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Groomer

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NATALIE HOLLAND

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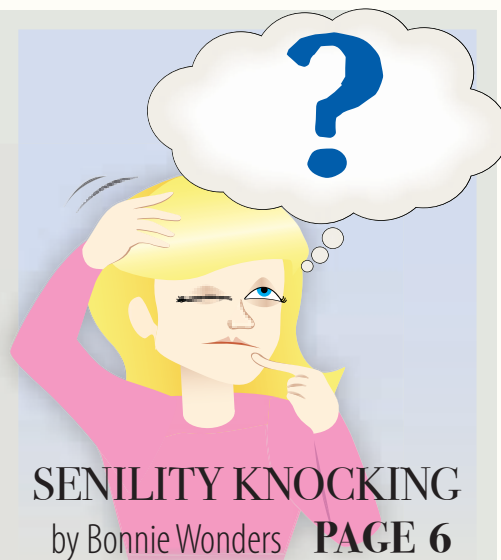




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by Kathy Hosler

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by Bonnie Wonders **PAGE 6**

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AMERICAN STYLE
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by Kathy Rose

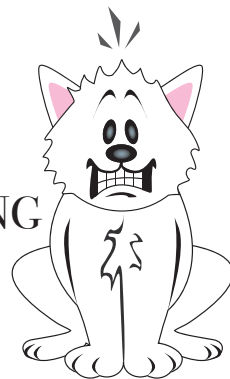
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YOU ARE KING KONG

by Gary Wilkes

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ON THE COVER



Photo courtesy of Natalie Holland



SENILITY KNOCKING!

By Bonnie Wonders

My memory isn't what it used to be by far, and it never was great to begin with. Lately, however, it has really had me worried. The last straw was a couple months ago when I was supposed to do a huge craft show with dog supplies.

The show is located in West Virginia, and we had done it in the fall with great success. When I was invited to come back to the same location for a Spring show, I immediately sent in the booth fee. It is held at a high school, and they do these events on a Saturday only. When I sent in the check, I noticed a misprint on the application for the date, though. It said March 23, which was a Friday. I do remember making the

correction in my appointment book to the 24th of March, which would have been Saturday. No big deal. It was just the application.

Setup was that Saturday morning from 7-9 a.m. The show starts at 9 a.m. We have an enormous amount of products to set up, and it takes an hour and a half (at least) to get there from our house. On Friday, the day before, my husband loaded the trailer from top to bottom with our products. It was no small feat, considering he had to work a 12-hour shift at his regular job that same night and wouldn't be home until 2 a.m. We would have to get up at 4:30 in the morning in order to be able to leave at 5:30 to arrive by 7:00 for set up.

It goes without saying, of course, that I screwed up on setting the clock, and we didn't wake up until 5:30 a.m. We had to rush like maniacs to get going, and I felt horrible. I was in charge of one thing - resetting the alarm, and I hit it for the wrong day of the week. I spent the entire trip down there apologizing for making us rush.

I kept thinking that we were going to lose the trailer around one of the curves going down the mountain to get there. I was scared to death and was sitting bolt upright, needing to pee, but I knew it was all my fault so I kept my mouth shut. Asking to stop for a bathroom call didn't seem like a good idea at the time.

Continued on page 8

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Poor Dave. He just kept saying, "It's okay. We'll get there when we get there. Don't worry about it." He was such a sport. He was probably just afraid that if I'd get any more upset than I was, he'd have a wet seat to contend with in his new truck.

At exactly 7:43 a.m., we turned onto the road that leads back to the school. We were 43 minutes late and needed every minute we had to get everything unloaded. As we rounded the turn in front of the school, I immediately noticed a bad thing. There wasn't a single vehicle in the parking lot. No cars, trucks, or trailers to be found.

Dave slowed the truck to a crawl as we approached the doors to the school. He then stopped the truck. We were both speechless for a second or two. We looked at each other simultaneously. "There's nobody here," he stated.

Normally, I would have come up with some sarcastic remark at his astute observation. "I don't understand" was all I could come up with as my big mouth hung wide open.

Normally, I would have come up with some sarcastic remark at his astute observation. "I don't understand" was all I could come up with as my big mouth hung wide open.

"Are you sure they are having it at this same school?" he asked, staring at me.

"Of course it's at this school! It's the only one we've been to down here!" I snapped.

I suddenly had a really pukey feeling in my stomach. I just knew that I had written down the wrong date. The show had either already been held the week before, or we were a week early. I just knew it. How could I have messed every-

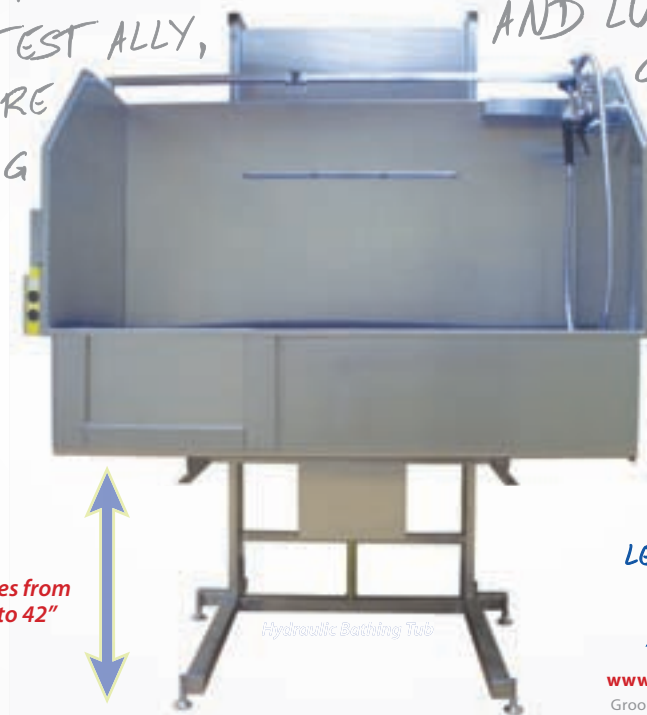
thing up so badly? The alarm, having to rush, Dave knocking himself out loading up all this stuff before working night shift, only getting three hours of sleep, wasting all the gas to get here and now back... everything. All my fault.

Suddenly a car pulled up next to us. I threw open my door and probably scared the crap out of the man as I nearly threw myself on his car door. He wound his window down, looking wide eyed at me. In hindsight, I probably did come across as a little crazed as I grabbed the top of his car door's glass.

"Isn't there a craft show here

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today?" I asked frantically.

"Huh?" he replied, looking confused.

"A craft show... The Spring Bling, it's called," I added.

"I don't know anything about a craft show. I'm just the baseball coach. I'm here to check the condition of the field after all the rain last night," he said. "I think we're going to have to call off the game," he

continued.

"Ok, thanks," I heard my husband say as he came up behind me. He took my hand to pull me back toward the truck. "Get in. Let's go home," he said calmly. I knew I had him scared, too. I must have had that kind of look I get when I'm trying to groom one of those crazy Spitz dogs.

I bawled almost the whole way

home. "I don't understand" is pretty much all I kept saying.

"It's ok," was my patient driver's repetitive response.

"We're either a week early or a week late. I just know it. After all, it's called the 'SPRING BLING.' It's in the SPRING," I said vehemently.

It was just killing me that I couldn't even call anyone to see what had happened. The contact numbers for the women in charge were at my shop. Of course I made my husband go the long way around so that we could stop there to get the phone numbers.

When we arrived, I burst into the office and grabbed the half of the application that I didn't need to send in when I sent my deposit money. I immediately called both numbers listed on the paper. No answer at either one. This wasn't improving my mood. I must have looked like I had Mad Cow Disease.

Dave kept rubbing my arm. "Let's go home," he was saying as he led me to the door. He put me in the truck, and I started the bawling thing all over again. I think we both thought I was really losing it by this time.

"Do you need any pills or anything?" Dave asked.

"Huh?" I looked at him while trying my best to focus. It's really hard when your mascara is burnt and dissolved into your eyeballs.

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"I mean that Prozac stuff... or anything else like that to get you to not be so..." he trailed off.

"So WHAT?!" I asked, feeling my ears go upward.

"Wanna go to Dairy Queen?" he tried as a last resort. I didn't even respond.

All day I tried those numbers. It wasn't until 5:30 that evening that I finally reached someone. When I told her that we had loaded everything up and drove down there to find no craft show, the lady was astounded.

"I am SO sorry," she said.

"I sent my money in. What happened to the show? I didn't hear from anyone. Was it canceled? Did I miss it? WHAT?" I asked, begging.

"I am so very sorry," she said again when I finally let her get a word in edgewise. "The show isn't until 2013. You are a year early," she said. In a flash, it dawned on

**"Would you like to get on the scale for me?"
the nurse asked.**

"No," I replied as I looked up at her.

me why they had the date as March 23. That WOULD be next year on a Saturday.

That did it. I just knew I had a major problem. It bothered me so much that it prompted me to make an appointment with my doctor.

I arrived on the day I was supposed to and at the correct time. I had it written in my appointment book and plastered across the calendar at home, and I told my husband to remind me of it the night before. It figures – he forgot to remind me, the calendar was still turned to the previous month, and my appointment book was forgotten at the shop. How I remembered to

show up is beyond me, but I did.

I was sitting in the waiting room when the inner door opened and a nurse called my name. I went in and obediently sat in the chair next to the dreaded scale. "Would you like to get on the scale for me?" the nurse asked.

"No," I replied as I looked up at her.

"I wasn't asking. I was telling," she said, raising her eyebrows.

"I could save you the trouble. Just let me shoot you a number for the weight," I offered.

"The scale..." she said, looking unimpressed. I got up, moved toward the scale, and stopped to

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kick off my shoes. "Do you really think that's going to make a difference?" she asked, cocking her head to the right as she rolled her eyes. I thought she might be starting to lose patience with me, so I decided to forego the shoe thing.

I got on the scale and pouted as the demonic woman kept sliding the weights to the right on the machine. "That's good," she said when she satisfied herself with it finally balancing. Personally, I didn't think it was at all "good." Forty pounds less would have been much closer to "good," I thought.

As I took my seat once again next to the scale, the nurse slapped the blood pressure cuff onto my arm. As she was pumping it up, she looked at my chart. "So what brings you in today?" she asked.

"Actually, I'm getting a bit worried about my memory. It's really bugging me," I told her.

"Oh... They'll run you through some tests for that," she said as she bobbed her head up and down like one of those dunking bird things from the '60s. I smiled.

Satisfied with my blood pressure, she removed the cuff and sent me into an exam room. I thumbed through an old copy of *Woman's Day*, and after 10 minutes or so, I walked the NP.

"So I hear you're worried about some memory loss," she said.

"Well, I'm probably being paranoid, but I think I really do forget way too much," I told her. "I keep forgetting names and things that I have just read. I'm really scaring myself over it," I admitted.

"Do you remember to pay your bills?" the NP asked.

"Nothing's been shut off, and I haven't been turned into any collection agencies, so I'd say 'yes' to that," I told her.

"Did you pay your co-pay out front?" she asked.

"Ahh, yes," I replied, surprised that she would ask that.

"Good. That's the most important thing," she said. "You're fine," she laughed.

"I see," I said, shaking my head.

"Seriously, I'll send someone in to give you a little test," she informed me. With that, she got up and left the room.

Now I really started to get nervous. How hard was this "test" going to be, I wondered. I knew they would give me a list of things to remember and already I was sure that I'd forget them.

Gosh, if they asked me some history or political question, I knew for sure that I'd be screwed. I know the President and VP, but beyond that I'm hopeless. I wasn't exactly a stellar student in that stuff, and

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it has nothing to do with memory... more just plain stupidity.

What if they asked math? I can do the regular stuff okay, but what if it was multiplying double digits in my head? No, that wouldn't be good... not good at all.

Oh crap. It would probably have a couple of those questions like "What comes next in this sequence?" I never was good at that...

except for maybe ones like "2, 4, 6, 8, ___." I was pretty sure the answer would be 10. Yes, that I could do. "You idiot! That's not a memory question. That's for IQ or something," I said aloud to myself. I think I was starting to sweat at that point.

A little knock on the door and in came someone who looked like she worked in the office. "They want me to give you a little memory test," she

said smiling. She pulled over a stool and sat cross legged, looking at me. "Are you ready?" she asked.

"Yes," I said nervously. I felt like the proverbial "cat in a room full of rocking chairs." I just knew I was going to get my tail smashed...

"Here we go," the girl said. "Do you know what this is?" she asked, pointing to her watch.

"A watch?" I asked, thinking it was a trick question.

"Yes!" she said excitedly. "Do you know where you are?" she said next.

"My doctor's office," I answered, turning my head and looking at her with my eyes squinted.

"Perfect," she said. "Day of the Week?"

"Monday."

"Year?"

"2012."

"The time?"

"10:45."

"President?"

"Obama." (Aha... I knew it! Politics... Oh please, please don't ask me about history or geography.)

"Now here's a math one..." (Oh, double crap! I KNEW there would be one of those...) "Actually, take your choice. Either count backwards by sevens from 100 or spell 'wagon' backwards."

"N-O-G-A-W." (Spelling was my forte in school. I'd have had to work way too hard after 93 anyhow.)

"You passed with flying colors!" she announced.

"Great," I said. She then left the room.

So that was it? All my anxiety over that? Twenty bucks for a copay and two hours out of my day off and that was my big test? I was amazed. I didn't know whether to be glad that it was so easy that I passed or ask for \$15 more of a test.

Oh, but in fairness, there was one other question. She gave me three words to remember at the beginning of the test. The only one I remember now was "table."

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The world's largest grooming show, *Groom Expo*, is almost here! The fabulous *Hershey Lodge and Convention Center* in Hershey, Pennsylvania, will welcome thousands of pet professionals for this spectacular trade show event September 6–9! This year's show has some fantastic brand new events scheduled: a Rescue Rodeo, an Abstract Runway Show, *Barkleigh Honors* Poodle Symposium, therapy dog certification, and a Business Success Summit.

The Rescue Rodeo is a grooming competition that uses homeless dogs from local animal shelters. The focus of the event is to promote adoption and create awareness to the necessity of foster homes for shelter animals. Each local rescue group will receive a donation for providing an animal to the Rescue Rodeo.

The Abstract Runway Show will be featured during the *Barkleigh Honors Awards Dinner* on Saturday evening. This show puts an elegant twist on creative grooming. Color is not allowed in this competition. Contestants will parade their creations down a runway that extends out into the crowd while two large screens will also project the show for better viewing.

The *Barkleigh Honors* Poodle Symposium is a series of grooming demonstrations held on Friday. Of

last year's *Barkleigh Honors* winners, Lisa Leady, Chris Pawlosky, Michell Evans, Sue Zecco, and Jay Scruggs will share their expert knowledge of Poodle grooming in four separate seminars.

A therapy dog certification class is being held Friday through Sunday near the Puppy Playground area on the garage level of the Convention Center. The certification process is a 20-minute obedience test conducted by Nikki Huntley through *Therapy Dog International*. Even if you are not interested in certification, this is a great opportunity simply to watch the testing and learn more about the process.

The Business Success Summit is being conducted by grooming legend Melissa Verplank. She is the founder of the Paragon Grooming School and the author of *Notes from the Grooming Table*. Melissa's years of experience and business success will help attendees achieve success in their own businesses.

Last year, *Groom Expo* was held during one of the largest floods the area had seen in nearly 40 years but still had 4,000 attendees and nearly 200 vendor booths. Therefore, we expect a much larger show this year!

Groom Expo will host various grooming contests and dozens of educational seminars on grooming, animal behavior, boarding, mobile

grooming, retail, naturals, training, and pet daycare. On Thursday, a day-long Animal Behavior Conference will be presented by Gary Wilkes.

Groom Expo will be home to exciting grooming competitions with generous cash awards! The *PetSmart GroomOlympics* and the following breed class competitions will be held: Poodle, Salon Freestyle, Sporting/Terriers and More, All Other Purebreds, and Creative. *TropiClean*, *Lambert Kay*, *Andis*, *Conair Pro Pet*, and *Electric Cleaner Company* are sponsoring the competitions.

Special package plans range from V.I.P (admission on all four days to most sessions, all meals, and spectator admission to all grooming contests) to weekend packages for Friday and Saturday or Saturday and Sunday. Of course, seminars and admission to contests can also be purchased individually.

Mark your calendars now for this event! For a program book, contact *Barkleigh Productions* at (717) 691-3388 or go to www.groomexpo.com.



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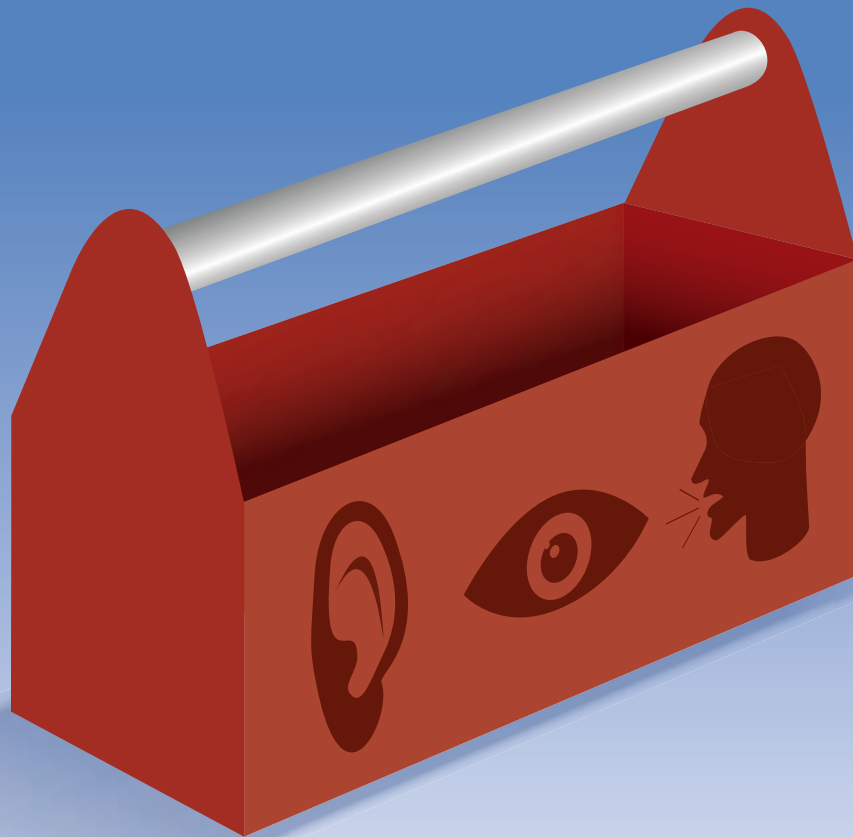
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BUILDING A COMMUNICATION SKILLS TOOLBOX

By Barbara Bird, CMG

Groomers love to have the right tools for the job. We make an effort to keep our shears sharp and toss out old brushes that are no longer working. How about our communications skills? Communication is the foundation of customer service, yet we rarely make an assessment of our communication style and habits or take the time to hone our skills. Here are a few key concepts from customer service experts as they apply to groomers.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Taking for granted or making assumptions about meanings. Words or expressions can mean different things to different people. A person's use of words or language depends on their own individual experience. Your customer's use of words about their grooming might

depend on how the last groomer used them. Most famous is the term "puppy cut," which can mean many things to many people.

Although communication with a regular customer over time usually smoothes out, it is easy to start taking your communication for granted. When you take a customer for granted, you stop caring about how you treat them. Treat the communication with your customer of five years with as much attention as you would for the new client.

BEING OVERLY AUTHORITATIVE. Sometimes when we assume the role of pet care expert, we can come across in a way that shuts down communication rather than facilitates it. Be careful that you do not invalidate the customer or make them feel judged by you. When people feel judged, they are more likely to lie to you or simply stay away

from you. People are more likely to tell the truth and make changes when they feel understood and supported. Likewise, using somewhat obscure technical terms such as "carding the coat" can often lead to misunderstandings. Many customers are embarrassed to admit when they don't know what you are talking about.

NOT ENGAGING THE COOPERATION OF THE OTHER PARTY. Are you guilty of telling customers what to do and hoping they will comply? Providing a service involves an unwritten agreement or contract. Failure to obtain customer agreement with the pick-up plan, for example, is more likely to result in a late pickup. Changing the grooming agreement without consulting the customer is another sure path to customer dissatisfaction.

Continued on page 22



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BEING UNAWARE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION. Sometimes we do not recognize that miscommunication is occurring. A significant part of what is conveyed to the other person happens through nonverbal cues. This can conflict with what we are actually saying and can contribute to misunderstanding. An individual's facial expression and body language can be a powerful message that is delivered involuntarily. This is especially true for groomers in the middle of a difficult day. It's easy to convey accidentally the impression that you are rushed, impatient, overwhelmed, or frustrated. Recognize that your message may be perceived differently than you intend.

REMEMBER: How a customer is treated at your counter is a reflection of how their pet is treated in the grooming room. Try not to let your stress or fatigue affect how you come across to the customer. Keep smiling!

HELPFUL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

EYE CONTACT – Making and maintaining eye contact is one of the most important basic communications skills. It implies that you are interested and take the other person seriously.

SUMMARIZE AND REPEAT BACK WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD – This lets them know they have been understood and gives the other person a chance to clarify if necessary. This is especially helpful when discussing the grooming style or pick-up times or when dealing with complaints.

ASK QUESTIONS to obtain clarification, especially about the grooming style you are agreeing to.

PROJECT A POSITIVE ATTITUDE – Using phrases such as “We can do that!”, “Got it!”, or “That works for me!” and words such as absolutely and definitely sends a message that you are enthusiastic

and interested.

MATCH YOUR TONE TO YOUR MESSAGE – How you say something is just as important as what you say. Listen to yourself. Use a serious tone when speaking to a customer who is upset. An energetic and helpful tone matches your questions about how an owner wants the dog groomed. Keep sarcasm and derision out of your professional speaking.

PUT YOUR MIND ON A LEASH – When you are listening to a customer, try to control the urge to finish their thoughts for them or conclude that you know what they are talking about before they finish. It's also important not to judge your customer as you listen. If you are thinking “This is the stupidest thing I've ever heard,” you are likely to show your feelings with your body,

Continued on page 24

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and you might miss an important part of their message. Because the listening mind works faster than the speaking mind, it is natural to jump ahead. Controlling your thoughts while listening takes practice. Changing negative self-talk and judgments into positive thoughts about others can work to transform your communication ability. Instead of thinking "Gosh, this woman is a real pain. I'll never be able to please her," change your inner thought into "Here's a chance to utilize all my communication skills. I'm going to do my best to please her."

"WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?"

We want to convey to our clients that we have the intention of providing a service that works for them and their lives. The concept of "what works" applies to the styling, too. When we ask the pet owner, "How is this grooming style working for you?" we empower them to give us

Making people feel good about themselves by praising their pet care, their reliability as a customer, their promptness, or any quality that you value will strengthen your relationship.

feedback that will help us accommodate their needs. It tells them that their needs are important in the relationship.

VALIDATION. This is a tricky one for many groomers, as it is often confused with allowing the customer to be right even when we know they are wrong about something. There is an important distinction between being right and being alright. Let's say a client wants us to brush out their Goldendoodle, and we know it is matted beyond humanely combing. They seem to be placing a value on appearance over the

importance of the pet's experience of the grooming. Without validation of their preference for a fuller coat, the customer is likely to feel insulted or scolded. We can communicate that we appreciate and understand where they are coming from before we gently explain that the fuller coat is unrealistic at this time.

BE A PROBLEM SOLVER. Recently, I had a new customer miss a Saturday appointment for 9:00 a.m. I rebooked her for the following Saturday at 9:00, and she was a half-hour late. I was a bit put out. Instead of following my gut instinct

Continued on next page



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to make her feel bad for messing up my schedule, I said, "This 9:00 a.m. time does not seem to be working for you. Would a later appointment work better?" We agreed on an hour later, and she has been reliable ever since.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT – One of the most powerful tools you have available to use in any relationship is the power of acknowledgment. Making people feel good about themselves by praising their pet care, their reliability as a customer, their promptness, or any quality that you value will strengthen your relationship. Don't be stingy with your praise; it's the fertilizer for great customer relationships. If a client is always on time, let them know: "Thanks for being on time as always. I can set my clock by you!" Chances are they take pains to be on time, and your acknowledgment makes them feel worthy. And don't limit your practice of acknowledg-

ment to your customers; spread it around to your co-workers, friends, children, and spouses.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK – As a person who grew up being sensitive to criticism, this was a very difficult tool for me to cultivate. You cannot assume that "no news is good news." You need to give people very explicit permission to be critical. Often your customers don't want to hurt your feelings, especially if you seem to be the type to take things personally. Grievances that are not expressed may be stockpiled, and a stockpile of past petty grievances can lead to an explosion over just about anything. Let your customers know that you want to know if your grooming or service falls short of their expectations.

In real life, some miscommunications are bound to occur. What is said is often not what is heard. It is human nature to blame the other

party. Growth cannot occur in our ability to communicate, however, until we become introspective and look at how we might improve our side of the two-way street. Mastering communications skills and using these tools takes practice. With a little work, you can develop a toolbox of communications skills that you can draw from in your effort to provide extraordinary customer service.

Barbara Bird, CMG, is the author of It's Not JUST the Grooming: Communication Skills for Pet Professionals, available through www.shop.bbird.biz. She has operated Transformation Pet Center, in Tucson, AZ since 1977. In a previous life, she obtained a Masters of Social Work degree from Arizona State University and worked in the field of mental health for twelve years before finding her passion in pet grooming.

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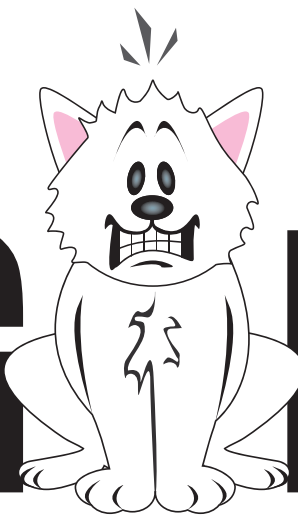
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**YOU ARE****KING KONG**

There is a scene in the 2005 remake of *King Kong* in which the sacrificial babe, Naomi Watts, is tied between two posts, waiting for the arrival of – well, at that point, she hasn't really been told what to expect. But when you are tied and immobile, even a wild pig is pretty frightening. As Naomi wriggles to escape her bonds, the camera slips behind her and pans upward.

An 80-foot-tall ape crashes out of the jungle, roaring and beating his chest. It is King Kong: giant ape and beneficiary of this human sacri-

fice. As King Kong moves toward his "appetizer," he stops for a second. This new morsel is a blonde, and she's wearing a pretty slinky nightgown. He decides to take a closer look. Naomi vainly struggles to pull backwards, away from this huge, hairy, intimidating creature. Kong's great, staring eyeball moves closer to get a better look, and then he reaches down from above to touch the wriggling blonde with his hand. Naomi struggles as Kong picks her up – and then she faints. Kong then takes off at break-neck speed into

the jungle. Cut.

Other than the last part, this scene could have been written by a dog. The differences between the original and the canine versions would be minimal. First, the part of Naomi Watts would have been played by a frightened, leashed or confined canine. Second, the big ape would have been a little smaller, a little less hairy, but just as frightening. Sometimes this person is wearing a smock and smells of shampoo – meaning you. Third, the dog-damsel would

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Mobile Advantages

Groom Fewer Pets For More Income-

You would often have to groom up to 10-12 dogs in a salon to make the same money grooming 6 pets in a mobile when you compare overhead costs.

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Closing a storefront early is almost impossible, even if you're done grooming by 2:00pm. Mobile allows you to schedule the dates and times you want to work. You have more time for family and friends.

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How does your body feel after grooming 6 pets compared to 10 or 12? How many years will you be grooming if you keep doing 10 or more pets a day?



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*According to a recent survey at www.petgroomer.com/surveys.htm the national average for a mobile stylist is \$61.00 per pet compared to a stationary salon average at \$40.00 per pet.

have offered the big ape a very nasty bite wound.

For about 15,000 years, domesticated dogs have been biting “less hairy apes.” While many of these bites are the result of territorial protection and competitive aggression, a large number of bites are of the Naomi Watts variety. In these types of bites, the dog is either physically “tied to the stake” (i.e. “standing in a loop”) or in an area that prevents easy escape. The “big gorilla” – that’s us – is bending down to pat the nice doggie on the head. That’s when the dog reaches the breaking point and snaps, both figuratively and literally. It is common for the victim of this type of bite to comment, “Gee, I think he was scared or something. He sure didn’t seem aggressive. I was just trying to calm him down a little.”

One reason this behavior startles us is that we inevitably view the scene from King Kong’s point of view. In the movie, Kong is merely curious about this blonde bombshell. If he could have spoken English, he might have said, “Hey, little lady. I’m just curious. Don’t be afraid. I just want to get a close

look-see and touch that shiny kind of skin you are wearing.” Somehow I don’t think Naomi would have been calmed by such a statement, even if she could speak his language. Given a free hand and a bazooka, I guess Naomi might decide to defend herself from this overgrown voyeur. King Kong has no idea that his peaceful intentions aren’t obvious to Naomi.

The amazing part of this scenario is the human assumption that aggression is always connected to dominance. A common metaphor for an extremely dangerous animal is to liken it to a “cornered rat.” Rats are almost always ready to run from animals several hundred times their size. If you back a rat into a corner, it has no way to escape. Cornered rats will fight tenaciously to escape. The fearful dog bites for the same reason. Social dominance is the farthest thing from the animal’s mind. All the dog wants is to be left alone or allowed to escape.

Learning to respect an animal’s prerogatives is a difficult thing. It takes true sensitivity to realize that we do not always have a right to stick our nose where it doesn’t

belong. Of all the dog bites in this country, the majority are probably the result of a human taking liberties with a fearful dog. If you are determined to play King Kong, here are a few ways to soften your effect on a canine Naomi Watts.

CAUTION: All of these “rules” are descriptions of tendencies that may or may not work with most fearful dogs – but certainly not all. There can be no airtight way to handle every dog, since not all dogs are alike. For instance, using this knowledge, I have remained unpunctured for over 30 years, including eight years working in shelters and handling as many dogs a day as you do. Now I handle a high percentage of nasty ones because my job is to fix them. Despite my knowledge and skill, there was a particular Wheaton Terrier who apparently hadn’t read my rule

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book – he nailed me pretty hard. His owner let him out of a crate before I was ready. The point is that life has a way of throwing you curves, so be prepared.

If the dog is confined in a crate, do not assume it is friendly unless you put it there. If you need to move someone else's dog, don't just barge forward and grab it. Look at the dog's posture. Don't face the dog directly. Take your time for a second. If the dog retreats to the back of the cage, take even more time.

Do not make direct eye contact. To a frightened dog, eye contact is a sign that you are in "confrontation mode." The last thing you want to do is increase this animal's fear of you. Use your peripheral vision to see what the dog is doing while appearing to be looking at the clouds rolling by.

Do not try to pat the nice doggie on the head as your first greet-

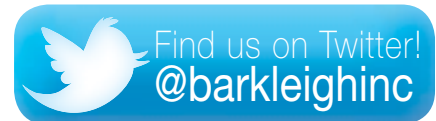
ing ever. Do not bend over the dog quickly when it first comes into the salon as you slip a lead over its head. Squat down and turn sideways to the dog. Again, avoid eye contact and do not immediately touch on the top of the head or withers.

Holding your hand in a fist is not a safe way to offer your hand. While this is often suggested as an alternative to extending vulnerable fingers, it ignores some basics of canine interaction and dentition. First, a dog's teeth are perfectly capable of puncturing and slicing through your fist. Second, it is the relative height of the hand that makes the real difference. An extended hand below the dog's head will be less likely to be bitten than a fist extended from above.

If you are going to risk trying to touch the dog, forget about letting the dog sniff your hand first. A safer

method is to slip your hand softly into the inguinal region – the inside of the thigh – where dogs shove their noses to investigate each other. Put a tiny bit of tension on the lead so that if the dog whips around to bite, you won't get nailed. Leave your fingers there for a few seconds. This is a polite greeting. Then try to touch a couple of other areas, avoiding the withers. If you get no reaction to these touches, you are probably good to go. Probably. Your mileage may vary, so be cautious.

For those of you who haven't seen the movie, I won't spoil the ending. Suffice it to say that Naomi Watts survived the encounter and King Kong tried to coin the phrase "I'll take Manhattan." Considering the ending, I think it really was written by a dog.



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Genesis Revisited

Many of the past Solid Gold articles talked about our new dog food, Solid Gold SunDancer dry dog food with curcumin and chia to control gas, also tapioca and quinoa, SunDancer has no grains and no gluten.

Today's focus is on our Solid Gold SeaMeal powder supplement, which has 19 types of sea vegetation, and only one type of kelp. Dogs are 11% trace minerals and only 4% vitamins. Without the trace minerals the vitamins don't work. SeaMeal activates the hormone, enzymes and immune systems of the body.

These systems grow coats, help with tear staining, for ear infections, help to prevent allergies, and aid in preventing bladder stones. SeaMeal is especially for Oriental and Arctic dogs and dogs developed in England, Scotland and Ireland for hundreds of years, (Terriers, Spaniels, retrievers, water dogs, poodles, white, near white and light colored dogs). If you don't feed a fish-based dog food and sea vegetation to these types of dogs, you are not supporting the DNA of the body and you will have problems.

We used to import our kelp from Norway. But in 1985, the Russian nuclear disaster at Chernobyl spread. Now, we get our kelp from New Zealand. When a dog is eating allergic dog food, his front legs may become inflamed and this acid condition causes his feet to swell and burn. He licks his feet because saliva is an alkali.

An acid-based ingredient is white rice (listed as rice). Solid Gold uses brown rice, an alkali. Other acid ingredients are corn, wheat, soybeans, sugar beet pulp (companies forget to list it as sugar), and peanuts or peanut butter. Solid Gold doesn't use these acids. These acids may cause a normal dog's cells to become abnormal and produce malignant cellulose cells that do not correspond with the immune system and may cause leukemia or cancer.

Excess acidity in the blood causes white cells to increase and red cells to decrease - causing liver disease, kidney disease, epilepsy and diabetes. Arthritis may also occur. See book by Herman Aihara, Acid / Alkali Balance of the Well-being Ranch in Harper, TX.

All of our Solid Gold dog foods are fish-based. Fish is the best food for people and dogs. Big fish eat smaller fish, which eat little fish, which feed upon sea algae. Algae color is very important. The red algae supports the blood circulation and immune system. During the Japanese tsunami/ radiation disaster, the U.S. sent tons of red sea algae to Japan. Brown algae is for bones and the support system. Green algae with chlorophyll makes healthy new cells and lungs. Blue/Green algae can be a mixed blessing. Some are good, but others grow so fast that it clogs up waterways, so that the ships can't get through.

Now for GENESIS REVISITED

Prior to Noah's Ark, people lived to be 900 years or more. Adam lived to be 903 years, Enoch 905 years (see foot note about Enoch), Cain 910, Methuselah 969 and Noah 950. After God brought the flood to destroy mankind, except for Noah and his family, mankind died at a younger age. After the flood, the waters receded with an almost total erosion of the earth's crust. This in turn, washed the mineral rich top surfaces to the bottom of the ocean, which became fish food algae.

By taking away the minerals, man's life was dramatically shortened.

You can replace your dog's shortage of minerals with Solid Gold SeaMeal. People ask us why we don't put the SeaMeal in with our SunDancer and other dog foods. We mix pro biotic digestive enzymes with our SeaMeal. Probiotics are killed at 120°. Dog food is cooked at around 300°. All the digesters would be destroyed.

Other dog food companies list lines of probiotics in their ingredients lists. Guess they didn't do their homework. Why are you paying for something you are not getting. These companies may say that they lower the temperatures and spray the enzymes on. Don't believe it! When you lower the temperature, the oils cool and don't hold the trace minerals and enzymes. How do we know? Because we tried it. If it didn't work for us, it doesn't work for them.

Now for the Story

In 325 AD, the Council of Churches met on the island of Nicea and threw out 67 books of the Bible - including Adam Part I and Part II. They left in Genesis, but threw out Enoch I and II, Jubilee, etc. In the New Testament, they threw out the books of Philip, Thomas, Judah and the five books of Mary. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, the missing books were found.



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Getting Foxy with Color

by Dawn Omboy



Salon creative is breaking out everywhere, and I am always happy to be a part of it. In a recent color class in my salon, we really got foxy with color. April Perry of *Animal Artistry* (Glenview, Illinois) and her daughter Allie drove down with a car full of canine critters to my salon in Columbus, Georgia, for a creative makeover.

SweetPea, April's mom's dog, is a small mixed breed who is white with a few tan spots on her head and one on her jacket. April said she could just see *SweetPea* as a fox. I, too, could see that she was perfect for the role, so we pulled up pictures on the computer and got busy.

We began by choosing a light brown shade of *Kiss Express* (Nutmeg), as I knew this to be the right product for this particular coat type. I then mixed some red and yellow into the brown to give us the red/orange undertone that we would need to create the right effect of the undercoat of the fox. The product was applied with an applicator brush

over her jacket and her tail and to *SweetPea's* face to create the fox expression. We left the belly, chest, legs, and tip of the tail white.

The next thing we did was create the dark stockings on our fox with an application of black dye to her legs. We also used the black to accent the ears and base of the tail. The ears were dyed about halfway on the outside and around the inside edges to give it a natural look. This dye was left on to process for 25 minutes. We rinsed with cool water while the foxy little dog stood on a rack in the tub so she was not standing in water.

Upon rinsing and drying, *SweetPea* was too orange to be finished, so after a "Sally Break," back to the table she went. Next I chose Mahogany *Kiss Express* to create the top

coat on our fox. April and Allie lightly painted the top of the coat, taking care not to go into the coat for better effect. This toned it perfectly, as you can see by the pictures. *SweetPea* is now a fox! And any stylish fox is not complete without her natural feather extension handmade by me! I only wish I could have seen the look on people's faces as they made their 13-hour drive back home.

Queen of Color Dawn Omboy, NCMG, is the Barkleigh Honors Winner for Contribution to Creative Grooming. For more information, visit www.klippers.com, www.pawsitiveeducationaltraining.com, and www.groomwise.typepad.com/queen_of_color.

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HELLO,
**I'M IN THE
PET BUSINESS!**

**EASY
MONEY**

By Joe Zuccarello



SOMETIMES A SIMPLE CONVERSATION STARTER CAN LEAD TO BIG BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES!

Thirty to forty trips per year. That is how much I am traveling these days. I travel to trade shows and a variety of client locations and sometimes even squeeze in a little personal travel for vacation or the annual guys' golf trip. I log thousands of miles a year, stay in dozens of hotels, and eat at hundreds of restaurants. I am typically a very social guy; others describe me by saying, "He has never met a stranger." I like to think of my personality as extremely outgoing; those I encounter are "friends I just haven't met yet." So this got me thinking of YOU.

During the countless number of

hours of travel, something amazing happens each and every time I engage in even the briefest of conversations with a "friend I haven't met yet." Usually we exchange pleasantries such as "Hi" or "How are you?" These standard greetings can reduce the anxiety of the accidental locking of the eyes on each other or the awkward squeezing into an airplane seat before take off and having to battle for the territory of the shared armrest. Since I am also very inquisitive and look for material and business lessons everywhere I go, I will usually go one small step further and ask my new friend what type of business they are in or what

it is they are traveling for.

I have met all kinds of people during my travels, but one thing is for absolute certain. Once they ask me about my profession and I tell them I am in the pet industry, the floodgates open and all guards are let down. I now seem to have some common ground with them where most wouldn't. Yep, the moment I say my business revolves around pets, they are quick to tell me all about theirs! Not only do I get the "I have a dog" reply, but it is often followed by a detailed description of the pet, the breed, the personality, the age, and so on. Sometimes my

Continued on next page

new friends will tell me about pets they had as far back as when they were kids!

So you may be asking where I am going with this story. Well, as I usually do, I am identifying an opportunity for you to seize and make your very own. This opportunity is one of the easiest business lessons I have learned. Unless they are oddly in the slim minority of people in our society who do not love or own pets, the customer base of the pet industry is larger than most. This being said, all of us must remember that anywhere we travel, if it is to the grocery store or across the country, we only have to strike up a conversation with someone to gain a potential new customer!

Think about this for a minute. What other businesses can you come up with that has the potential our business does? You

and your new friend could go on for hours talking about their (and your) pets and how a certain haircut may make them look, how a certain product could help their itchy skin, how a lesson or two with a trainer may help their manners, or even what facility may offer the best care for when the pet parent may have to travel or work long hours at the office. Whatever the case, the conversation will usually happen naturally and productively.

Since most of you may not travel as often as I do, I can bet you are visiting businesses in your local area where you can meet these new "friends." Here are some tips for spotting these new friends and turning them into clients without spending a dime on advertising!

Continued on page 36

Remember the last time you received an invitation to a party or reception in the mail? Remember how excited you were to know someone wants you to help them celebrate something fun or be somewhere important?

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1. CARRY BUSINESS CARDS.

One huge mistake I see is people in our business not having business cards with them everywhere they go. Keep some in your wallet, in your purse, in your car, or in your cell phone case, but keep them everywhere. If you have them, use them. If you don't have them, get some! Remember the last time you received an invitation to a party or reception in the mail? Remember how excited you were to know someone wants you to help them celebrate something fun or be somewhere important? Business cards are like your little, personal invitations to try your services. You may even up the ante a bit and handwrite an impromptu discount on the card to encourage your new friend to give you a try. Make them feel important. Make them feel special.

Let's hope their pet jumps in some huge mud puddle that day so they need your services even that much faster! Active pets are dirty pets. Fortunately, you are there to save the day! Another great invitation moment.

2. WALK THE DOG FOOD AISLE AT THE GROCERY STORE.

Whether you are at the market to purchase milk, bread, or fruit, do not skip the dog food aisle. I can bet you will see someone in this aisle contemplating which food, treat, or toy to buy his or her pet. It is perfectly fine to approach someone you do not know. Try it. Don't be shy. Again, recall my comment about guards being let down when you start talking about someone's pet. The perfect ice breaker? "What kind

of pet do YOU have?" Show genuine interest in their response and watch the magic happen.

3. FILL 'ER UP!

People take their pets everywhere these days. While you are making a small investment at the gas pump, look for pets in neighboring cars. Along with paying your enormous fuel amount, pay a compliment to a person's pet and the conversation will flow as easily as the gasoline through the pump.

Continued on next page

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Don't forget to give them your personal invitation (business card) at the end of the conversation.

4. TAKE A HIKE.

Seriously. Get outside and do something for your health and the health of your business at the same time. Visit parks on nice days and look how many people are there with their pets. All of them are new friends just waiting for someone to talk to them. After all, let's hope

their pet jumps in some huge mud puddle that day so they need your services even that much faster! Active pets are dirty pets. Fortunately, you are there to save the day! Another great invitation moment.

Lifestyle. Pets are part of everyone's lifestyle. Key in on where lifestyles take people, and you will find more business. There are many more places you will find these new friends, and I look forward to your

success in building your business and forging new relationships!

Joe Zuccarello has excelled in the pet industry since 1986 and is a pet industry consultant and National Accounts Sales Manager for Tropiclean Shampoo and Fresh Breath Made Easy! Dental products for dogs and cats. To find out more about Tropiclean Shampoos and Tropiclean Fresh Breath Made Easy! dental products, please visit www.tropiclean.net or call 800-542-7387

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Natalie Holland

ABSOLUTELY AWESOME! by Kathy Hosler

Natalie Holland, the owner of the Rhinestone Collar Pet Resort and Grooming Spa in Greenville, Texas, has a real zest for life and a passion for dogs – especially Poodles. She has 23 of her own.

Natalie is a very busy lady – she breeds and shows her poodles, owns and operates her grooming salon, and runs her exclusive boarding kennel. She looks forward to every day and lives each one to its fullest.

Natalie's grooming career began the way a lot of groomers get their start: she saw a help wanted sign in the window of a grooming shop. They were looking for a bather, and 16-year-old Natalie applied for and got the job. She did all the bathing and "grunt" work. About a year later, the owner started to teach Natalie how to clip, and soon she

became a full-fledged groomer. That was the beginning of Natalie's dog addiction.

After a few years, she moved near Dallas, Texas. She and her husband, Scott, bought a place in the country and had draft horses. They often used a team of their horses to give carriage rides, escort weddings, and pull hay rides.

"In 2003, a church hired us to have our team of horses pull a wagon full of people on a hay ride," recalls Natalie. "During the hay ride, one of my horses spooked – something that it had never done

before. The horse panicked, took off, and made a sharp turn, and I was thrown off the wagon. I rolled underneath it, and the wheels of the wagon ran over me, breaking several of my ribs and my back – and damaged my spinal cord."

As a result of her injuries, Natalie is now in a wheelchair. But anyone who knows her will tell you that it hasn't slowed her down much. After her accident, this determined gal saw a "help wanted" ad in the newspaper for a shop that was looking for a groomer.

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She went to the shop, and to her delight, their layout made it possible for her to groom again. The shop had two tubs: one at waist height and a lower one – mostly used for the bigger dogs. Well, the lower one worked perfectly for Natalie in her wheelchair. Natalie loved being able to groom again, but it was about an hour commute for her each day.

Natalie and her husband began to formulate a plan. The area they live in is surrounded by peaceful farmland and provides a very calm, relaxing environment. Natalie knew that it would be a wonderful location to start a pet care business.

They decided to convert the barn on their property into a grooming salon and kennel. They did the renovation and started advertising. Soon Natalie built a wonderful client base.

In the beginning, some of Natalie's clients were taken aback when they saw a woman in a wheelchair grooming. Natalie just flashed a smile at them and said, "The dogs don't care if I'm in here."

The customers soon found



that being in a wheelchair doesn't hamper Natalie's grooming at all. "It's been about 10 years since my accident. A lot of what I do is second nature to me now.

"I have an adaptive grooming table that goes all the way to the floor, and my husband built the bathing area so that it is completely accessible to me. He was able to customize anything that I needed to make my job easier.

"As for the kennels, we designed and built them so that I would be able to do everything on my own if

"It's been 10 years since my accident. A lot of what I do is second nature to me now."

there was no one around to help me," Natalie continued. "The kennels are wide enough that I can go in, spin around, and go back out with no problem. I have a wonderful staff, and we all work together as a team, but I still want to know that I can handle anything that comes up."

Whether they come for boarding or grooming, Natalie's clients get very personalized and extra special treatment. "With everything in one building, there is a lot of dog/human interaction," said Natalie.

Continued on next page

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“Our open floor plan allows me to see everything that is going on, and the dogs in the kennels don’t feel isolated.”

Natalie’s website, www.rhinestonpet.webs.com, tells clients all about her pet resort and grooming spa. It shows some of the designer clips and decorative toenails that they do as well as the creative coloring and styling that they have recently begun to offer. (Don’t tell anyone, but Natalie is seriously thinking about entering creative styling competitions.)

“We do a lot of facials and special baths as part of our spa services,” said Natalie. “I’m a big believer in knowing what is in the shampoos and other products that I use.”

Being in a wheelchair does not keep Natalie from showing her dogs in the conformation ring. She zips into the ring in her power chair and shows her dogs for all she’s worth.

As busy as she is, Natalie still

finds time to help find homes for rescued dogs. And she helps others in any way that she can – like when she donated her hair to *Locks of Love*.

Natalie is always planning and executing new projects. “Right now, my husband and I are in the middle of building our house,” says Natalie. “And I’m planning to expand my sa-

lon and make it look like the Ritz.”

Every day has to present enormous challenges to Natalie Holland, but her upbeat, positive attitude and her perpetual smile is proof that she can handle anything life throws at her.

“I shoot to improve myself every day,” said Natalie as she flashed her amazing smile.

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Building a Pet First Aid Kit

By Mary Oquendo

Many years back, I sliced my finger on a pair of scissors. Being ever prepared, I took out my unopened, still-in-the-cellophane 100-piece pet first aid kit, hoping that it had some *Band-Aids* in it. The good news is that it did indeed have them. The bad news is that they were about 75 out of the 100 items in the kit. There was also a roll of gauze, tape, gauze pads, alcohol wipes, and tweezers. Hardly what I was expecting for a pet first aid kit. The following day, I sat down and made a list of what I really needed. This list is currently what is in my pet first aid kit.

1. The name and phone number of a veterinarian, including an off-hours contact – there are times when you will need their direction or to inform them that you are on the way.

2. Gauze rolls

3. Vet wrap

4. Cotton roll for large areas and head wounds

5. Non-stick gauze pads

6. Antibiotic cream

7. Sanitary napkins for soaking up excess blood

8. Bandanas for use as triangular bandages or slings, to cover burns, and to aid in walking by taking pressure off the injured limb

9. Sealed sterile solution – to rinse out wounds and burns (once opened it is no longer sterile)

10. Surgical scrubs, such as *Novalsan*[™] or *Betadine*[™], to clean out wounds – CVS makes a generic brand called *Hibiclens*. I do not use alcohol to rinse wounds, which stings, or hydrogen peroxide, which

degrades surrounding tissue. Cats cannot metabolize either alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.

11. Sterile eyewash for eye injuries or rinsing out wounds (once the bottle is opened, it is no longer sterile)

12. Surgical glue – there is a right and a wrong way to use this. Have your veterinarian show you the proper way to apply it. Improper usage can trap bacteria into the wound and degrade surrounding tissue.

13. Black tea bags contain tannic acid, which helps to clot blood.

14. Plastic cards such as old library or used gift cards – they are the perfect size to cushion pad injuries. You can also use them to flick out bee stingers. Place the card under the stinger and lift up and out.

Continued on next page

15. Small flashlight to check for debris in the throat – store it without installing the batteries, which may explode over time. Also keep a set of spare batteries handy.

16. Chemical cold packs or instant cold gel packs – they can be placed against pressure points to aid in cooling a pet. Always contact a veterinarian for instructions when a pet is suffering from hypothermia or heatstroke.

17. Plastic baggies for debris, vomit, or stool samples

18. Latex gloves to protect you from zoonotics such as rabies or leptospirosis

19. Honey packets for hypoglycemic or diabetic pets

20. Smart water – helps replace electrolytes when a pet is stressed due to injury

21. Butterfly bandages to help close larger wounds

The rest of my kit requires veterinary contact first! For different poisons, call for different protocols and proper dosage. What will help in one situation can cause harm in another.

22. Liquid gel cap antihistamine with a safety pin – the safety pin is used to puncture the liquid center. It is then squirted directly onto the tongue. It is the fastest way to administer an antihistamine during anaphylactic shock. Dosage is important.

23. Hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting. Do not use on cats. They cannot metabolize hydrogen peroxide. Dosage is important.

24. Activated charcoal to absorb poisons

25. Baking soda to absorb topical caustic materials

26. Squirt bottle or turkey baster to administer hydrogen peroxide

Some of these items have expiration dates. Go through your kit after each use or periodically to replenish and replace out-of-date items.

Another valuable part of my pet first aid kit is my certificate from my pet first aid class along with the manual. Because of my training, I know how to use the contents of my first aid kit and when I need to call for help first. The sooner a pet

receives first aid, the faster they will recuperate.

If you need to use your pet first aid kit, this pet is probably in pain. Protect yourself from injury by muzzling this pet. Cones placed on the pet will minimize further damage caused by the pet scratching, licking, or biting at the injury.

Pre-packaged pet first aid kits are fine as long as you open them up and check the contents. Make sure they contain more than just *Band-Aids*.

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Increasing Revenue *without* Decreasing Prices



By Caroline Shin

When looking for a way to ramp up your profits and give your business a boost, it's easy to default to the old mainstay: a sale. However, you don't always have to offer deep discounts to get your customers to dig deeper. Here are four ways to rethink your sales strategy.

Motivate Your Staff

We all need a little motivation in life, and the same thing goes for your staff. Setting small goals along the way and dangling the proverbial carrot is the best way to change behavior – it's simply human nature.

First consider setting monthly revenue goals, and if you exceed those goals, reward your staff with cash bonuses or even something as simple as a pizza party. The same process applies even if you work by yourself. Be sure to set goals and reward your own achievements.

Next be sure to discuss with your team how you can achieve your

monthly target. Should everyone try to upsell a service when the pet checks in? Or should you upsell on retail by offering grooming products like brushes and combs?

To help the process, make sure to track your daily progress. If you don't have software, it's a good reason to consider purchasing one so you can see a) how much you booked, and b) how much the system is forecasting you will do – all with a click of a button.

Take a few minutes to set this up and be clear with your targets. After initiating these ideas, I've seen grooming businesses instantly increase their revenue by 30% the next month with no discounts!

Throw a Party

Everyone loves a party, so why not throw one and make it fun for your customers to engage with you outside of your business? They'll get to know you better, come in more

often, and refer their friends, too.

What kind of party is appropriate? The weather is getting nicer, so a great party idea is to partner with a dog agility handler or dog trainer and throw an event at a dog park. Give yourself a month to market the event with posters, emails, and Facebook. You can also post your event on meetup.com, a site where people interested in topics (such as pets) can look up public meet-ups. Be sure to bring some goodies (e.g. cookies, dog treats, and water) and to tell your customers to bring friends – or your potential new clients, as we prefer to think of them!

If your business is surrounded by other stores, consider throwing a block party with them – after all, the more the merrier. Pick one early evening when all of you will host a party. You can split the expenses with each business promoting the event to their customers. It's a great

Continued on next page

Do you have tons of add-ons that are not getting noticed?
How about simplifying it and making
pre-packaged services that bundle the add-ons?

**You'll be surprised how many customers
will give you extra revenue because you made it
simple for them to upgrade.**

opportunity for you to have each of your customers get to see the surrounding businesses.

To make it even more effective, consider having each business donating a raffle gift. With a raffle, you can ask each customer to give their email address to be eligible for a prize, and on the form, ask them if they're willing to receive promotional emails from you. You and your business neighbors get to build up an email list for future marketing.

Rethink How You Sell Your Services

Speaking of neighboring businesses, does it make sense for you guys to bundle your services for a unique package? For instance, my grooming store partners with a neighboring photographer to offer a pet groom and portrait package. On Mother's Day, we even invited a neighboring salon to sell a bundled package where Mom gets her hair done at the salon, the pets get theirs done at our grooming store, and all of them pose together at the photo studio.

Also take a look at how you offer services. Do you have tons of add-ons that are not getting noticed? How about simplifying it and making pre-packaged services that bundle the add-ons? You'll be surprised how many customers will give you extra revenue because you made it simple for them to upgrade.

Also consider this idea in reverse. If people keep buying your cheap package, offer a few popular add-ons, like tooth brushing and a premium shampoo, and promote them every month. See what percentage of your revenue falls in each service, and get ideas on how you can upgrade your customers.

Focus on Customer Retention and Referrals

It's cheaper, easier, and more effective to retain current customers than it is to acquire new ones. If you doubt that, it's not just us saying it - that quote was from INC Magazine. Also take a look at what Bain Consulting said after researching the impact of customer retention across industries for hundreds of businesses: "A 5% increase in customer retention results in 25-100% increase in profits." Wow.

We also looked at our customers and saw that a business will generate an appointment for every two emails they send and revive half of their lost customers by reminding them to re-book. Email is particularly great as you can automate your appointment system to send an email after so many days from their last visit.

Another look at our users showed that 47% of customers that used online booking scheduled their appointments when the business was closed. How many customers

do you think don't bother leaving a voicemail and decide their pet can wait for a few more weeks before their bath or - even worse - go to someone else that does offer online booking?

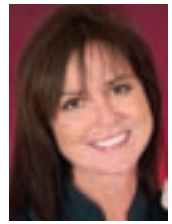
If you don't already, ask customers for feedback after each appointment. Among our users, we see that businesses receive positive feedback 98% of the time. Furthermore, 9% of their customers gladly refer the business to their Facebook friends, and on average, a customer has 198 friends on Facebook. You do the math - how many referrals can you generate in a month?

Start increasing your revenue with these straightforward, proven steps - all achieved without discounting. You will see an immediate impact to your bottom line and set your business to be successful for years to come.

Caroline Shin is the co-founder of Store Vantage, a web-based appointment system that boosts business profits by bringing customers back and driving referrals. Caroline is passionate about customer service and has spent the bulk of her career working for companies, small and large, that embrace technology to deliver excellent customer experiences. She is also the owner of Spot Pet Care, a pet grooming store in Northern California.

BREAD & BUTTER GROOMING:
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PET TRIMS FOR THE SALON

By Kathy Rose



AMERICAN STYLE BEDLINGTON IN A SNAP!

The Bedlington Terrier, with his oh so soft and virtually shed-proof coat, is becoming increasingly popular and joining the ever-growing list of our “Bread and Butter” clients. As professionals, it is our responsibility to ensure our familiarity with this breed and be able to create a reasonable facsimile of the breed standard when presented with one.

The time to hand-scissor this unique trim may break our proverbial time bank as well as the client’s wallet. In this session, we will discuss methods that permit us to offer a fast and easy pet trim and still turn out a sharp representation of the breed.

The blade choices will vary depending upon the skin sensitivity of the dog and, of course, the

skill level of the stylist. A Bedlington presented for the show ring would most likely sport #40 blade work on the face, ears, and tail. This is not always practical in a salon situation and can actually be detrimental because of the reasons mentioned above.

In my salon, we generally use a 15 or a 30 blade for the short work, with the exception of very sensitive dogs where a 10 is required. I suggest clipping with the coat growth until you are secure in your abilities and the dog’s tolerance.

As always, skilled and thorough prep work is essential. With a soft coat, fluff drying is essential. Product application and products, such as texture-enhancing shampoo, will ease your scissoring efforts and help

to ensure a positive final outcome.

FIG. 1: While supporting the ear flat in your hand, clip the ear leather from just above the fold at the skull to approximately one inch above the bottom of the ear, creating an inverted “V.” Do not clip into the skull coat.

Continued on next page



Use extreme caution to avoid cutting the flap of skin on the inside of the ear.

FIG. 2: Trim the throat necklace, forming a “U” to approximately one inch above the breastbone.

Trim the front of the lips just under the nose.

FIG. 3: Trim the tail, creating a “V” approximately two and one-half to three inches from the tail root.

With a 5F, trim from under the ear down the chest and sides of the shoulder. Switch to a 4F and, starting where you left off with the 5 on the shoulder, clip down the ribs, starting at the spring of rib (widest part of rib cage) and falling off before the rib cage curves into the undercarriage. Use a skimming technique over the groin to avoid an hourglass shape. The ribs should appear flat. Do not clip the crest of the neck.

FIG. 4: Continue clipping from the croup down the longer tail coat and down the back part of the upper thigh to about two inches above the hock.

FIG. 5: Switching to an “A” snap-on comb, clip the back, starting just behind the withers. Blend into the side coat.

FIG. 6: Using a #1 snap-on comb against the hair growth pattern, clip the undercarriage. The chest should appear deep and the brisket should reach the elbow. If the dog is lacking there, use a longer attachment.

Using an “A” or an “O” snap-on comb, clip the legs from top to bottom following the contour of the legs.

At this point, the entire dog has been “roughed” in with blades and snap-on combs, and the length patterns have been set. We only need now to blend all the areas and con-

nect them for a finish that is smooth and well blended. Begin by locating the dip just behind the withers and make a small indentation at this area. Now move to the rear and trim the edges of the “V” on the tail.

FIG. 7: Using long curved scissors, trim over the croup and onto the back. The highest point of the “roach” should be in line with the tuck-up.

FIG. 8: Once over the highest point, invert your scissors to descend down to the withers in a smooth flowing line. Do not cut into the crest of the neck.

Using long curved scissors, blend the ribs to the back, keeping in mind the ribs should appear relatively flat. Now blend down to the undercarriage. There should be no evidence of a skirt. Finish the body by completing the undercarriage. Using shorter curved scissors, fine-tune the tuck-up very close to the skin and line it up with the highest point of the “roach.” The underline and top-line should follow the same contour, and the brisket should reach the elbow.

FIG. 9: Tighten up the lines of the legs, creating smooth parallel lines from the shoulder down the sides of the front leg and from the hip to the foot. The knee is well angulated (bent) and the pasterns sloping (angled toward the foot).

FIG. 10: Round the feet following the natural outline of a hare foot (oval).

FIG. 11: Trim the outside edges of the ear with finishing scissors, trimming with the hair growth pattern. Trim straight across the bottom of the ear tassel for a tidy finish.

FIG. 12: Because the Bedlington head is so unique, there really is not an efficient snap-on comb shortcut. The head should appear

Continued on page 48



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

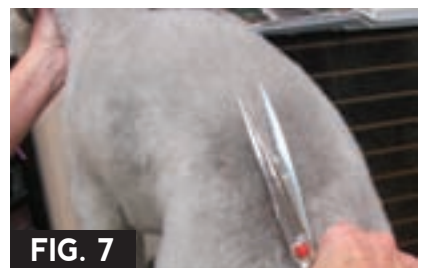


FIG. 7

long, narrow, and rounded without any indication of stop or hourglass shape. Begin with your long straight scissors parallel to the cheek, and trim the line from the eye to the ear and from the nose to the corner of the eye.

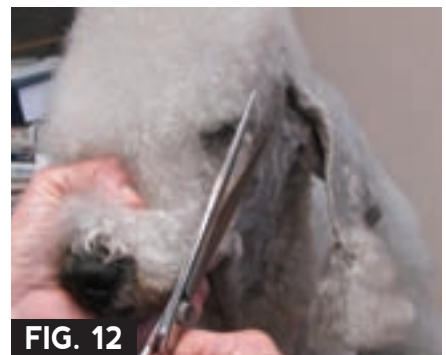
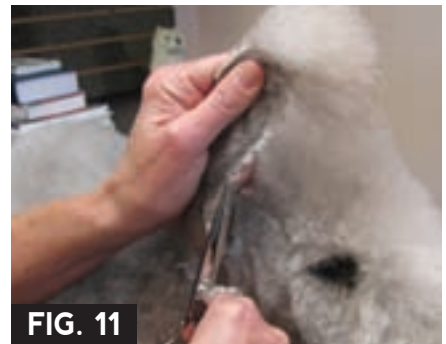
It is possible to remove the coat from the outside of the eye without creating an indentation when viewed from the front by placing your scissors flush against the cheek and trimming the outside of the eye. The eye is visible when viewed from the side but not when viewed from the front.

FIG. 13: Switch to long curved shears and trim the foreface to the point above the occipital bone.

FIG. 14: Using long straight shears, trim straight down from the high point of the occiput to the mark you made just behind the withers.

The Bedlington can be a challenge for even the most skilled stylists because of the soft coat and the unique style profile. However, a clean, tidy trim that is loyal to the essence of the breed profile is not

only possible but profitable. Your ability to produce a nice pet trim, without breaking your time budget will keep your Bread and Butter clients shouting your praises to all of their friends and help you to stand out from your competition.



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GETTING STARTED

AN EXCERPT FROM *GROWING YOUR OWN DOGGIE DAYCARE: A START-UP AND OPERATIONAL GUIDE FOR SUCCESS*

BY WHEELER DEL TORRO



KNOWING YOUR GOALS

Many business owners feel either successful or not depending on the current situation they perceive at their company. Truly successful business owners, however, measure their success against their progress toward their goals.

When you're setting your goals, there are several criteria to keep in mind. Goals need to be achievable and measurable in order to be good

goals. Making a goal achievable seems obvious, but many new business owners set goals that are not realistic for their business and then constantly feel like they're failing. To avoid this pitfall, consider breaking up your goals into one-, five-, and ten-year goals. You can even add in smaller benchmark goals along the way to see that you're making progress. Making a goal measurable is also essential. A good goal has a

way to measure, or track, your progress toward that goal. For instance, if one of your goals is to have 50 dogs signed up for regular daycare classes by the end of the year, you can easily break down how many dogs you need to add each month and track your progress. You can also see if you are falling short of that goal in any given month and increase your marketing accordingly.

The following questions can help you determine your goals:

- How much money in profit do you want to make?
- How much take-home pay do you want to make?
- How many dogs do you want to have?
- How many employees do you want to have?
- How much money do you want to be able to invest back into your company?

Before opening your business, you should have a clear idea of your goals. They should be broken down into personal goals for yourself as the business owner and company goals that you will share with your manager and staff. Your systems should be laid out according to how

Continued on page 52

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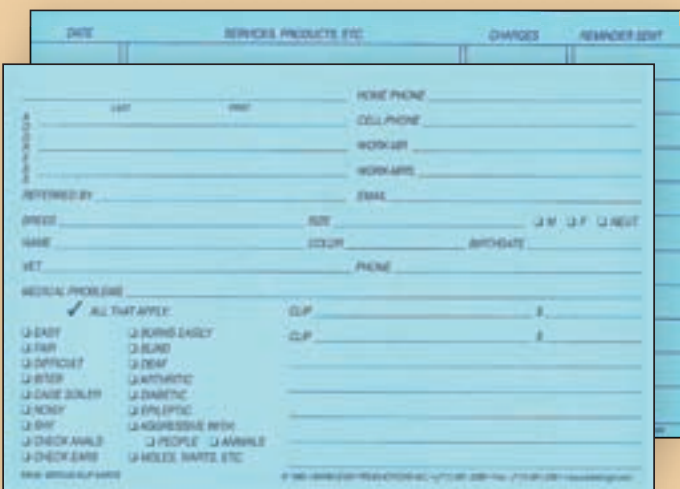
- #145 White
- #140 Blue
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- #143 Lavender
- #144 Pink
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- #141 Extenders

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Pack of 100	\$18
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#147 Giant Klip Kard Special 5 x 8	\$59



Medium Klip Kard

4" x 6" Medium Client Index Card offers space for pet description, medical problems, referral, birthday, vet phone and clip. Popular pet profile checklist denotes conditions about the pet. Back has date, services, charges and reminder sent date. Extenders can be attached when back is full. Mix and match in packs of 100 when buying 1000.

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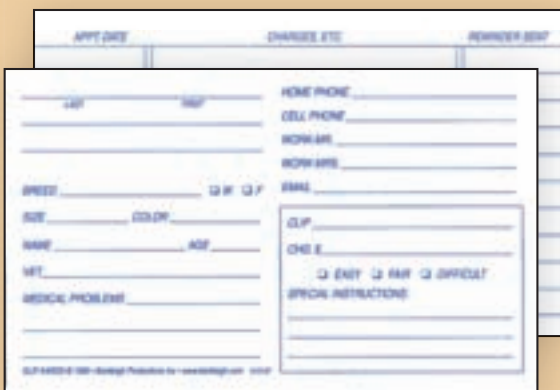


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Includes 250 Klip Kards, File Box, and set of Alphabetical Index Guides



Regular Klip Kard

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Kage Kard Holder



you will measure progress toward each goal and how you will communicate that progress to your staff. (Don't underestimate the motivating effect that proof of progress can have on a good staff.) Company goals should be included in the training for new staff as well as displayed prominently in the office.

Remember to celebrate your success toward each goal and when you achieve that goal at the end of the year. Once you're finished celebrating, it will be time to start the goal-setting process again. As the business develops, goals should be updated and changed so that everyone stays motivated and succeeding.

CLARIFYING YOUR SKILLS

Basically, you're taking your resources – knowledge about dogs, good business sense, and self-motivation – and using them to make profits by doing something you love.

Assuming you've got the capital together (even if you start small), there's nothing to stop you from running a successful doggie daycare center. You know what you want, why, and with the help of this book, how to do it.

Is this the right career for me? Some people go into animal-related careers, because they find it easier to work with animals than with people. However, a large portion of your time will be spent managing the expectations of a demanding clientele – dog owners. No matter how well you train your staff, a lot of clients will run straight to you with any questions. In fact, it's a delicate balance between making your clients feel important and being able to get on with your day. Believe me, on some days, you'll wish you could just roll in the grass with the dogs.

It can be a physically demanding business, too. Many people who

work with dogs, particularly if there is washing or grooming involved, have physical complaints like back strain. Consider attending sessions at a local yoga studio to increase your flexibility and strength. While it's tempting to think that you can hire someone to do it for you, it's usually the owner who ends up wrestling a muddy dog into a bath at the end of the day.

It is essential for you to have leadership skills with animals, as well. You should be well-versed in dog learning theory, pack behavior, and dog body language. If you have already worked as a dog walker or trainer, you'll have a good idea of your skill level. If you've had dogs for many years, you'll have a sense of your one-on-one style. Just make sure that you are good with group dynamics and "difficult" dogs.

Finally, you need to have a solid work ethic and a willingness to

Continued on page 54

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This popular Client Record Index Card has all the information any kennel or day care operator needs. Kenn-L-Kards offer boarding, medical and grooming profiles. Easy checklist eliminates tedious handwriting. Speeds your recordkeeping. Extender cards double your records space. Just attach to the back of a full Kenn-L-Kard.



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#159 Green

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work long hours, with an irregular schedule, without supervision or the “motivation” of a boss. This is especially true during the first few years as you start up and develop your reputation, as well as during any lean times that your business might face. You can’t pay someone else to run your business. Nobody will care about it as much as you.

Some of your friends or family might be encouraging you to stick with the security of the nine-to-five grind. They may be worried that you’re taking too big of a financial risk, particularly if you’re one of the first entrepreneurs in your family or social circle. If you know what

you want to do and you understand the risks, don’t bother arguing with them. Just smile, shrug, and start building your business.

IDENTIFYING YOUR MARKET

The market for doggie daycare is hot. Despite the fact that people have gotten busier and busier, and even though times have gotten tougher for many Americans, pet ownership, as well as spending on pet care, is on the rise. In 2001, Americans spent \$28.5 billion on pet care; that number jumped to \$43 billion in 2008 and continues to grow at a rate of 5% annually. The number of pet-owning house-

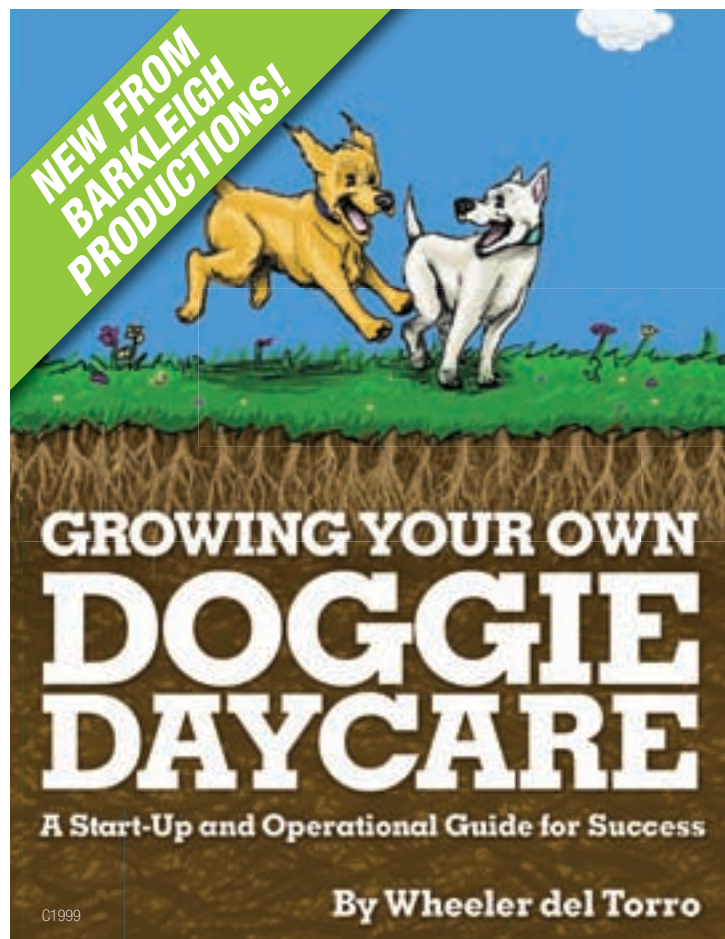
holds in the U.S. has climbed to 63%, (including 75 million dogs!) according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Also, the mentality of pet ownership has changed, with owners having much more committed, almost parent-like, relationships with their pets. The American Animal Hospital Association reports that 75% of American pet owners would willingly go into debt for their animals, and a recent Home Care Council survey reported that more than 60% of pet owners think of their pets as “surrogate children.” The same survey also found that 22% of respondents felt closer to their pets than to their own partners.

The typical dog daycare client is a household with two adults who both work and have no children. These two-income families have, in effect, made the dog the child

Continued on page 56

IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO DO AND YOU UNDERSTAND THE RISKS, DON'T BOTHER ARGUING WITH THEM.



There’s nothing to stop you from running a successful doggie daycare center.

- Wheeler del Torro, author

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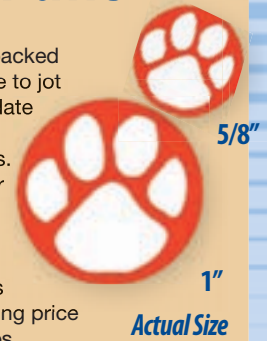
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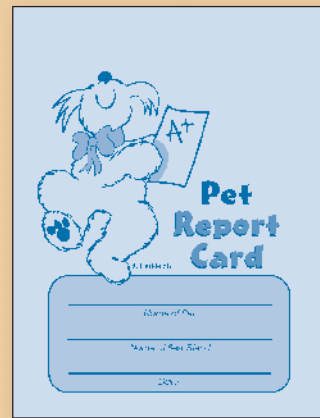


Tan Appt. Kard

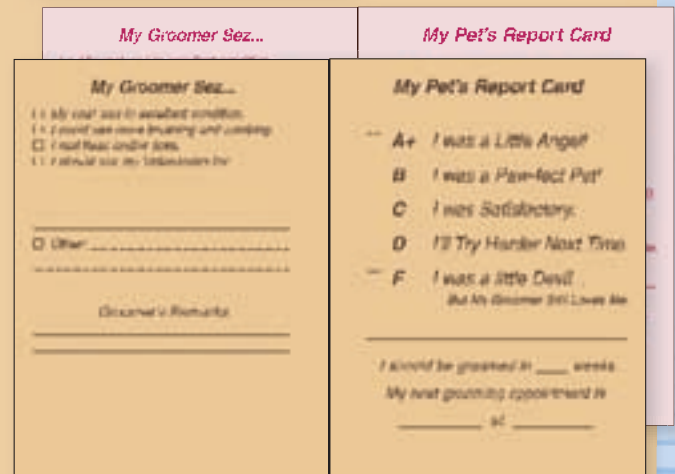
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#163	KAGE KARD HOLDER 3 X 5
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10 holders	\$35



of the family and are quite willing to pay for daycare to ensure their pet's happiness and well-being. These types of owners know that a happy dog is a tired dog, and they understand the pitfalls of leaving their dogs home alone all day while they're away at work.

Not only are individuals giving more care to their pets, but the public is demanding more accountability of pet owners. There are more leash laws and pooper-scooper laws. Noise complaints are being taken more seriously. Dog owners today know that they need to get their dogs obedience training, a component of most doggie daycare centers. Dog parties, dog walking services, professional grooming, and personalized dog care are becoming more and more popular.

In short, we're on the cusp of a change in the market for doggie daycare. Starting with the wealthy

and now the middle classes, people have been slowly readjusting their expectations to see that doggie daycare is worth the expense. It's becoming more and more socially unacceptable for people to leave the dogs at home all day in the (dog) house. There's a growing demand for quality doggie daycare, and in many regions, there are not enough centers to meet the demand.

That's where you step in.

WHAT IT IS LIKE TO OWN A DOGGIE DAYCARE

Owning a dog daycare business is fun and rewarding. With the growing number of caring dog owners realizing the benefits of leaving their beloved dogs at daycare with other dogs instead of at home alone while they are at work, it is a smart way to turn your love for dogs into a profitable business. Seeing the excitement and anticipation of

the dogs when they come in to play with their friends is gratifying. The parents are very grateful to have a place where they feel comfortable knowing that their four-legged child is getting the proper care in an environment designed especially for them. Dogs are social creatures, and parents are thankful they are spending the workday playing, socializing, learning, and creating fewer problems at home.

Owning a dog daycare business allows you to connect with nature and to enhance the human-dog bond. When you work in the dog business, there's never a dull moment. Caring for others is a hard job; it requires long hours, stamina, patience, and attention to detail. Dogs can be unpredictable, so you must stay on your toes to ensure safety. Dog daycare owners must be self-motivated, have good people skills, and be assertive pack leaders.

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C1989

Rescue Remedy and a chicken sandwich, we were back. Josh was regaining his strength, but we had sat out of the competition and lost valuable time. I wasn't sure if I could complete him with the time I had left. Kathy Rose announced "scissors down" just as I added a couple feathers for a headpiece. After all that coat growth, I just didn't have time to finish what I had planned. We still managed to get third place and the coveted People's Choice Award. Lori again got first place, and the "Lion King" managed to remain undefeated.

I decided to go ahead and take the design to one more show: Atlanta Pet Fair. I just had to complete this design that I had worked so hard to perfect.

Just a couple weeks before Atlanta, my mother passed away. I was devastated. I had no intentions of going anywhere, especially so soon after her death. My mother was my soul, my greatest fan, my seamstress, and my inspiration.

In the days before Atlanta, my entire family pushed me to go on and do what my mom would have wanted me to do. "She would want you to go, Angela!" is what my dad was telling me. I agreed to go but wasn't sure if I would compete. I just wasn't up to it. The night before we left, I told my dad, "I will work on my dog, and if I can do it, I will. For my mom!"

It was time to get the dogs ready, and I am sure everyone thought I had lost my mind. I just kept talking to my mom while I was working on Zoë, just like she was standing there. When I was done, I was so excited. It was beautiful, and win or lose, I was happy. I pulled it together and completed the design; my mom would have been so proud. We won first place and People's Choice.



Top: Preparing for Atlanta Pet Fair just after Pasadena

Middle and bottom: At Atlanta Pet Fair, where "Cherokee Heritage" took First Place



Angela Kampe, winner of the 2010 Groom & Kennel Expo People's Choice Award, with "Cherokee Heritage"

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New Product News

Dr. Emmo's Unique Pet-Clenz



Dr. Emmo's Unique Pet-Clenz "First Aid" Products include: Wound Care Wash, Wound Care Spray Gel and Ear Care Rinse. The products are all natural, anti-biotic free and are safe for

use on all pets. Each contains a special anti-microbial solution that kills common bacteria, germs and fungi. For more information, request Reader Service Card #9061.

Andis 90th Anniversary Limited Editions

Andis Company introduces limited editions of two products to commemorate company's ninety year anniversary: the 90th Anniversary UltraEdge Clipper and UltraEdge #10 Blade which feature an engraved 90th anniversary logo. The #10 blade is also available as part of a 5-piece set of popular blades, called the Blade Packup. The UltraEdge Clipper has two speeds and runs at up to



strokes per minute. Its sealed motor is powerful, yet quiet. The motor runs so cool that fans and air vents, which can become clogged with hair, are not needed. The clipper has detachable blades and is maintenance free, requiring no oil or greasing of internal parts. It has a heavy duty cord and a locking switch. The clipper is made in the U.S., comes with a one year warranty and is compatible with all Andis UltraEdge and CeramicEdge blades, as well as most other detachable blades. For more information, request Reader Service Card #9058.

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The JUICE Clipper is part of Oster Professional Products' newest series of high-performance clippers and trimmers powered by Lithium Ion Technology. Designed with power and versatility in mind, the Juice features a permanent Li-Ion battery that runs for hours on a single charge and boasts a high-speed, powerful motor that runs up to 10,000 RPM. The cordless option maximizes your cutting

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Calendar of Events

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info@barkleigh.com
www.groomandkennel-
expo.com

FLORIDA NDGAA FUN IN THE SUN

10/26/2012 - 10/28/2012
Orlando, FL
(724) 962-2711
ndga@nationaldog-
groomers.com
www.ndgaa.com

ILLINOIS ALL AMERICAN GROOM- ING SHOW

8/09/2012 - 8/12/2012
Wheeling, IL
(847) 364-4547
www.aagrmgshow.com

BACKER CHRISTMAS TRADE SHOW

10/12/2012 - 10/14/2012
Chicago, IL
(312) 578-1818
hhbacker@hhbacker.com

NEVADA SUPERZOO

9/11/2012 - 9/13/2012
Las Vegas, NV
(626) 447-2222
www.superzoo.org

PENNSYLVANIA GROOM EXPO 2012

9/6/2012 - 9/9/2012
Hershey, PA
(717) 691-3388
info@barkleigh.com
www.groomexpo.com

RHODE ISLAND NEPGP SUMMERFEST

7/13/2012 - 7/15/2012
Warwick, RI
(413) 219-0291
lindacc@nepgp.com
www.nepgp.com

TEXAS U. S. PET PRO CLASSIC

11/2/2012 - 11/5/2012
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classic@petstylist.com
www.petstylist.com

WASHINGTON NORTHWEST GROOMING SHOW

3/15/2013 - 3/17/2013
Tacoma, WA
(717) 691-3388
info@barkleigh.com
www.nwgroom.com

CANADA

CANADIAN NATIONAL PET INDUSTRY TRADE SHOW

9/16/2012 - 9/17/2012
Mississauga, Ontario CN
www.pijaccanada.com

GROOMING EXTRAVAGANZA

9/29/2012 - 10/1/2012
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EVENTS

GROOM EXPO

9/6/2012 - 9/9/2012
9/19/2013 - 9/22/2013
Hershey, PA

PET BOARDING & DAYCARE EXPO

11/6/2012 - 11/8/2012
Baltimore, MD

GROOM & KENNEL EXPO

2/21/2013 - 2/24/2013
Pasadena, CA

NORTHWEST GROOMING SHOW

3/15/2013 - 3/17/2013
Tacoma, WA

PETQUEST

June 2013
Wilmington, OH

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Barkleigh Productions Purchases The All American Grooming Show

Several years ago, Sally told me that if we ever had a chance to buy the *All American Grooming Show*, I should jump on the opportunity. The tradition, identity, and region of the country are all great. Last year at the show, I was talking to Jerry, and as he was about to walk away, he said something to the effect of "You should make an offer to buy the show." I was so taken off guard that I was speechless. I mentally regrouped and approached him to verify that he was, in fact, serious. He assured me that he was. After a few months of some surprisingly seamless negotiations, we had a deal. And here is the press release announcing that deal:

Jerry Schinberg, founder and owner of *The All American Grooming Show* in the Chicago, IL, area has announced that he has reached a sales agreement with *Barkleigh Productions, Inc.* to sell *The All American Grooming Show* following the 2012 40th Annual event.

Originally called the *Midwest Professional Dog Grooming Contest and Seminar*, *The All American Grooming Show*, established in 1973, is the longest running grooming trade show and competition. Schinberg states that he started the show because he "saw a need for groomers to get out of their shops and come together to learn and to hone their skills." The show has grown to be the largest pet care event in the Midwest. Last year's show drew 68 vendors in 97 booths and nearly 1500 attendees. It annually features many of the top speakers in the pet industry. Schinberg was also instrumental in the creation of *Groom Team USA* and was the pioneer of competitive creative grooming.

Barkleigh Productions Inc. is the producer of *Groom Expo*, *Groom & Kennel Expo*, *Pet Boarding & Daycare Expo*, and other grooming trade shows. They also publish *Groomer to Groomer* and *Pet Boarding & Daycare* magazines. *Barkleigh* president Todd Shelly states, "We are excited to continue with the tradition that Jerry has created. The show has a great identity. We hope to make the transition as seamless as possible." Shelly also indicated that Schinberg will be used at future shows to emcee events.



todd@barkleigh.com



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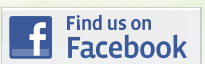
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