

Groomers Vary on Selling Home Grooming Products

By Kathleen Mangan

Groomers cover the full spectrum on the issue of selling grooming products for home use, from not selling any at all to offering an entire wall of grooming and spa products.

Justin Jones, co-owner of Grapevine-Texas-based Espreo Animal Products, which started in 1989 with natural products geared initially to the grooming market, said groomers are key product influencers, since pet owners see them as pet care experts.

“Groomers can leverage their expertise and background to help the dog, help customers make purchase decisions and enhance their shop’s profits at the same time,” he said.

Some groomers in the industry see things differently. Carmel, Ind.-based Platinum Paws co-owner B.C. Henschen said they don’t sell much shampoo because their customers don’t wash their own dogs. Instead, customers have regular standing appointments at the salon. However, the groom shop does sell some extras such as tear stain and shedding products to use at home.

The New York City-based New York Dog Spa and Hotel sells products for home use between grooming visits since dogs get dirty in the city, but the product recommended depends on the type of dog, according to co-owner Naresh Jessani. Shampoo and conditioners work for some dogs, but sprays or wipes are better for certain breeds, he added. For instance, a bath for a dog with a knotted coat could make the knots tighter and closer to the skin if a groomer didn’t detangle and brush the knots out first.

Various approaches seem to work better for different groomers when it comes to the bottom line. Maria Ruezga, owner of Mutt Cutts Dog Spa and Boutique, sells all the products she uses for grooming, including the cologne.

“Dog owners aren’t bringing their dogs in for professional grooming as often in the current economy,” she said.

The key to selling home-use products is explaining the product benefits, not just the product features, Ruezga added.

For groomers seeking to add these types of products to their offerings, various sales strategies may be needed depending on a number of factors. At Canine Creature Comforts in Malverne, Pa., owner Amy Parsons said she encourages customers to purchase the grooming products she uses by explaining that consistent product use protects the dog’s skin and coat. She said her sales secret is the product’s wonderful scent—customers want their dogs to smell that good all the time. She added that the shop tested a lot of products to find its signature scent.

Janene Zakrajsek, co-owner of Pussy and Pooch in Los Angeles and Long Beach, Calif., said she sells tons of home grooming products and suggested it’s all about presentation. Her two stores feature a whole spa wall of shelves that are fully stocked with nine complete product lines.

“When you’re selling a \$28 bottle of dog shampoo, the presentation has to justify the price,” she said.

The staff educates customers on the product choices and up-sells all the special extras.

“Our products enhance and extend our service offering,” Zakrajsek added.