet Owners Survey 2012-2013



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"Our top sellers from our Arm and Hammer Canine Oral Care line include: the Dental Rinse for adult dogs, the Advanced Care Fresh Breath and

"Social media is great because it allows you to interact with the customer instantly and really opens up a dialogue," - Steve Shweky

Whitening Toothpaste, the Toothbrush and Finger Toothbrush Set and the Advanced Care Dental Mints," he said.

SynergyLabs, manufacturers of animal health and veterinary care products headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., has an extensive portfolio of brands and products, which include a large selection of dental products.

"Our top selling product is the Dental Fresh Original Formula which is available in a variety of sizes from 4 ounces through to 32 ounces," Carlos Zamora, marketing coordinator for Synergy Labs, said. "The range includes focused dental care such the Advanced Whitening Formula, Advanced Plaque and Tartar and also a Puppy Formula."

Like Warnars, Zamora also said a lot of their products are sold to groomers for salon use. The smaller sizes are in turn sold to pet owners for take home applications in between grooming appointments.

Apart from promoting February as pet dental month, Shweky also believes that it's important to utilize both social media and traditional ad campaigns in the promotion of products because campaigns have great reach and also offer their own unique benefits.

"Social media is great because it allows you to interact with the customer instantly and really opens up a dialogue," Shweky said. "It's also inexpensive. On the other hand, traditional ad campaigns are important because they provide a more permanent form of advertising. They also disseminate very quickly and produce short-term results with greater tangibility. "



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\* Data on file





## **Feline Fashionistas**

Cat fashion is a growing category that could lead to new sales.

### BY STACY MANTLE

hether it's a warm scarf to take the chill off a wintry weather day, or an elaborate costume for a black tie charity event, there's no question that feline fashion is on the rise.

According to the National Retail Foundation, pet owners are expected to spend \$70 million more on pet costumes in 2012 than they did in 2011.

Nowhere is the fashion trend more evident than in New York City, where the heart of all fashion beats strong. And, if the Big Apple is the royal court of fashion,

Ada Nieves is the queen of cat couture.

"People dress their animals not only to make their pets look good, but to express their personality," Nieves said. "One reason why people dress up their pets is to show off your personality. But the other side of pet fashion is that it's often a necessity. For example, fashion can help hairless pets retain body heat and make pets feel more secure. No matter what the situation, fashion should always be functional."

Whether you're exploring feline fashion

for form or function, there is an outfit or accessory available, and you'll find tabbies wearing everything from taffeta to tiaras.

The pet fashion industry has been growing so quickly that there are resources committed just to this section of the industry. The Fashion Institute of Technology in New York now offers a specialized curriculum focused on Pet Product Design and Marketing. The tract includes classes in "Petwear Patternmaking" and "Pet Accessory Design."

According to Lauren Darr, founder of

the International Association of Pet Professionals and author of the 2014 Pet Fashion Almanac, cat fashion is here to stay.

### **Fashion Forward: From** Japan to New York

Princess Prin and Prince Koutara are two cats who helped put "high fashion" on the map. Owned by Takako Iwasa, these fashion cats set the standard for Japanese cat fashion. Iwasa-San, as she is known online, tells her website visitors: "To dress a cat, let [the cat] know [dressing up] has changed [their lives] for only a

without clothes that constrict, are gaining in popularity.

### Cat In a Hat

ToScarboroughFair's ETSY shop has been featured on everything from People Magazine to Animal Planet, and it's little wonder why. Her tiny hats for the fashion-forward feline are one of a kind and as creative as each cat.

Stocking up your store for your cat clientele can still be a challenge, but it's certainly doable.

"We had many clients asking for

"We had many clients asking for sweaters this winter. While attending SuperZoo, we went on a search for them and sure enough, located Catspia, which is now one of our favorite designers of cat sweaters"

- Frrin West

moment. Take your photos, then remove the clothing immediately. Then give her a hug and say, 'Thank you!'"

Iwasa's bestselling book, "Fashion Cats" has helped increase the popularity of cat couture.

Most cat owners know that dressing up a feline can be a dangerous undertaking and not for a temperamental tabby. But for those looking for a bit of fun, with a tolerant cat in their home, they can have a nice photo session without stressing out their feline companions.

### **Au Natural Neckbands**

The easiest way to dress up a cat is with a collar or other decorative neckwear. The top sellers are fashionable leather collars that are durable and long-lasting.

"When it comes to cats, fur is best," Errin West of Cat Connection, a retail store in Dallas, said. "Leather collars offer an additional factor of durability for cats. We're also seeing a big surge in hemp and natural collars. Quick release collars are still a concern so we don't carry any collars that aren't safety stretch or breakaway collars."

Designer collars are just as popular, with pet owners seeking out innovative designs that reflect the individual nature of their cats. The necktie collar, which feature a cute way to dress up

sweaters this winter," West said. "While attending SuperZoo, we went on a search for them and sure enough, located Catspia, which is now one of our favorite designers of cat sweaters."

Even wigs are popular fashion accessories for cats. Thanks largely to the cat memes of the internet, celebrity cats continue to grow in popularity. Accessories such as bowties and scarves tend to

ramp up the cute factor.

Feline finery has also been touted for years at the landmark Algonquin Hotel in New York City. Their feline resident Matilda, is well known among feline fanciers and she hosts an annual fashion show that has been in existence since 2006. The hotel has had a feline resident since the 1930s, beginning with the arrival of a stray cat, affectionately named Hamlet by actor John Barrymore, who was in resident at the hotel during that time.

### **Functional Fashion**

Not sure if you are ready to commit to cat clothing? Stylish carriers and unique grooming styles may be more up your store's alley.

Companies like Sturdi Products offer carrier with unique patters and designs that can express a person's eye for fashion and color.

### Inspiration

If you're looking for inspiration, look no further than the annual New York Pet Fashion Show.

"The Pet Fashion Show is the pinnacle of what the pet lifestyle industry has to offer," Nieves said.

Now in its 10th year, the show occurs each February and kicks off the Westminster Weekend and Fashion week.





## Cat Treats Get a Makeover

Single ingredient and grain-free treats are popular choices.

### BY SANDY ROBINS

hen it comes to cat treats, felines certainly have their favorites in respect of tastes and textures.

However, for longest time, the allotted shelf space in the average retail store featured a very limited selection. It's only recently that manufacturers have started to truly cater to the taste buds of these popular companion pets ultimately giv-

ing cat treats the right to be deemed a comprehensive category.

Many of the new lines are following in the footsteps of popular dinner recipes and focusing on single ingredients and other trends such as grain-free and soy-free.

"Consumers are becoming much more savvy, aware and interested in the ingredients in treats," David Yasulka, vice president of marketing communications for Halo, said. "With the ongoing jerky scare, customers have peace of mind when treats, including ours, are all made in the USA.

"Also, another big concern for cat owners is obesity and weight management," he said. "Over-treating or treating with high calorie treats can quickly contribute to weight gain. Our beef, chicken and salmon Halo Liv-a-Littles are our top seller. They contain only one ingredient, namely freeze-dried chicken, salmon or beef.

"And, because feline diabetes is another growing concern, again when it comes to treats, they are being pointed in the direction of nutritional basics. For cats, there's nothing more basic than a pure protein treat."

According to Chanda Leary-Coutu, the communications manager for Wellpet, the idea of guilt-free treats is becoming popular across the industry.

"Besides our treats being grain-free, wheat, corn and soy free, we place a lot of emphasis on the fact that they are guilt-free too," she said. "The Pure Delights range of soft moist flavors that includes salmon, turkey, chicken and lamb are only 1-1.5 calories per treat and made in the United States."

The company will be introducing a new range of crunchy treats called Kittles next month, which is set to debut at the Global Pet Expo in Orlando, Fla. The grain-free treats in fun shapes will be available in chicken and cranberries, tuna and cranberries, and salmon and cranberries.

"From a merchandising standpoint, both lines are peggable for driveaisle and in-line placement or both," Leary-Coutu said.

In terms of shape, The Honest Kitchen's entered the cat treat space with Smittens, which launched a few months ago. The treats are low calorie heart-shaped snacks made from freezedried, wild line-caught haddock fished off the coast of Iceland.

"While our Wishes treats, also made from haddock fillets, are also suitable and very popular with cats, we wanted something specific dedicated to the feline market," Stacey Yip, public relations spokesperson for the San Diego-based company, said.

"The heart shape wasn't originally designed around a cat's tactile needs: we wanted to create a treat that felt really friendly and cute, the size of a pill without actually looking like one! So the heart was a natural choice for the shape, and the really happy coincidence was that it was really easy for cats to pick up."

Following on their lines of innovative dog treats such as Grill-licious and Barksters for dogs, Loving Pets Products launched their Purrfectly Natural Cat Treats in four flavors: namely beef lung, chicken, shrimp and buffalo. The treats, also made in the USA, are 100 percent freeze-dried protein with no additives, fillers or preservatives and, in line with the latest dietary trends, are also glycerin soy, grain and wheat free.

"My customers tend to buy a variety of treats to start, then they come back to us to purchase their cat's favorite one," Jeff Sarachik, owner of Pet Delight in Brooklyn, N.Y., said.

"They are also beginning to question where the treats are made, favoring those made in the USA like the Purrfectly Natural range. The dry treats are more popular than the old style of soft, moist treats, because dry to semi-dry treats offer a crunchier texture, and dryer treats also benefit a cat's dental health/tartar control."

Evangers is also thinking beyond standard protein choices with the introduction of their raw freeze-dried beef hearts.

"Beef heart is loaded with essential nutrients for supporting the health of frisky felines," Erin Terjesen, public relations spokesperson for the company, said. "Because of the palatability and wholesomeness of these treats, they are excellent for finicky cats or pets with food sensitivities, as well as for use as a food mixer."

From a retail standpoint, the market for treat products is being boosted with the introduction of cat puzzles, which are fast becoming the latest toys to keep cats both physically fit and mentally engaged. Also behaviorists are recommending that cat owners set up treasure hunts around the home so that cats remain active and hone their hunting skills.

It's this type of advice that retailers can also use to promote treat sales and explain the benefits beyond enhancing the human-animal bond.

Pet Central in Honesdale, Pa., introduces customers to new treats through their Treat of the Week promotion.

"We advertise when something new comes in by placing stickers that say 'new item' to highlight them on the shelves to draw customer attention," Adam Levine, the owner, said. "While we keep a packet of open dog treats on the counter for pets to taste, we haven't yet done that with cat treats to give cat owners an opportunity to take a few home to try. But it's an idea worth considering.

"Because of the huge selection customers do come to us for advice if they don't know their cat's taste preferences. Many buy treats to prevent tartar build up or hairballs. Others stock up randomly to give their cats choices. Our treats for both cats and dogs get a lot of shelf prominence so it's easy for customers to find."



### Trends & Products AQUARIUM



# **Catering to the Consumer's Taste**

Kid friendly décor, lighting options among popular ways to decorate a tank.

### BY TOM MAZORLIG

very pet retailer knows that there exists a seemingly endless variety of aquarium decorations.

Given this, manufacturers continue to produce interesting, attractive, and sometimes innovative new décor items sure to capture an aquarist's imagination.

### **Kid Approved**

Resin aquarium decorations have long been popular, and there is a tremendous variety of them to choose from. These can range from the classic treasure chests and octopuses to more modern designs.

Paul Demas, project manager at Penn-Plax, Inc., is particularly excited about décor that attracts kids to the aquarium hobby.

"We feel a major effort is necessary to get the next generation involved," he said. "With that in mind we have put forth great effort in developing 'kid friendly' aquarium décor, to help get young people involved in our wonderful hobby. We have found that fun and whimsical décor along with licensed products really captures the attention of the younger demographic. We have some very new and exciting licensed resin aquarium décor that should really appeal to younger hobbyists. Making it fun for kids is what it is all about."

Some of the new Penn-Plax resin décor items designed with the goal of getting young hobbyists interested in fish keeping feature beloved children's characters including SpongeBob SquarePants, the Little Mermaid, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and characters from Finding Nemo. Along with these designs are the Gazers, resin skulls with faux ruby eyes.

"All of these items are fun and designed to capture the imagination of the younger hobbyist, as well as the big kid in all of us," Demas said. "Getting kids started at an early age is critical in building

lifelong hobbyists."

### **Exotic Options**

Blue Ribbon Pet Products has added a wide range of new items to their Exotic Environments line of resin aquarium decorations. There are three pixies to add a whimsical touch to any tank.

Bronze Buddha with Plants, Happy Buddha with Plants, and Buddha Warrior with Plants helps create a serene, mystical environment. For the more fanciful minded consumers, there's the UFO Crash Cave, the Viking Helmet Cave, and the T-Rex and Triceratops Nests. For those who like bubbling ornaments, Blue Ribbon offers a realistic Bubbling Alligator in two sizes.

All items in the Exotic Environment line are safe for freshwater and saltwater use, and many, like the Driftwood and Ram's Head Skull, can also be used in terrariums.





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### **AQUARIUM**

### **Complimenting Each Other**

It's no secret that GloFish are wildly popular. These little genetic marvels have taken the aquarium hobby by storm. Tetra, part of United Pet Group, is launching a line of décor products designed to complement the unique colors and lighting of a GloFish aquarium.

For inside the tank, there are new additions to the GloFish Aquarium Plants and the GloFish Resin Ornaments lines.

The plants come in fluorescent and pearlescent colors, and stand out beautifully under an aquarium's blue lighting. The new varieties are Small White Moneywort, Large White Bacopa, Small Moonrise Pink Bacopa, Medium Moonrise Pink Moneywort and Medium Moonrise Pink Moneywort. The GloFish Resin Ornament line introduces five new additions, featuring natural designs and fluorescent paint highlights that stand

out beautifully under blue LED lights.

For outside the GloFish tank, Tetra has two reversible backgrounds: Jellyfish/ Anemone and Cityscape/Cave. These will fit aquariums up to 10 gallons and look dazzling under the lighting typical of a GloFish tank.

Recently, manufacturers have started incorporating LEDs into fish tank décor. Aqueon is expanding its popular line of flexible LED bubble wands to include multi-colored models. Multi-Color Bubble Wands change color continuously while creating a decorative bubble curtain in the aquatic habitat. The flexible wands allow for bending around décor and creating that perfect, customized aquarium. For freshwater or marine aquariums, the Multi-Color Bubble Wands are available in 14-inch and 21-inch sizes.

When it comes to selling décor to retail consumers, it's important to not just consider the individual items you offer, but also to think about the bigger picture.

Can your customers completely outfit their tanks in your store? Do you have a range of different items that match in style?

"Whether hobbyists create a natural environment in their tank or they throw convention aside and choose bold décor pieces, there is a common trend among them: consumers are looking for coordinated décor," Catherine Langford, product manager of aquarium environments at United Pet Group, said.

Taking advantage of this tendency could mean organizing décor by theme on the shelves or setting up a themed display tank or two in the store to demonstrate the possibilities to your customers.

"One of the biggest trends influencing aquarium décor preferences is what I refer to as the Pinterest effect," she said. "Consumers have access to endless images of beautifully decorated aquariums and are inspired to recreate these scenes at home. As a result, I expect to see consumer preferences move toward easy-to-shop collections. Retailers can take advantage of this trend by supplying gravel, ornaments, plants, and backgrounds that fall into common themes. The average consumer takes multiple trips to purchase their décor, but with the right product mix, a retailer can inspire a consumer to complete most of their décor purchases at once."





Lonnie Ready Director of Sales and Marketing

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The best rock will be very porous, and very fresh. When you pick up a rock, does it seem light for its size? Is it covered in algae, sponges and other stuff? Finally, how much did you pay for it? Better rock sells for more and takes up more space per pound, meaning you pay less to ship more valuable rock.

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Lonnie Ready is the Director of Sales and Marketing for Quality Marine, North America's premier supplier of fish and invertebrates to public aquariums, educational institutions and retail stores.

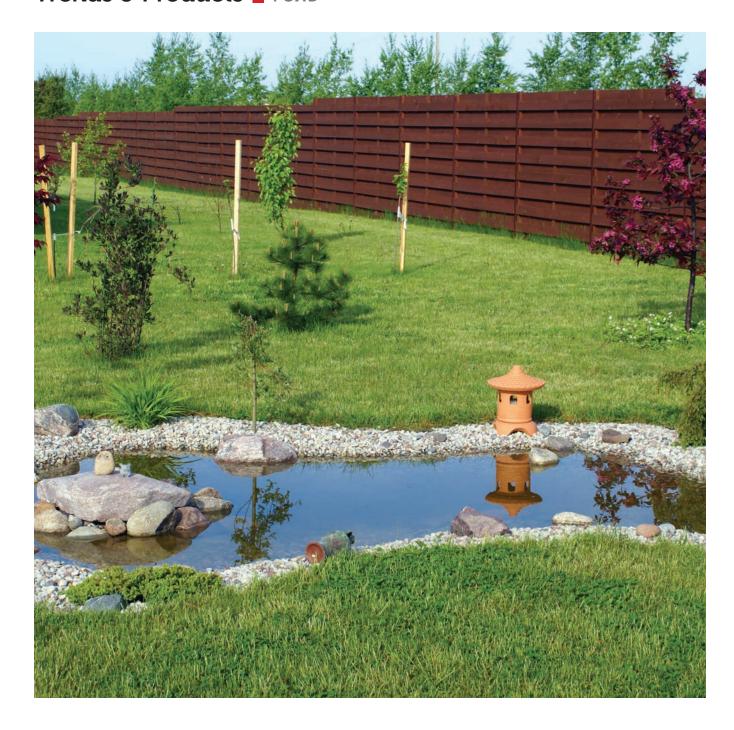
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## Trends & Products POND



# **Protecting a Pond**

Products can help shield ponds from weather, predators and chemical problems.

### BY JOE OLENIK

ond and water garden owners face a variety of concerns when it comes to protecting their spaces, and retailers have a golden opportunity to offer solutions, gain their patrons' trust and loyalty, and increase sales.

By demonstrating knowledge, offering quality products and helping hobbyists avoid and/or resolve problems, aquatic retailers can enhance their cus-

tomers' enjoyment of their ponds and keep them coming back.

Protecting an outdoor water feature typically involves the elements and predators, but introduction of diseases and toxic lawn chemicals are also of concern. In northern climates winter freeze is the primary concern in terms of the elements, while in southern states excessive heat during summer months can be devastating to fish populations.

# Protecting an outdoor water feature typically involves the elements and predators, but introduction of diseases and toxic lawn chemicals are also of concern.

Predators typically include wild animals such as herons, cranes, raccoons and even muskrats, minks and large snakes, however free ranging domestic cats are known to hunt and catch fish as well. Finally, lawn care products can wash into ponds during heavy rains, with devastating results to fish and plant life.

### **Protection From the Elements**

In areas where winter freeze occurs, a pond should have a section that is at least 36 inches deep if fish are to be left out year round, and a deicer and/ or aerator should be installed to keep a hole open in the ice for oxygen exchange.

Rolf C. Hagen offers several winterizing kits in their Laguna line that include heating elements and aerators, along with pond netting to keep falling leaves and other debris from accumulating in the pond. Decomposing organic material not only consumes oxygen but may lower pH to unsafe levels. These products should be stocked and advertised as autumn approaches.

Oxygen depletion can also occur during extremely hot weather, especially if water circulation is poor. This is can be potentially lethal to fish in heavily stocked ponds, and is a primary contributor to undesirable algae outbreaks. Waterfalls, fountains, aerators and additional circulation pumps all help to alleviate this problem.

Many submersible pond pumps

such as E. Danner's Pondmaster line can be fitted with fountain heads to create surface agitation, as well as diverter valves to drive waterfalls or circulate water around the pond at the same time. Lily pads and floating plants like Hyacinth and Water Lettuce help shade and cool water to improve dissolved oxygen content, and have the added effect of providing fish with refuge from predators. Water Hyacinth and Lettuce spread rapidly with good sunlight, and help in preventing nuisance algae and green water outbreaks by blocking sunlight and using excess nutrients. Retailers should stock these plants and promote their use.

### **Predator Protection**

Predatory wildlife such as Blue Herons, cranes, raccoons and even domestic cats are becoming increasingly problematic, particularly in populated residential areas. Once conditioned to available food, they will return regularly for an easy meal, decimating valuable fish collections.

Offering customers protective devices against these marauders will keep their enthusiasm level high and keep them coming back to your store. Pond netting can be effective, but detracts from the visual appeal of a water feature and animals can become entangled in them, sustaining injuries and potentially damaging plants and pond equipment as they thrash about in an effort to free themselves.

Herons are territorial by nature and will usually not land where another heron has set up residency. Artificial life-size herons are inexpensive and easily installed. They should be moved frequently, however, as live birds quickly figure them out, rendering them ineffective. Artificial alligators that move around the pond with changing wind patterns are much more effective and can add an interesting visual effect.

The Contech Scarecrow is a motion activated sprayer that hooks up to a garden hose and releases a high velocity water jet when predators approach. They can be adjusted for spray arc and detector sensitivity for maximum effectiveness.

More recently, ultrasonic repellers like The Guardian are gaining in pop-

ularity. These devices release a high pitched sound that is undetectable to humans but scares predatory animals away. Many are programmable for specific animals, and have adjustable sensitivity ranges.

### **Chemical Worries**

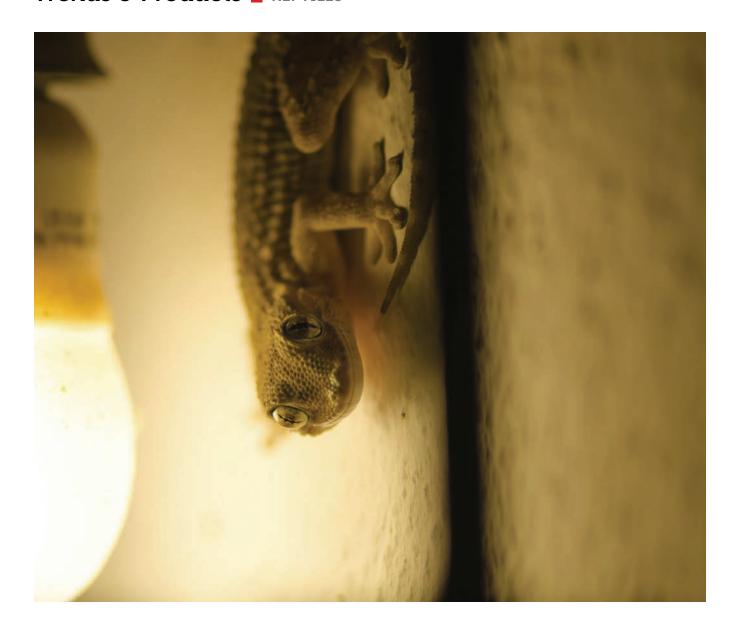
Another concern for pond enthusiasts is run-off from lawn chemicals that are applied around or near a pond. Lawn care providers should be well-versed in proper use of their products, but heavy rains can wash these chemicals into a pond, wreaking havoc on fish and plant life.

Ponds that are installed at the bottom of slopes where lawn care chemicals will be used, should have a burm or raised planter bed around them to prevent run-off from entering the water.

Providing pond enthusiasts with sound information and quality products to address their needs will establish retail aquatics shops as go to destinations and ensure success for years to come.



### Trends & Products | REPTILES



# Lighting the Way Forward for Reptile Retailers

New products go beyond just brightening a tank. BY ERIK J. MARTIN

hen a good idea pops in your head, the proverbial light bulb goes off. Judging by the number of inventive and eye-catching new reptile lighting and heating products that made their debut in the past several months, the year 2013 was a bright one for retailers who have been eager to offer patrons more and better options in this category.

### **Illuminating Introductions**

Reptile owners enjoy gazing at their

scaly critters in their caged environments. But, how often do they look through the eyes of a lizard to appreciate what the animal sees? Enter Exo Terra's Reptile Vision bulbs, which produce the correct visual light output that reptiles' eyes are sensitive to.

"Reptiles communicate visually and physically, but for years we've always placed them under lights that were visually pleasing to us," Steve Sotelo, division manager for Exo Terra in Mansfield, Mass., said. "The Reptile Vision

bulb improves perception and stimulates breeding and appetite by offering a pleasing light spectrum."

Another notable improvement observed in recent months is bulbs that have been tweaked to output stronger intensity UVB and UVA light, such as Zoo Med's Reptisun T5 bulb. This bulb is just right for larger and taller tanks because they offer UVB penetration at longer distances and are available in 5.0 and 10.0 configurations and in 22 inch, 34 inch and 46 inch lengths. The

manufacturer has also introduced a new Reptisun High Output T5 low profile fixture compatible with the new bulbs and available in 24 inch, 36 inch and 48 inch sizes.

Lights that help make a herp habitat smell better is not the stuff of sci-

"New lighting and heating products that combine several features into one showcase well because the shopper can see that the cage has fewer wires and bulky fixtures attached to it,"

# -Misia Shumway

ence-fiction; it's already here via Exo Terra's new Natural Light Ion deodorizing compact fluorescent light. This bulb's built-in ionozer helps reduce or eliminate harmful airborne particles that cause odors.

#### **Cutting Through the Clutter**

Choosing the correct reptile lighting and heating elements can be tricky sometimes with so many options available to consumers today, said Ashley Rademacher, animal care and education coordinator for Zoo Med Labs, Inc. in San Luis Obispo, Calif.

The solution? Value-added bundles. "Combination packages offered nowadays make it easier for customers, especially newcomers, to choose the products they need," Rademacher said.

Zoo Med's Reptisun mini compact fluorescent UVB lamps come standard in several different lighting packages that each offers a mini deep dome lamp fixture and a spot, UVB and/or basking lamp. Case in point, the Desert UVB and Heat Lighting Kit combines a mini combo deep dome, basking spot lamp and a 10.0 mini-CFL UVB lamp, while the Aquatic Turtle Lighting Combo bundles a mini deep dome and a Turtle Tuff splash-proof halogen basking lamp.

Another way to make shopping

simpler is to roll out all-in-one light and heat sources. Exo Terra's Sunray uses metal halide technology to produce such a solution — combining UVA, UVB, infrared heat, the aforementioned Reptile Vision feature and a light bracket in one product.

"New lighting and heating products that combine several features into one showcase well because the shopper can see that the cage has fewer wires and bulky fixtures attached to it," Misia Shumway, manager for Austin Exotic Pets in Austin, Texas, said. "It also makes for a cleaner, simpler look that merchandises well."

To help consumers make a more educated, but easier choice, manufacturers are also providing user-friendly apps designed to find the ideal lighting/heating product. Exo Terra recently launched its UVB Buddy app for iPhone and Android, and Zoo Med's Mobile App for Android provides quick access to its various products.

### Warming Up to Innovation

Ask your share of pet retailers how satisfied they've been with the latest reptile lighting/heating merchandise, and you'll likely get positive responses.

"Today's heating and lighting products are manufactured to a higher quality than in years past and are offered in greater varieties and packaged better to get the shopper's attention," Shumway said.

Bruce Delles, owner of Twin Cities Reptiles, Inc. in St. Paul, Minn., agrees that the push lately has been toward energy savings and compact design, as evidenced by the influx of high-output bulbs available in smaller sizes as well as LED lights. While the latter doesn't offer UVB/UVA benefits, they are ideal for species like snakes that don't require ultraviolet.

"These LED bulbs are very small and more streamlined, and they can save big money on electricity," Delles said.

Modern mini halogen bulbs are also competing well with their fluorescent competitors and large domes as primary heat and UVB sources for many herps, he said.

"Thanks to these more compact light designs, retailers can save more

space in their stores, especially with vertically stacked setups," Delles said. "I can now fit 5 tanks on my vertical shelving where I could only fit four previously, thanks to these smaller light fixtures replacing standard fluorescent aquarium hoods."

Smaller lighting and heating elements also mean greater visibility for prospective purchasers, who can now see more of the habitat and its occupants when they visit the store.

#### **Getting On the Same Page**

Colorful new SKUs energize owners, but sales goals can backfire unless you train your employees to talk to customers about the latest heating and lighting products, Shumway says.

"Your shoppers have to be able to see the benefits in replacing their older fixtures with more energy efficient, space-saving ones on the market today," Shumway said. "And that means training your staff and making sure they know how to upsell and promote the advantages of certain products over others, even if they are more expensive. If you can demonstrate to customers that they'll save more money in the long run, they'll take a closer look at those products."

# **EDGE**

# **Number of Reptiles Owned**

From 2010 to 2012, the number of singular-reptile owners increased 5 percent.

2012

1 Reptile: 59% 2 Reptiles: 24%

2011

1 Reptile: 57% 2 Reptiles: 21%

2010

1 Reptile: 54%

Source: American Pet Products Association National Pet Owners Survey 2013-2014



# **How to Properly Price Your Reptiles**

Pricing the reptile correctly is only the start to building a long-lasting customer. BY JOHN MACK

ast issue, we took a look at which reptiles are best suited to a beginning reptile retailer. While including any new department to your store can be daunting, choosing the right reptiles goes a long way towards ensuring that your store is able to sell reptiles efficiently, safely, and profitably.

However, pricing those reptiles can prove to be a challenge in and of itself, requiring a delicate balancing act between ensuring sales through lower prices and maintaining a profitable markup.

In most cases, I recommend a 100 percent markup above the total purchase cost (Keystone or cost x 2), and actively encourage stores to be more aggressive on their pricing. By lowering prices to sell at a higher volume, stores can see an approximate 70 percent increase in sales over one year.

By being aggressive in pricing, you can avoid a frequent pitfall of many small pet stores, stores that overprice reptiles often have trouble selling reptiles, leading them to become "store mascots" rather than salable pets. With private breeders and reptile shows all over the country, stores simply cannot afford to overprice their reptiles. Rather, stores with an aggressive, competitive pricing strategy, again, around 100 percent markup or less, experience sales two to three times higher than their higher-priced competitors.

The key thing to remember, though, is that each reptile represents not just a sale of a given animal, but rather sales of the food, accessories, heating, substrate, lighting and housing. As long as your store is prepared to provide those items at reasonable prices and a quality customer service experience, you can ensure repeat business from those rep-

tile owners.

Further, the purchase of a reptile only rarely proves to be an impulse buy. Because of those necessary items and the ability for consumers to research prices, overpriced reptiles can leave a bad taste in a customer's mouth for your store in general.

However, those very specialty items represent a distinct advantage for specialized pet stores over their "big-box"

The key thing to remember, though, is that each reptile represents not just a sale of a given animal, but rather sales of the food, accessories, heating, substrate, lighting and housing.

competitors. Larger stores tend to cater to a more general audience and simply don't carry many of the items necessary for reptile care. Items like substrate, heating elements, and lighting options represent avenues for repeat business through which your pet store can easily take advantage.

Even more so, reptiles' unique feeding requirements ensure not only business from food sales, with significantly lesser competition. Large grocery store chains simply do not carry common reptile foods like mealworms and crickets. Even certain larger pet stores refuse to stock live/frozen feeder mice or 'pinkies', which are common food items for many snakes. By taking advantage of this gap in the market, you ensure additional food traffic through your store on a regular basis. Every time their reptile needs food, money gets spent in your store.

Each time that a customer comes in your store to buy crickets, mice or a new heat lamp represents a two-fold opportunity. First, by providing specialty items with a quality customer experience, you ensure repeat business through your reptile sale. Second, that positioning allows you to take advantage of multiple-pet owners.

The American Pet Products Association's most recent survey claims that households with multiple pets is at "an all-time high with 44 percent of pet owning households in the U.S. owning more than one pet, up from 42 percent of households in 2010." With the increased foot traffic brought in through reptile-based necessities, it becomes increasingly likely that a repeat customer will choose your store for their other pets' needs, resulting in more overall sales for you.

However, the key to ensuring all of these subsidiary sales is to get a reptile into the customer's home in the first place. And, naturally, the key to achieving that original sale revolves primarily around the reptile's original price point. By pricing your reptiles properly, you ensure a high turnover for your reptiles, providing the building blocks for hundreds of new sales in the future.

John Mack is the founder and CEO of Reptiles by Mack. His Ohio based company is widely recognized as one of the largest reptile breeders and suppliers in the USA today.





# **Reduce Dusting and Gut-Loading Complexity**

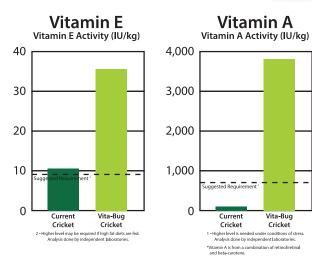
Existing feeder insect choices do not provide complete nutrition for captive insect eaters, as a result, dusting or gut-loading is necessary. Even when used properly, many existing commercial gut-loading products and dusts do not provide appropriate nutrition.

After years of research and development the first vitamin and nutrient complete diet\* for nourishing feeder insects has been created; Vita-Bugs. The patent pending feed enhances the content of critical nutrients in feeder insects therefore reducing the need to dust or gut-load.

Vita-Bug<sup>™</sup> insects raised on our patent pending feed have been proven to maintain the increased vitamin and nutrient levels throughout their growing process, unlike most gut-loading or dusting techniques that expel their improvements in short time.

The Vita-Bug™ crickets will be available in the spring of 2013 and soon after, Vita-Bug™ mealworms and Vita-Bug superworms. Vita-Bugs™ will only be available from Timberline Live Pet Foods.

To see the complete Vita-Bug<sup>™</sup> study go to www.timberlinefisheries.com/vitabugs.





 $<sup>*</sup>proper\ calcium\ supplementation\ is\ still\ recommended.$ 



# The Scale Count: An Interview With Ramy Guirguis

Show promoters, stores can work together to make the reptile hobby successful

#### BY ROB STEPHENSON

his month I want to cover what has become an integral piece of the reptile hobby, the reptile show. While a huge hit amongst hobbyist, reptile shows around the nation have become an enemy in some retailer's eyes. So I thought I'd interview the promoter of the largest reptile shows in the U.S., and also a former store owner, to get his take on it and try to bridge the gap between local shows and local stores.

Ramy Guirguis is the owner/promoter of the Reptile Super Shows on the west coast and also former owner of Reptile City in the San Diego area.

#### Rob: How did you get your start?

**Ramy:** When I was 15 years old I bought my first red tail boa and was hooked for life. I never looked back.

Rob: Do you still keep reptiles?

## What are you keeping?

**Ramy:** I had the largest collection of chahoua geckos in the country at one time but now I keep leachianus geckos and Spanish ribbed newts.

# Rob: How many stores did you have and how many shows do you have?

**Ramy:** I had two stores called Reptile city for 10 years and I have three shows a year for the last 6 years.

# Rob: As the owner of the Super Show, what do you feel is the relationship between shows and stores?

Ramy: I would hope it's a positive. A lot of store owners actually set up booths at my shows and aside from that it's a great place for them to buy more rare animals than they find on wholesale list and most are captive bred. It's also a great

place to connect with potential customers in a niche environment. Kind of like Comic Con, you have a lot of passionate people there.

# Rob: What positives do stores gain though?

Ramy: Education. A lot of manufacturers have started showing new products at shows, you can see the latest animals and morphs and ask questions right to the breeders. You can meet authors. I remember reading books by Phillipe De-Vosjoli as a kid learning about reptiles, now I can't believe he's behind a booth at my shows. I sometimes look at his hands in amazement, like right there, those are the hands that wrote hundreds of books and started so many careers, man...

# Rob: What are the most important things you do as a very successful promoter?

Ramy: You know, I take care of my vendors and my customers and I take care of 'em right. After owing the stores for so long, I've learned that customer service is always number one. Also, you know what's the most important? The kids. They are the future.

# Rob: Ram, you're starting to sound like a Whitney Houston song.

Ramy: No but seriously bro, stores and breeders and anyone involved in the hobby of reptile keeping need to band together and educate our children on nature and the animals. They're who pumps life into all our businesses. They're also who will take care of the planet when we're gone. Do you know there were over 280 videos on you tube for the super show and a lot of them were made by kids. That gets me pumped.

Questions or comments? Feel free to contact Rob at the scale count@gmail.com.

Rob Stephenson has been keeping and breeding reptiles for just over 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 Zoo Med. 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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# Pet Age



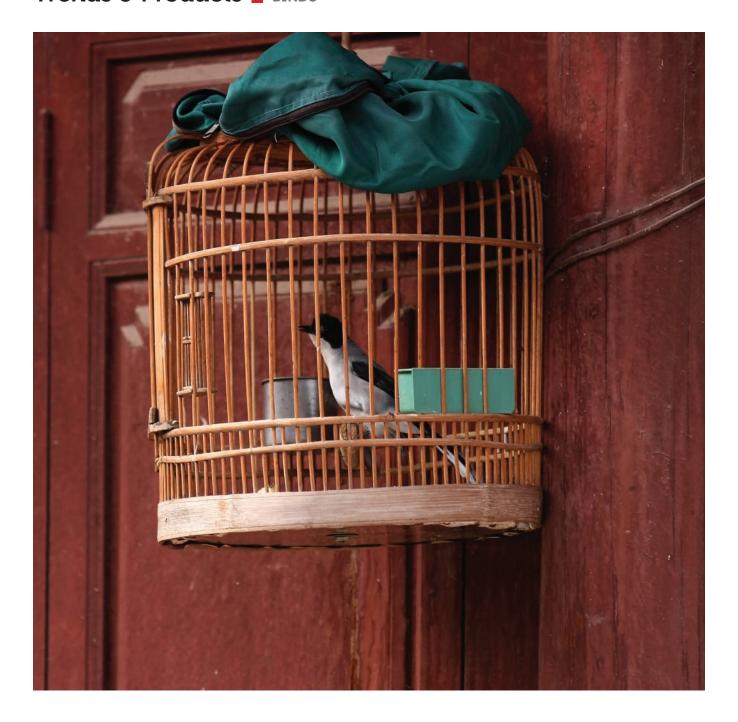












# Creating a Cozy, Comfy and Safe Sleepy Time

Cage covers and other accessories make bed time fun for birds, owners.

#### **BY ERIN SALLEY**

roviding a comfortable and warm sleeping environment is just as important inside the cage as it is outside.

While using a cage covers, such as

the custom covers offered by Cozzzy Covers, can shut out light and stop cold drafts from affecting a bird's sleep pattern, giving the bird, especially parrots, something to cuddle up to is important.

Making a companion bird's cage not only stimulating, but comfortable betters their quality of life. Allowing the bird to access toys easily, hanging food and water dishes out of the way of messes, and providing a warm and cozy place to sleep are all elements of a proper environment for a healthy and happy bird.

There are numerous benefits to owning a cage cover including easily separating multiple birds and allowing for stress free transport for birds that have to travel, but the most notable pro is cage covers provide the bird with secure place to rest and relax while keeping it warm when the temperatures begin to drop.

#### **Protection From The Elements**

Mary Wyld, owner of Wyld's Wingdom explains that a companion bird's living quarters requires additional care during the winter months.

"Many of our exotic and pet bird breeds are originally from warm, tropical climates and cold temperatures can be a health challenge" Wyld said.

Covering the cage with a heavy and dark cage cover will protect sensitive birds from any cold drafts that may enter the bird's environment.

Some customers may use an old bed sheet to cover their bird's cage; however, because most sheets are made from lightweight fabrics in light colors they not only let too much light through to provide a dark place for the bird to sleep, but they still allow for cold drafts to blow through.

Bird Paradise, in Burlington N.J., offers the Sheer Guard Bird Cage Cover in small, medium and large. This cage cover comes in red and is made from an opaque material to allow for a small amount of light and proper ventilation through the cage.

"Bird owners should definitely have a cage cover on hand," Paul Lewis, owner of Birds Unlimited, in Webster, N.Y., said. "Covering the cage at night will keep the heat in the cage and help the birds stay warm. Cage covers are a great way to help regulate a bird's sleep cycles, calm them down during times of stress, and keeps them warm and away from drafts, but what about the inside of the cage? Many species of companion birds enjoy contact, be it from their humans or from other birds in the home. If they are living in their cage alone, adding a soft object for

them to snuggle up to can help comfort them through the night."

#### **Keeping Cozy**

In addition, some birds enjoy avian huts and hanging tent shelters called snugglies and snoozies . These cozy shelters give the bird the option to snuggle in when they are cold Wyld said.

Wyld's Wingdom offers many different sleepy time cage accessories. The WW Tropical Snugglie is a hanging tent

"Cage covers are a great way to help regulate a bird's sleep cycles, calm them down during times of stress, and keeps them warm and away from drafts,"

- Paul Lewis

made out of durable outer fabric and lined with fleece. Birds can climb in and cuddle in for a good night's sleep.

Another sleep accessory option is the WW Avian Haven Hut, a square felt cover that hangs over the bird's perch. The Avian Haven Hut acts as a dark and safe space for the bird to go into and rest easily.

Wyld also recommends the WW Peekaboo Tent sleep accessory. This sleep tent includes a perch that is covered by a fleece tent top so birds can perch and sleep comfortably.

"Cage accessories are for the welfare of your bird," Erik Christopher, president of Mango Pet Products, said. "Typically, when you purchase your cage for your bird, it will come with very little accessories. As you get to know your bird and how you can best care for your bird you may want to add accessories for fun, convenience or comfort."

Christopher knows the importance of cage accessories and highly recommends the Corner Shelf accessory.

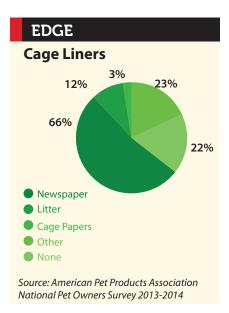
"It fits easily nested in the corner of any style cage and comes in either small or large," Christopher said. "This is an extra cuddly perching area, a bird privacy area or use as a foraging shelf. This accessory compliments the cage. Also great and original designed for handicapped birds where perching a rounded wood may be much harder to do."

It is important for customers to know their bird's personality prior to making any decisions about their sleeping preferences. Lewis urges customers to use digression when deciding if tented sleeping accessories are right for their birds.

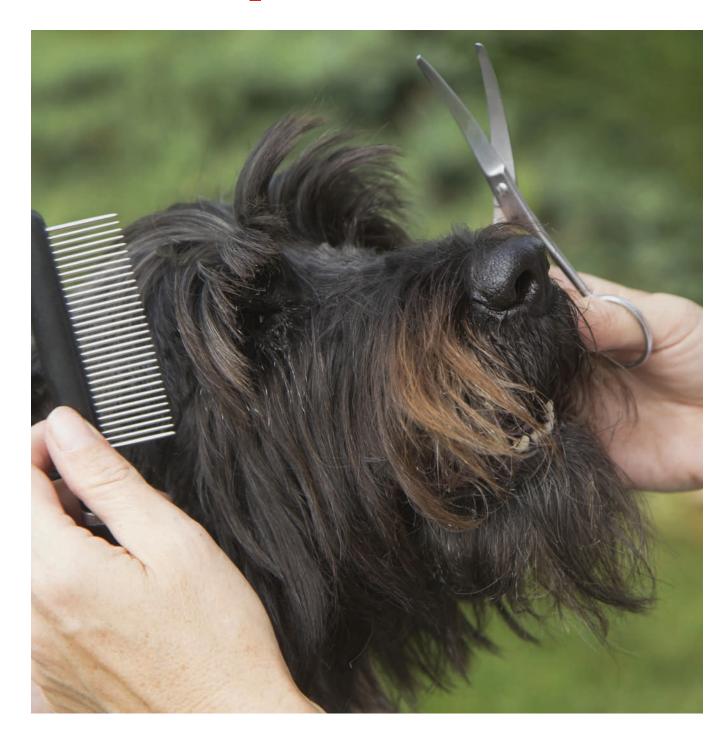
"I do caution people who want to use a nest box, Happy Hut, or other sleeping quarters as it may stimulate a female into egg laying and many birds may become overly protective or aggressive about them," Lewis said. "Most birds don't use a nest in the wild unless it's breeding season."

For birds that tend to exhibit aggression, Prevue Pet Products offers the Cozy Corner in various sizes to accommodate small, medium and large species. This small piece of fuzzy fabric features two ties on the back which secure it in place in the corner of the cage. Using the Cozy Corner allows a customer's bird to enjoy the warmth and security of a nesting box without the protective aggression they can cause.

Erin Salley is a Kennel Technician who is working towards her Associates Degree as a Certified Veterinary Technician. She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband and all her rescues; two retrievers, cat, and horse.



# Trends & Products GROOM AND BOARD



# **Small Tools, Big Impact**

Having a good selection of tools on hand can make all the difference.

# BY DARYL CONNER

ave you ever heard the expression, "it's the little things that count?" It can be very true of the small tools that groomers use to work

their art and magic on dogs and cats.

Many groomers save their tips and pool them toward the purchase of some big, expensive tool that will help them in their daily work, and that can be a very good thing. At the same time, however, those same groomers will keep aged brushes and combs with bent, abraded teeth around.

Worn, damaged hand tools can scrape and irritate skin and damage coats. Once a brush or comb begins to show wear, it should be replaced. Luckily, small hand tools like combs and brushes can often be purchased very inexpensively, and since they are mandatory for the grooming of most every pet, having a good selection on hand is important. There are many types of these tools to choose from, designed to work on the vast array of coat types that stylists encounter during their daily work.

#### **Groomer Favorites**

"Our number one selling brush is the Miracle Coat Slicker," Alison Franklin, owner of Groomers Mall, said. "Groomers tell me that they like the length of the teeth, and that they are bent at the perfect angle to glide through coats. They have a nice rubberized handle that is comfortable to hold, and they hold up well, even if you use them to brush out wet coats in the tub."

An informal survey on Facebook grooming groups turned up a large number of groomers who said that their go-to favorite brushes are hands down the Les Poochs line. Les Poochs slicker style brushes were the first on the market to feature a flexible head.

The price tag they carry is a bit higher than many of the industry standard slicker brushes, but comments like, "You would have to pry my Les Poochs Mat Zapper out of my cold dead hands," and, "I just tried a Les Poochs brush for the first time. My grooming life is forever changed" were posted over and over.

The flexible head on this style brush makes brushing coats far easier, and they are ergonomically designed, so are a great choice for groomers who want to preserve their wrists. The line of brushes has been hard to find of late, but they will be available again very soon, and will now be made in the U.S.

"The much anticipated re-release of the world's top selling original Les Pooch brush is now only weeks away," Michel Raviol, CEO of Les Pooch, said. "We apologize for the long wait, however due to recent substandard quality issues from our German vendor we decided to move production to

# Worn, damaged hand tools can scrape and irritate skin and damage coats.

the United States. This transition will ensure top quality and constant supply for our global market. A huge promotional special celebrating the release of the world's first flexible headed brush will be in effect along with new exciting additions to our brush collection."

#### What to Look For

Groomers know that after a pet is well brushed, they must be combed through to insure that no tangles or loose coat remain. When choosing a comb, look for a comfortable fit for your hand. Pay attention to the length and spacing of the teeth, as well. Combs are not a "one size fits all" tool.

Fine coats require closely spaced teeth, thick, double coats need a longer tooth and wider spacing. Check to make sure the tips are smooth, not sharp, to minimize skin irritation. The finish of a comb is important, too. A smooth finish will not only help the comb to glide through pet hair, it will be kinder to the coat, causing less damage as you work.

"The Aaronco Honeycombs are very popular," Franklin said about their best-selling combs. "They are made in England, are of great quality, have a wonderful smooth finish and come in a huge variety of sizes. It's all about teeth spacing when you buy combs, and groomers can find what they want in this line. They have a square spine and they are very comfortable to hold. Resco combs, made in the U.S., also have a loyal following, and we sell a lot of the Wahl 8 inch finishing combs. Some groomers swear by carbon fiber combs. They have a little give to them, and they are wonderful at removing static from coats."

Les Poochs offers a comb line, as well.

"We can't keep our combs in stock," Ravoli said. "They are hand crafted by the same artisans who make our shears in Japan. This comb has glide through technology and features ultra light yet sturdy 3036 aircraft aluminum."

It's the little things in your grooming toolbox that you use most often. Invest in some new combs and brushes this year and see the difference great hand tools make.

# **EDGE**

# Brushes and Other Grooming Tools Owned by Size of Dog

Percentage that owns a grooming tool

**2006:** 77%

2008:80%

**2010:** 78%

2012:88%

Medium Dog

**2006:** 80%

2008: 84%

2010:82%

2012:88%

Large Dog

2006:82%

2008: 84%

2010:85%

**2012:** 92%

Multiple response question, therefore, total may exceed 100%

Source: American Pet Products National Pet Owners Survey 2013-2014



# **Going All Natural**

From flea prevention to shampoos, natural grooming products see a surge.

#### BY DEBI HILLEY

eople are becoming smarter and educating themselves and are making better choices regarding their health than they have in the past. This includes eliminating product ingre-

dients that are controversial, or considered "overly processed" in foods, shampoos, cosmetics and cleaners.

As a result, all natural products are finding a niche in the dog care industry

and all natural shampoos and grooming products are becoming very popular.

Nootie is one of the many companies that make an all natural shampoo line. A family run business, Nootie spe-

# COUT OWNERS LOVE

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Here's a secret about cat owners: they're marketing powerhouses. When they find a quality product that keeps their cats healthy and happy, they talk. A lot! When that product decreases shedding up to 90% and helps prevent hairballs, well, we're talking fiercely passionate brand loyalists. So when you carry FURminator deShedding Tools and Shampoos for cats, you also get the

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Stainless steel edge glides through topcoat, safely and gently removing loose hair.

Sleek, ergonomic handle makes the tool easy to grip.

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# **GROOM AND BOARD**

cializes in all natural grooming products in scents that are sure to appeal to



the consumer: Warm Sugar Cookie, Japanese Cherry Blossom and Sweet Pea and Vanilla and Cucumber Melon are just a few. Their shampoos and spritzs are made with naturally derived ingredients. Aloe and oatmeal, essential fatty acids, rosemary and jojoba oil are included to treat pet's skin

- puppies

and coat and make them smell good and remain healthy as well. Nootie also makes an Argan Oil shampoo and spritz designed to keep pets coats in top condition.

Another manufacturer in the natural product marketplace is Burt's Bees, who has a line directed at pets called Burt's Bees Natural Pet Care Products. These include a full line of specialty shampoos, including a tearless shampoo with



apple cider vinegar and aloe vera. The line also includes an ear cleaner made with peppermint and witch hazel and several sprays to sooth itchy or irritated skin.

Burt's Bees Natural Pet Care Products are pH balanced for pets and contain no parabens, phtalates, petrochemicals or sulfates.

#### Natural Defense

Many consumers turn to natural grooming products when it comes to

DE FLEA

Pet Shampoo

Kills Fleas On Contact

getting rid of, or preventing fleas.

Natural Chemistry's DeFlea products are used by groomers and owners alike to safely and naturally kill fleas on contact, and does not contain pyrethrins or permethrins.

Their DeFlea Shampoo for Cats is a patented combination of ingredients that work in tandem with one another to

"soften" the waxy exoskeleton of fleas, ticks and mites. The company's Natural Flea Shampoo and Spray contains natural botanical ingredients that work synergistically with one another to provide effective, natural, and safe flea



protection. The natural botanical formula has been proven to provide residual killing and repelling up to 7 days.

Ark Natural's has a line of Neem products that also naturally combat the flea issue. Their Neem "Protect" Shampoo is natural, safe and eco-friendly. Botanicals gently shampoo dirt, oil and sebum from pet's coats. It is non-drying and low-sudsing.

# **Slather Up**

Planet Dog created a line of grooming products that fit their company's.



They have created a line of shampoos that include an All Natural Deodorizing Shampoo, All Natural Oatmeal and Aloe Shampoo and All Natural Healing Shampoo. All shampoos are made with a coconut shampoo base and specialized ingredients to address specific skin or coat issues.

Just like in human products, pet retailers who carry true all natural products can see their sales increase dramatically because this customer base is growing in leaps and bounds.

By educating yourself and your staff you can assist your customers in choosing the best all natural products for their pets.



# **Pet Organization Gets Fresh New Look**

Pet Sitters International makes changes to annual conference.

et Sitters International has a new name, logo and mission for its annual conference.

Pet Sitters International's annual conference, formally PSI's Quest for Excellence Convention, is now named Pet Sitter World Educational Conference & Expo and the 2014 event will take place Sept. 12-15 in Indianapolis, Ind.

"PSI hosted the first-ever annual conference for professional pet sitters in 1995 and our conference content and offerings have evolved over the years to best meet the needs of our pet-sitting attendees," Patti J. Moran, PSI founder and president, said.

"With the most recent change, PSI has revamped its annual conference to en-



sure professional pet sitters have access to the education and networking they

need to thrive in the rapidly growing pet-sitting industry."

The new mission for the conference is to provide professional pet sitters with face-to-face community bulding opportunities, the latest in pet-sitting industry research and informative sessions that highlight pet-sitter best business practices and the most up-to-date pet-health and pet-care information.

"Pet Sitter World is a 'can't miss' event for professional pet sitters, and attendees will be the thought leaders shap-

ing the future of the pet-sitting industry," Moran said.



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Balanced nutrition sells. Balanced nutrition with Botanifits™ sells better.

BOTANIFITS: our exclusive blend of herbal extracts full of natural antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that support immunity and digestion – and promote the long term health of your dog.



#### CHAMOMILE

Digestive aid, calming aid, flavor.



## BLUEBERRIES Antioxidants, fiber,

Antioxidants, fiber vitamins.



#### DANELION EXTRACT

Antioxidants, Potassium, aid digestion.



#### CRANBERRIES

Antioxidants, fiber, nutrients, vitamins.



#### ROSEMARY

Natural preservative, cancer reducer.



#### GREEN TEA EXTRACT Antioxidants, boosts immune system.

PEPPERMINT Aids digestion, freshens breath.



# YUCCA SCHIDIGERA

Anti-inflammatory, joint heath aid, reduces ammonia odor.







# **Woof Gang Bakery to Offer Vet Services**

The clinic is open six days a week.



oof Gang Bakery unveiled its first full-service veterinary clinic within its newest store in Boca Raton, Fla., providing a onestop-shop for all pet care needs.

The veterinary clinic is open six days a week, Monday through Saturday, and offers veterinary services available for dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, ferrets, rab-



bits and other exotics in addition to vaccinations, surgery, radiology, micro-chipping and exams

Pharmacy, prescription diets and nutritional and behavioral counseling is available.

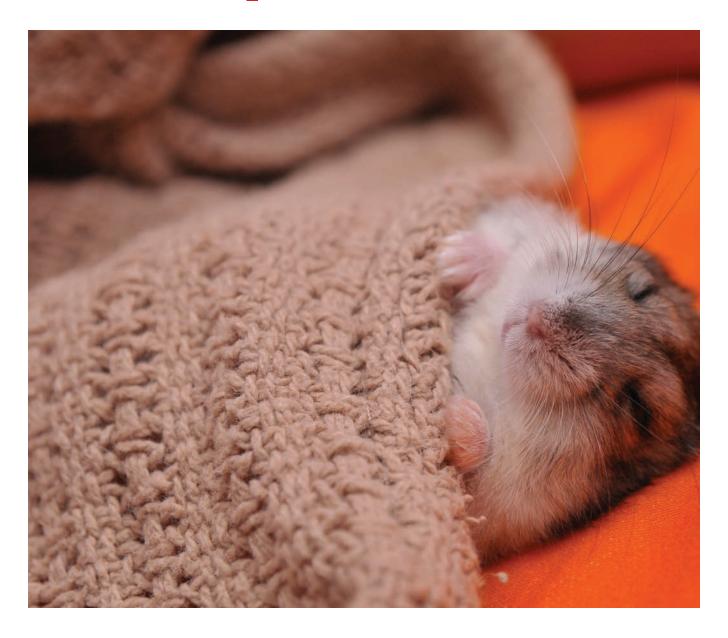
Walk-ins are welcome upon availability. The new facility is located at 7050 W. Palmetto Park Rd, Suite 21, in Boca Raton, Fla.

Woof Gang Bakery is a leader in the pet industry and has grown to 41 franchise stores with the opening of this new location.





# Trends & Products | SMALL ANIMAL



# **Making Small Pets Feel at Home**

Customers want products that are eco-friendly, stylish and safe. BY KAREN M. ALLEY

ncreasingly, people look at their pets as part of the family. And this feeling of connectedness has extended beyond cats and dogs to include small pets as well – gerbils, hamsters, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets and the like.

And partly because of that, consumers are looking for much more when it comes to finding a home for their pet. Rather than just a functional cage that will contain their pet and keep them safe, people are looking for

a home for their pet that will be spacious, comfortable, fun, safe, and often something that will look as nice among their own furniture.

With that in mind, manufacturers have some new offerings in both cages and bedding to help meet consumers' increasingly sophisticated tastes and high standards for their pets. It also provides a great opportunity for sales, as about 18 percent of small pet owners replace the cage once a year, according

to the 2013-2014 Pet Owners Survey by American Pet Products Association.

Whether they're upgrading from a starter cage to a more extensive habitat, or they're just in the market for something that looks clean and fresh, cages are not a stagnant category.

# **Looking Good**

To help meet the growing needs of consumers, Marchioro is expanding its line of cages this year to include some



# Save your customers a trip to the grocery store.



# And put more cash in YOUR register.

Did you know up to 39% of consumers buy their small animal food at grocery or mass market stores? That's why CareFRESH® Complete Menu™ is exclusive to Pet Specialty—so your customers can buy their pet food and bedding in one convenient location—from YOU.



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new sizes, including a cage that is 16-by-16 and either 12 or 40 inches high, depending on the height the consumer wants. They will also have a cage that is 20-by-20-by-57.

"This one is unique to the industry, with its small footprint and expansive height," Brad Forgette, executive vice president of Marchioro, said.

The additional height provides plenty of room for ramps, tubes and other accessories, to keep them interested and active.

"It gives owners more enjoyment to see their pets having fun," Forgette said, adding these cages will be in the same simple yet elegant design of other Marchioro cages. "We try to appeal

# Biodegradability and sustainability are two big selling points in bedding since the product is used in such large amounts.

to a wider audience, creating cages that will attract adults of all ages in addition to children. We aim to provide a habitat a 20-something person wouldn't be ashamed to have sitting on their living room table."

In addition to ramps and exercise wheels, the Marchioro cages are equipped with ventilated tubes, so waste can drip out and gases can escape.

"Just like humans, our pets are healthier when they're active," Forgette said. "We have ventilation in our tubes to ensure that the animals aren't breathing in harmful gases when they're exercising and having fun."

Another elegant yet functional habitat comes from BioBubble Pets. These totally clear, conical-shaped homes can be expanded upward and customized to fit each person's preferences. Created by aquarium designer Al Venezia, the BioBubble products have a look that leans toward the aquatic world, but with a versatility that suits small pets just as well.

Pet owners can choose to purchase a standard BioBubble Premium, which is a base and a top, or they can add to it with risers that come in mesh, clear and cage varieties. In between the risers you can add a screen to separate the levels, or a bungalow deck, which provides a place for small pets to sleep and eat.

BioBubble just recently introduced a new Terrarium riser that is twice as wide as its original risers and 15 inches tall. It will stack with the premium base as well as the Terra base and features interchangeable viewing panels in either clear or mesh. This new riser allows for larger animals, including guinea pigs and small rabbits.

A unique feature of the BioBubble habitats is the CarbonFresh pad that can be placed in the bottom of the bedding tray.

"One of our priorities is to help pet owners keep their cages clean and fresh," Kari Simigran, communications manager of BioBubble Pets, said. "We have created a pad infused with a special activated carbon that helps neutralize odors and keeps everything smelling good longer."

#### **Comfortable Bedding**

It's not just the outside of the cage that matters to consumers. Finding bedding that keeps pets comfortable is also a priority, and next to food, bedding is one of the most purchased items of small pet owners.

"There are two things people are looking for when making purchases of bedding," Lisa Kniceley, trade sales specialist for Vitakraft, said. "They want items made or grown in the United States, and they want something that is environmentally friendly."

Biodegradability and sustainability are two big selling points in bedding since the product is used in such large amounts. Both Vitakraft and Oxbow have products that appeal to a consumers' eco-conscious while providing a healthy environment for the pet.

Vitakraft has its Sunseed Fresh World Bedding made in the United States from recycled paper. Baking soda helps increase absorbency and odor control. When paired with the new Super-Absorbent Cage liners introduced in 2013, clean-up is easy. The cage liners wick away moisture to help

keep bedding dry, and once the bedding is soiled, the liner can be folded up and the entire mess thrown away.

Oxbow Animal Health has also introduced bedding for the environmentally conscious consumer. Eco-Straw is an all-natural wheat straw bedding that can hold up to 300 percent of its weight in moisture, as well as being flushable, compostable and naturally mold resistant.

"Our decision to add a bedding to our product line was driven by our commitment to helping meet the basic needs of pets in the healthiest ways possible," Melissa Ross, marketing operations manager of Oxbow Animal Health, said.

Another company making great strides in this area is Absorption Corp. Their colorful CareFRESH bedding bits are blended with low-dust pellets and create for a super adsorbent litter, while their line of bedding products contain odor control to help keep a pet's habitat smelling fresh.

Their premium soft bedding is also made from wood pulp, a natural and sustainable resource, and is 100 percent biodegradable and compostable.

#### Set It Up

The best way to sell more cages is to have them out. Use them for the small pets in the store, or set up a display with a few different options. Of course, there isn't the space to have them all out and assembled for customers to take home, so Marchioro has answered retailers request for a smaller footprint on the shelf with its new line of cages.

"We have new packaging that takes up less space, making it more profitable for retailers because they will be able to have more inventory there to sell," Forgette said.

The boxes will have a lifestyle picture of each cage so customers will be able to visualize the product without it being set up.

Most importantly, have a variety of products available. Not only are pet owners looking to keep their small animals active and healthy, they also want cages that fit in with their own style, and of course, every person's style is different.

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# Trends & Products NATURAL

# **Understanding Natural Medicine for Pets**

Educated retailers can help customers make better choices. By STACY MANTLE

■ he pet care industry has seen tremendous growth in the markets of natural and alternative medicine.

Just as alternative veterinary care increases, retailers can expect a surge in over-the-counter solutions. While most over the counter solutions are very effective in preventing and solving minor problems, it will still be important for retailers to encourage customers to consult with a professional. In order to do this, retailers should have a basic understanding of the various modalities.

#### **East Meets West**

Western medicine and Eastern medicine have always been at odds. While Western medicine tends to be largely "reactive," Eastern medicine is focused on being "proactive" in order to stop issues early. For this reason, it may be tempting to view traditional and holistic treatments as rivals, but they are actually quite complementary. A holistic approach allows practitioners to focus on supporting overall health rather than treating a disease.

"I'm seeing more of an acceptance of allowing traditional doctors like myself to recommend a more holistic approach to medicine," Dr. Jeff Werber, owner of Century Veterinary Group, said. "New certification programs in chiropractic medicine and laser modalities are becoming very popular."

Dr. Lisa S. Newman, N.D., Ph.D. founded Azmira Holistic Animal Care in 1982, and has become well known for resolving health problems in pets that modern medicine could not cure. Utilizing proprietary blends of herbal

extracts, she has created a line of products directed towards resolving specific problems in pets and offers a line of supplements.

"Even with the best quality, balanced diet, nutritional supplementation is necessary to provide many nutrients now missing from our food chain," she said.

Other natural supplements are joining the marketplace, including the new award-winning, all-natural line of canine liquid vitamins LICK's liquid vitamin drink supplement, which boasts a 98 percent absorbency rate. The supplements are available in three forms, Zen for calming pets, Joint & Heart for maintenance and Athlete for active dogs.

Zuke's line of Hip Action treats offers over 300 mg of Glucosamine and 50 mg of Chondroitin in easy-to-feed treats that pets love. Zuke's treats also include other herbs, such as rosemary, to support whole food antioxidants.

Healthy Dogma is another example of a company focused on natural health. Peaceful Pooch, a nutritional additive, uses kelp, melatonin, flaxmeal and passion flower to help a dog to relax without the problems of traditional medications.

#### **Holistic Medicine**

Holistic medicine is, in effect, taking a complete view of the patient before treating. This view may include things like the environment, behavioral patterns, genetics, levels of stress, and even the relationship between pet and owner, which is then used to develop a protocol with which to treat a pet.

When a holistic veterinarian sees a pet, they not only examines the physical aspect, but they looks at the pet's complete history, including nutrition, emotional stressors, environment and behavioral history.

Holistic practitioners are primarily interested in the "why" is symptoms are presenting in order to cure the problem.

# **SPOTLIGHT**

# **Beat Pet Stress Naturally** with RESCUE Remedy® Pet

eterinarian recommended RESCUE Remedy Pet is a natural way to treat pet anxiety caused by travel, separation, new surroundings, loud noises like thunderstorms and fireworks, and other behavioral issues associated with stress.

RESCUE Remedy Pet is appropriate for all kinds of pets, from dogs and cats to horses and iguanas. Simply add 4 drops to your animals' food, water bowl, treat or even apply a few drops to the animal's fur, paws or pads of their feet. RESCUE Remedy Pet helps you treat the physical signs of stress in your animal that can trigger unwanted behaviors like barking, scratching or biting, naturally.

RESCUE Remedy Pet is available in 10ml and 20ml dropper bottles and can be found in pet stores nationwide.



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- Website rescueremedy.com/pets
- Facebook facebook.com/ rescueremedypet
- Twitter @BACHRESCUE





Once they have a good idea of the problem, they will utilize the least invasive, most efficacious path to resolving the problem. These solutions may include a combination of therapies.

For example, a patient may require surgery and drug therapy from conventional medicine, but could also include a change in diet, chiropractic or laser treatment, acupuncture, and/or homeopathy. By focusing on the entire picture, and utilizing a wide range of therapies that are both supportive and reactive, veterinarians can treat both acute and chronic problems far more effectively.

## **Homeopathy**

According to the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, "holistic (or Integrative) veterinary medicine is the examination and diagnosis of an animal, considering all aspects of the animal's life and employing all of the practitioner's senses, as well as the combination of conventional and alternative (or complementary) modalities of treatment."

The premise behind homeopathy is that "like treats like." Developed in Germany nearly two centuries ago, homeopathic practitioners analyze their animal patients as individuals, and then utilize custom-developed treatments to bring the body into balance. Herbal and plant-based remedies are administered in tiny doses over a course of time.

For example, a substance that causes harm in a large dose may actually be helpful in a small dose. Homeopathic medicines are most often referred to as remedies and these remedies are created by specialists who use a careful process of dilution and succession.

Natural remedies, such as Bach Rescue Remedy, utilize a proprietary blend of herbs to help offset anxiety in pets. The original Bach Flower Remedies has been used on humans and animals for more than 80 years.

#### Patience is a virtue

"Natural may take a little longer, but it completely eliminates the source of the problem," Dr. Adelia Ritchie, founder of DERMagic, said. "Corticosteroids

reduce itching by reducing inflammation, but can do nothing about the underlying cause of the itch and can negatively affect nearly every organ in the body. DERMagic is safe, free from corticosteroids and is immediately effective at relieving itch, fighting fungal and bacterial infestations and promoting healing of affected areas."

Thanks to organizations like the American Holistic Veterinary Medicine Association, traditional treatments are now becoming mainstream. As pet owners realize the dividends of natural medicine, reatilers can anticipate many more veterinarians to embrace traditional medicine and greater innovation in pet foods, natural remedies and more innovation throughout the industry.

Quiet Tea from The Honest Kitchen is another example of innovation in action.

# Ask the **Expert**



Joel Solly President, CEO

#### Kanberra Group

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# Q: What is Kanberra Gel and how does it work?

A: For over 400 years, tea tree oil has proven to have powerful, yet natural, antiseptic and anti-fungal properties. Kanberra Gel is an all-natural, proprietary blend of these tea tree oils and other essential oils.

When used, Kanberra Gel allows the natural antiseptic properties of the oils to become airborne through an evaporative release. At the micro-biotic level, the air itself absorbs the pharmaceutical grade oils. As the air circulates and lands on the source (the mold, mildew, etc.), Kanberra Gel begins neutralizing and eliminating problems, and associated odors, on contact. It does so naturally, with no chemicals.

In fact, it's so effective and natural, it's safe for topical use on humans and dogs. Some of the benefits include air purification, flea and tick repellent, odor control and as a soothing wound healer. Many pet products, such as shampoos, use tea tree oil in their formulas for this purpose.

The Kanberra product line has recently grown with the addition of new Kanberra All Natural Wipes®. The unique wipes attack and degrade mold, fungus and bacteria at the source, and help neutralize odors. All natural with no chemicals, fragrances or bleach, the wipes are safe around kids and pets.

Joel Solly is the president of Kanberra Group, a division of Indoor Air Professionals (IAP). Founded in 1993, IAP is an indoor air quality firm specializing in products and services for creating healthier indoor environments for homes, businesses naval & commercial ships, etc. Kanberra Group utilizes its indoor air quality (IAQ) expertise and works with leading researchers in the IAQ field to continually refine and develop Kanberra product offerings.

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

# Community News and Events in the Pet Industry



# A Look Back At: The Ritzow Bros. – All Glass Aquarium

Their vision helped shape the aquarium industry.

Editor's Note: The pet industry is rich in history, and as the old guard passes the torch to the new leaders, it is important to remember the foundation, people and companies that helped make it is what it is today. We are excited to introduce you to this new feature where Phillip Cooper will be taking a trip down memory lane to take a look at some of these trend setters with the hope of educating the new generation.

#### BY PHILLIP M. COOPER

here was a time when you walked into any pet store you would see a stack of 25, or more, 10 gallon aquariums or aquarium kits for sale. This stack of low priced starter kits helped create new

aquarium hobbyists. Many of these hobbyists came back to buy larger sizes or multiple aquariums. This simple strategy drove growth in the aquarium hobby more than almost any other.

There was also a time when every

aquarium had a stainless steel frame, because it wouldn't rust, a slate bottom and was held together by a black non-toxic tar within the frame. Then, came the invention of silicone sealant by GE.

The Ritzow bros. in the Milwaukee area, avid aquarium hobbyists, saw the potential of gluing five pieces of glass together with silicone sealant and started making all glass aquariums using extruded plastic as frames to cover up the exposed glass edges. After a couple of years they also saw the need to improve and increase the production of glass aquariums and were one of the first to use one piece molded plastic frames. This simple, but expensive innovation, brought production from a few hundred units a day to well over a thousand. This was revolutionary because it brought down the cost significantly.

When I first started selling glass 10 gallon tanks in 1973 the distributor cost was \$7.95 each. With the one piece frame that cost went down to \$4.95. In the 1980s retailers were selling starter 10 gallon tanks for \$4.99 as loss leaders and we couldn't make enough of them.

I always felt that Jerry and Roger Ritzow deserved an industry award and recognition for almost single handedly growing the tropical fish hobby for over 30 years by being the leading supplier of low cost starter kits to encourage new hobbyists. Without these low cost glass boxes, we wouldn't have sold air pumps, power filters, heaters, plants, gravel, fish, reptiles or small animals.

The Ritzow Bros. were brilliant engineers and marketers because they had a vision and developed many innovations that turned the fish aquarium into a piece of furniture that you would be proud to have in your living room instead of the garage. Their innovations included one piece plastic frames in sizes up to 220 gallon, state of the art full hoods with incandescent and fluorescent lighting, knock down wood aquarium stands, solid wood cabinets and canopies, bow front aquariums and stands in many sizes and mini-bow desktop aquariums. They started out with black frames only, then walnut wood grain finishes and ultimately introduced the revolution into oak trimmed aquariums.

With their expertise they turned a small aquarium company into the largest aquarium manufacturer in the



world. They invested in technology and facilities that improved manufacturing at all levels, and year after year they continued to introduce new products that helped drive growth in the entire aquatics industry.

What impressed me most about the Ritzow Bros is the way they did business and the relationships they had with family, friends, customers and employees. In the early years, they had cash flow problems, as did all of their competitors, and had to tighten up liberal receivable and shipping policies. All of their customers rallied behind them. The Ritzow's supported all community groups and local projects as well as the WPA, APA, PIJAC, Pet Industry Trust and many aquarium groups and societies. They are and were true gentleman and made doing business with them a pleasure.

The growth of the aquarium industry may have grown without their vision, but I doubt it would have grown as large or as fast, or would have been as much fun. Ask anyone who knows Jerry or Roger, or worked with them professionally and I'm sure you will hear how loyal, supportive and generous they

were their entire career. Any dealer who stopped by to visit their booth at any trade show will remember the warm welcome they received as well as the giant cashews in the snack bowl!

In 2000 The "All Glass Aquarium" (the best possible description of the item they sold) Company was acquired by Central Garden and Pet. The brand disappeared because it was re-named. The aquarium segment of the pet industry saw a downturn. Kids today spend more time on their smart phones rather than keeping an aquarium. The stack of 25 aquarium kits has disappeared. For those of us who love tropical fish we still feel kids and parents alike would enjoy our hobby if we encouraged them with a new All Glass Aquarium.

The Ritzow Bros. are retired and doing well and still love the business. They've seen many changes and like me, they remember the glory days of fish keeping. We had many other friends who played important roles in the pet industry, but few had the impact or left the footprint of the Ritzow bros. Thank you Jerry and Roger for helping the tropical fish industry in becoming an important part of the pet industry.

# Community THE SCENE

**Aquatic Experience Chicago** It was several years in the making, but when it finally happened, the first Aquatic Experience Chicago, produced by the World Pet Association, was by all means a success. The three-day hybrid show brought together retailers, hobbyists and consumers at the Schaumburg Convention Center just outside of Chicago. The group is already working on this year's show scheduled to take place Nov. 7-9, at the same location.









- 1 Omar Mojena, Cory Lo and Chris Clevers, Hikari
- 2 Patrick Donston, of Absolutely Fish, presents the Coral Restoration Foundation with a check for \$15,000 raised through an in-store program.
- 3 Aaron Kline, Acurel.
- 4 Mark Whitney, Gary Nocera and Frank Cocozzelli, Deep Blue.









- **5** The many speakers who took the time to teach classes at the Aquatic Experience Chicago.
- **6** Some of the people responsible for putting together the Aquatic Experience Chicago.
- 7 Brian Shavlik and RD Webster, Hydor US.
- **8** Dave Parks and Scott Moore, Segrest Farms.

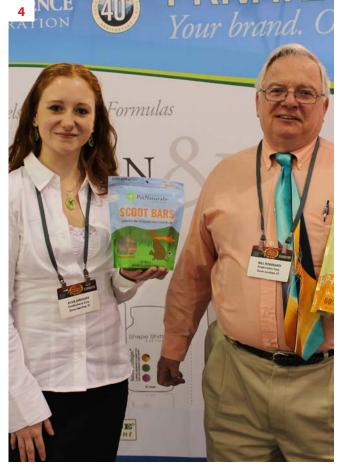
# THE SCENE

**Private Label Show** The Private Label Show, with an expanded pet pavilion, took place at the Rosemont Convention Center, just outside of Chicago in November. The show will take place this year at the same location Nov. 16-18.









- 1 Lauren Fuchs, George Tuttle, Steven Shweky and Brooke Bonell, Fetch ... for Pets!
- 2 Bryan Kahn, Devraj Raval, Melissa Overby and Richard Coy, Vets Plus, Inc.
- 3 Amy Kohl and Joe Wayman, True-Dose.
- 4 Susie DiDonato and Bill McBrearty, Pet Naturals of Vermont.



# **Looking Ahead to Global Pet Expo 2014**

Trade show continues to expand, set records.

#### BY ANDREW DARMOHRAJ

s we prepare to celebrate the 10th Annual Global Pet Expo in Orlando, March 12-14, 2014, it has been interesting to reflect on the show's growth and its ever-growing importance as the first industry trade show of the year.

In 2013, the show broke all previous attendance records with 964 exhibitors, up from 630 in 2005, and 5,325 qualified buyers compared to 4,365 at the first Global Pet Expo. The growing international influence of this event is impressive with more than 18 percent of exhibitors being from outside the U.S. and buyers representing 72 countries.

Global Pet Expo is the place to see more new product launches than at any other show, and as we continue to attract more exhibitors and buyers, we also continue to expand our offerings.

With an expanded show floor in 2014, attendees will have the opportunity to see more of the latest innovations that in many cases will be making their debut at this show. We are expecting an increased number of exhibitors and that means more new products.

As a result, the popular New Products Showcase will be larger than ever, displaying more than 800 ground-breaking pet products. This is where we offer an exclusive glimpse of the fresh products entering the market. Buyers are invited to judge the year's best new pet products, and the Best in Show will be presented at the 4th Annual New Products Showcase Awards Presentation on March 13.

We have also dedicated more space to our other special sections as they have consistently sold out for the past several years. These sections are the perfect way for you to connect with the specialty products that customers crave. The "Natural Pet" along with "The Boutique" and "Everything Aquatic" sections will feature more booths than in year's past, and the "What's New!"

section will now be home to more than 150 exhibitors introducing themselves and their products to the pet industry.

And, there's even more exciting news for the 2014 show. We are proud to announce Kathy Ireland of kathy ireland Worldwide, will be speaking at the 3rd annual APPA Professional Women's Network Breakfast on Friday morning at the show. Ireland will be sharing her experiences that have made her an influential entrepreneur, and CEO of a hugely successful brand.

For more great business-building tips, check out the 2014 Global Pet Expo Speaker Series. This year's lineup will feature experts who know the challenges you face, and can help you reap the rewards of implementing new ideas and tactics. And new this year, will be 15-minute mini sessions modeled after the famous "TED Talks." They will be offered four times daily and will give you actionable advice that can improve your business.

And, while you are marking your calendars for all of the exciting events taking place at Global Pet Expo 2014, be sure to include the premier networking event of the year set for Wednesday evening. Our popular Networking Reception is the place to socialize with people you might never have another opportunity to meet. With the pet industry's extraordinary growth, you're sure to come across some new faces and familiar ones as well.

Above all, register to attend Global Pet Expo today. It truly is too big to miss.

## Information about Global Pet Expo:

Presented by the American Pet Products Association (APPA) and the Pet Industry Distributors Association (PIDA), Global Pet Expo is open to exhibiting manufacturers, qualified buyers and media from around the world, and features the latest and greatest in pet product innovations-including more U.S. products under one roof than at any other show. For more information on the Global Pet Expo visit www.globalpetexpo.org, buyers@globalpetexpo.org or call 203-532-0000.

Andrew Darmohraj, is the executive vice president & COO of APPA.



# February 2014

Feb. 1-2 The Lehigh Valley Pet Expo Allentown, PA Contact Dennis Garetano, 800-677-4677, petexpo@optonline.net, www.familypetshows.com

Feb. 28 - Mar. 2 Long Island Pet Expo Brentwood, NY Contact Dennis Garetano, 800-677-4677, petexpo@optonline.net, www.familypetshows.com

Feb. 7 SuperPetExpo, Edison, NJ. Contact: www.superpetexpo.com

Feb. 2 Southern California Pet Expo, Long Beach, CA. Contact: 855-738-3976, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com

Feb. 8-10 NAPPS Conference and Small Business Forum, San Antonio. Contact: Caitlin Dougherty, National Association of Professional Pet Sitters, 856-380-6820, cdougherty@ahint.com, www.petsitters.org.

Feb. 9 Vegas Pet Expo, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: 855-738-3976, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com.

Feb. 19 NexPet National Convention, Orlando, FL. Contact: Barry Berman, 212-348-8171, barry@nexpet.com, www.nexpet.com.

Feb. 22-24 Groom & Kennel Expo, Pasadena, CA. Contact: Barkleigh Productions, 717-691-3388, info@barkleigh. com, www.groomexpo.com.

Feb. 28-Mar. 3 Atlanta Pet Fair, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Atlanta Pet Fair, 770-908-9857, info@atlantapetfair.com, www.atlantapetfair.com.

# March 2014

Mar. 2-3 Long Island Pet Expo, Long Island Pet Expo, Brentwood. Contact Dennis Garetano, 800-677-4677, petexpo@optonline.net, www.horseandpetexpo.com.

Mar. 12-14 Global Pet Expo, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL. Contact: www.globalpetexpo.org.

Mar. 15-17 The Northwest Grooming **Show,** Tacoma WA. Contact: 717-691-3388, info@barkleigh.com, www.barkleigh.com.

Mar. 16 South Florida Pet Expo, West Palm Beach, FL. Contact: Amazing Pet Expos, 800-977-3609, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com.

Mar. 22-24 Reading Pet Expo, Reading. Contact: Dennis Garetano, 800-677-4677, petexpo@optonline.net, www.horseandpetexpo.com.

Mar. 23 Tampa Pet Expo, Tampa, FL. Contact: Amazing Pet Expos, 800-977-3609, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com

# **April 2014**

Apr. 9-11 H.H. Backer Spring Show, Atlantic City, NJ. Contact: 312-578-1818, hhbacker@hhbacker.com, www.totalpetexpo.com/registerspring.

Apr. 13 Houston Pet Expo, Houston, TX. Contact Amazing Pet Expos, 800-977-3609, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com.

Apr. 20-26 International Conference on Avian, Hepetological and Exotic Mammal Medicine, Wiesbaden. Contact: European Committee of the Association of Avian Veterinarians, www.icare2013.eu.

Apr. 20 Phoenix Pet Expo, Glendale. Contact Amazing Pet Expos, Contact: 800-977-3609, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com

Apr. 23-24 Pet Industry's Top to Top Conference, Napa. Contact: Cathy Calliotte, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, 202-452-1525, cathy@pijac.org, www.pijac.org.

# May 2014

May 4 Greater New York Pet Expo, Uniondale Contact Amazing Pet Expos, 800-977-3609, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com.

May 9-12 Zoomark International, Bologna Contact +39-031-3109353, exhibitor@ zoomark.it, www.zoomark.it.

May 14-16 NASC Conference, St Pete Beach Contact National Animal Supplement Council, conference2013@nasc.cc, www.nasc.cc.

May 18 Charlotte Pet Expo Charlotte Pet Expo, Charlotte N.C. Contact Amazing Pet Expos, 800-977-3609, ext. 107, www.amazingpetexpos.com.

May 30-June 2 Aquarama, Singapore ntact Iman Tam, UBM Plc, +65 6592-0889, iman.tam@ubm.com, www.aquarama.com.sq.

# June 2014

June 21-23 Pet Quest 2013, Wilmington, Ohio. Contact 717-691-3388, info@ barkleigh.com, www.barkleigh.com.

June 26-28 Mexico Pet Expo, Guadalajara Contact Brianna Morris, 770-618-5838, brianna.morris@mexicopetexpo. com, www.mexicopetexpo.com.

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# **Premium Dog Treats**

Quality is their number one priority at Darford.



e recently sat down with David Caras, senior vice president of sales at Darford, to talk about the company's philosophy and outlook.

## Q: Tell us a little about Darford.

Caras: Since 1987, dog lovers have trusted Darford to provide tail-wagging goodness in treats for dogs of all shapes and size with discriminating tastes. Darford treats are baked in our own ovens using natural ingredients carefully selected from suppliers in the United States and Canada; all of our ingredients are sourced in North America.

We have passionate, dedicated Darford team members in Vernon, British Columbia, home of our corporate offices and one of our baking and packaging facilities, and in Milan, Mo., our U.S. facility, which opened in 2013. Both of our manufacturing facilities are certified organic, with quality being our number one priority. Baking premium, all natural, highly palatable dog treats is what we are all about.

We are constantly striving to improve our products and messaging, as well as create better ways for our distributor and retailer partners to merchandise Darford treats.

## Q: What is a typical day like for you?

Caras: My main responsibility is managing sales in the United States and Canada, working closely with all of our key customers, our outside sales teams and customer support team. I am also involved in new product and packaging development, as well as marketing programs. I am not sure I truly have a typical day, but I can say that my days are always full and very exciting.

# Q: The company's core principles are passion, quality & trust. How does that factor into the products your company makes?

Caras: The pet industry is a passion-driven industry, and Darford has passionately been making pet treats for 27 years. However, passion is not

enough, quality is paramount and is definitely number one on our priority list. All ingredients are tested by our inhouse QC team as soon as they arrive at our facility. The treats are then tested after being manufactured and then tested again by an independent QC company before being released to our customers.

This is a long process and adds to our lead times; however quality is not something we will compromise. We believe this is why our customers and pet parents trust Darford, and have stood behind our brand since 1987.

# Q: We know you likely can't tell us specifics, but what are some of the new products you are working on?

Caras: We know 2014 will be an exciting year for Darford as we'll be introducing several new products, new formulas, packaging improvements and display options at Global Pet Expo. Our top selling product families will include new shapes, new flavors and new sizes.

There will be something new added to all of our treat families; Mega Bones, Grain Free and Naturals; in packaged treats and bulk. I guess I can mention one of our new treats as they were launched in January: "Breakfast Bagels" in two sizes, small and medium, and in two flavors, Bacon & Cheese and Bacon N' Eggs. There could very well be one or two more new product introductions later this year, possibly in late summer or early fall.

# Q: What do you enjoy most about working at Darford?

Caras: What I like best about working at Darford is our company's dedication to quality, and that we control our own destiny; we make our own products. If we want to change a shape or adjust a formula because we feel it will improve the quality or palatability, we can do that easily. We take a great pride in what we make, and have implemented the highest quality control standards. We make premium dog treats, making dogs happy all over the world—what could be better than that?



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