

Special Report: Long-Term Health and Wellness



Photos courtesy of Pure and Natural Pet

From Pg. 28

rely on and trust.

"When VetriScience provides education on our products through our Retailer Education Portal, we talk about supporting a pet's health through supplements throughout their lives," said Derek Archambault, VP of Marketing for FoodScience. "It is a difficult concept to market since we can't say a supplement 'prevents' anything, but we can talk about the systems that various supplements support and how that can help with everyday health."

Pure and Natural Pet have recognized how pet owners have elevated their pets' status in the family. "There is a difference between having a pet and having a pet family member," said Julie Creed, VP Sales and Marketing for Pure and Natural Pet. "Those with pets as part of their family have a greater understanding that caring for your pets' health involves more than just their food and treats. Wellness also involves the care of their teeth, ears, nose, paws, skin and coat."

"Our grooming and wellness products are multi-functional in their approach," Creed continued. "Our shampoos not only clean and moisturize, but also have key ingredients that promote healing and healthier skin. The same holds true with our wellness products. We explain and promote how our products and the ingredients in them, can have a huge impact on the overall health of their pet through our marketing, our labels and packaging as well as all of the educational information we provide on the Pure and Natural Pet website."

Leaders in this space have been mak-

ing progress with their endeavor to impress upon consumers and retailers the mindset: If you use higher-end products daily, we will have a more valuable and happier consumer.

"From a financial standpoint, it's more upfront cost to purchase a skin care line for your pet but the benefit is you're not going to have to go to the veterinarian as often and you're not going to have to pay for prescription medication," Gilcrest with Skout's Honor said. "You're not going to have to be on that constantly. You're going to save money there. Then also, ultimately they're going to feel their best and be a happier animal on a regular basis. They're not going to have to go through that treat-and-repeat cycle. It's also shown Millennials are willing to spend more money on natural and sustainable products than any other generation. For retailers at least, it's less of a hard sell now than it's ever been for solutions that work. It used to be a big ask, but that they're walking into it with an expectation that they're willing to do that."

"We focus on the effectiveness of our products through studied ingredients and clinically tested products, rather than focusing on price points and discounts," Archambault with VetriScience said. "We feel that it is important to be able to provide a high-quality product that works rather than chasing specific price points. We want VetriScience to be accessible to as many consumers as possible and want price points that help more pets, but also want to balance that with great products that actually work, which will save consumers money in the long-term."

"It's not about the price point, it's about the ingredients," Creed with Pure and Natural Pet said. "We often state, 'a happy and healthier pet starts with the ingredients!' This is a consistent branded message in all of our product categories and something that is actively discussed and promoted through our social media, blogs, catalog, newsletter, ads and popular education series."

One advantage for Skout's Honor is the term "probiotics" is not new to consumers which has provided a steppingstone for the company to begin a dialogue with pet owners, retailers and groomers during the company's educational outreach. "People now understand probiotics as a healthy wellness word in pet, but most often in the food category or the treat category or the supplement category, like an ingestible type of thing," Gilcrest said. "People understand what that means. Typically when they think about probiotics they think about balancing out the gut or healthy bacteria. That has helped us with people who do already have some knowledge about probiotics and wellness trends. We've definitely been able to grab those people easier because they already understand how the technology works for themselves and also from a diet standpoint."

"On the other side, it definitely caused some challenges for education," she continued. "One thing we've done really well is we went to the grooming community first. We did an extensive education outreach campaign to professional groomers to get the product in their hands and explain to them how it works

Cont'd on Pg. 32

Special Report: Long-Term Health and Wellness

From Pg. 30

and get their feedback which helped us learn and strategize on how to position it to pet parents, which was great. We do get a lot of people who already come at this from a, 'I want the best wellness products for my pet because it's what I take, it's what my kids take. And I want the best for my pet.' We also grab a lot of people who didn't know the solution existed and they were just looking for something natural but then realized that the probiotics give it an extra boost on top of being a natural product. It's an active solution as well."

"VetriScience finds that helping consumers understand that supplements for their pets is like what they are doing for themselves is big step towards getting them to try them for the first time," Archambault explained. "We often do that in our social media and blogs and in addition, we are able to leverage our history in the vet channel to reinforce that with expertise."

"We have worked hard to educate consumers and retailers on the importance of healthy ingredients for all of their pet products," Pure and Natural Pet's Creed said. "When we are working with consumers who are already aware of the health benefits of organic and natural products, they are thrilled to have it available for their pets as well. When you sleep with your pet and it is truly treated like a member of the family, you want to make sure that they are well-groomed—without harmful ingredients—and fed a healthy and nutritious diet. From dental and oral care to flea & tick protection, owners want to make sure that they are providing the best and healthiest care possible."

"We're always looking for feedback from our customers," Gilcrest said. "There really hasn't been a specific campaign necessarily, it's been introducing the idea of topical probiotics as a wellness solution. That was really our biggest hurdle because it was so brand new, it was a new concept for the pet industry. Although it isn't a new thing for humans, there are a lot of beauty and cosmetic lines for human skin care that are very successful because of the probiotic technology they use. The technology is very effective for humans, there's

countless dermatological studies on that and how that technology can solve problems like dryness and acne and rosacea and all of these skin problems in humans. That was our biggest hurdle from a campaign standpoint was educating people and getting them to trust and try the products. Once we were able to do that and get the products into as many hands as possible, we were overwhelmed with the testimonials and the experience coming back from pet parents who were telling us these were truly life changing products. Where things they tried, the treat-and-repeat, they tried steroids, they tried antibiotics, but the problems would just keep coming back. They tried oatmeal shampoos or natural grooming products, but it wasn't solving the problem. Our solutions were finally giving them something that was not only making their animal more comfortable and treating the problem but it was also preventing it from coming back."

"The educational campaign on why probiotics and how it can make a difference and then making sure we could get as many products in as many hands as possible and gathering testimonials is what was the most effective thing for us. That's why having witnessed the success of it from a business standpoint for us and also from a customer experience standpoint, that's why we've built out that line more extensively over the last couple of years," she continued. "We've created a ton more products with that technology as a base. It doesn't just work as a grooming product, it's not just an incredible shampoo but the technology itself is able to be an incredible ear cleaning solution. It's an incredible itch relief solution. It's an incredible paw spray solution for pets who can't stop licking and chewing their paws. The probiotics work for most problems people face with their pets' skin. We were able to build that line out for very specific problems pet parents have."

"The two things that really stand out in this area is providing education to our retailers through our Retailer Education Portal and providing more options on supplement flavors and conditions," Archambault said. "The education helps retailers understand our products better and the flavor options make it easier

for pet parents to give them GlycoFlex hip and joint and Composure behavior supplements every day, as it makes it feel more like a treat."

"This time frame nearly captures the birth of the company," Creed said. "In the past five years, we have gone from USDA Certified Organic shampoos to also include wellness products, most notably our Organic Dental Solutions and biodegradable Pet Wipes. We also launched a groomer-specific line: PRO-Coat Grooming. We support both brands and our retailers with an Educational Series. Our products have amassed over 50 awards and also been tethered to our philanthropy that aids service dogs for Veterans with Paws for Life K9 Rescue and the planting of nearly 2,000 trees with One Tree Planted."

For Healers Petcare, the new year means focusing on the company's goals.

"Our goal for 2022 is to continue to build on our foundation and continue to provide outstanding service to our customers," said CEO and President Terri Entler. "We had a great year even with Covid challenges. Our customers have been so supportive and have responded well to our lines. So in 2022 getting our message out and finding new ways to help pets and their parents keep healthy is top priority for us. One way to do this is by expanding out pet health education through our blogs and videos."

"The new year is a good time to reflect on what has gone well, where there's room for growth and to remind ourselves of our mission as a company," Derek Bodkin, Pet Sales Specialist for Nordic Naturals said earlier this year. "When we focus on that, our goals for the year ahead are always a bit clearer. We're exploring new and innovative ideas for product development, and we plan to bring forward marketing and education that serves our customers' interests today, whether that's premium products, the latest nutritional information, or top-notch service."

In January, Healers Petcare announced a pilot project, set to launch this month, of a new technology related to its supplement line. "It not only reduces environmental waste but will help pet parents remember to give their

Cont'd on Pg. 34