

# How does Pets at Home deliver pawositively outrageous service?

Since being founded in 1991, **Pets at Home** has become the number one specialty pet product and accessory retailer in the UK. Year-after-year, the organisation continues to expand its store coverage while experiencing massive sales and market share growth. In today's economic climate, what's the secret to its success? Exceptional customer service delivered by engaged, passionate colleagues who seem to have a whole lot of fun.

The challenge: Equipping managers with training and tools to continually engage and empower individuals and teams. Finding innovative ways to recognise and reward colleagues, continually recruiting top talent who understand and live the values of the business.

## JOURNEY TO RECOGNITION

With company values such as 'It should be fun' and 'We work as a team', Pets at Home management has always strived to create an environment for colleagues to feel recognised and rewarded. But a 2007 annual engagement survey indicated people did not feel appreciated. Coupled with rapid store growth, leaders

were looking for actionable tools to make colleagues feel valued and part of a team—whether they were in the distribution center, home office, retail stores, or grooming salons. Inherently knowing the 'why' recognition was important, the HR leadership team looked for ways to bring in the 'how' of embedding recognition into every facet of the Pets at Home culture.

## PARTNERING WITH O.C. TANNER

Pets at Home turned to O.C. Tanner's Learning Group to help develop a training-based strategy. A kickoff keynote exposed 700 Pets at Home managers to the philosophy behind recognition. Following this presentation, senior retail managers also attended "Recognition Training". The idea of noticing every day effort and appreciating great work is firmly part of the Pets at Home culture. Now, there are informal celebrations and presentations marked by the ringing of a bell in the Support Office, formal banquets and awards for service and employee of the year, performance awards, appreciation certificates, and of course, handwritten thank you notes. "There are lots of things that you get recognised for and lots of ways they support

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### Pets at Home

- Specialist retailer of pet food, pet-related products and accessories, fish and small animals
- £517 million pound-a-year business
- 6,000 colleagues in 347 stores

you. You feel valued, you feel that they trust you; it's empowering," says Deputy Store Manager Lynn Mathews.

"Letting people know they're doing a good job is great, it's a morale booster. It gets people to where they need to be," points out warehouse buddy and trainer Steve McConnell.

### RESULTS DELIVERED FOR PETS AT HOME

Results to date are impressive. In making recognition a top priority, Pets at Home has experienced:

- » Turnover reduced from 68% to 16.5%
- » A 2012 engagement survey with 98% participation and an engagement index of 92%
- » Being named number 1 in *The Sunday Times*, Top 25 Big Companies to work for list

"We're fortunate that as a business our people get it. They get that it yields bigger returns. With the recognition training, our managers walked away with ideas whizzing around their heads as to what they could do immediately in their areas, regions, and

stores." –Ryan Cheyne, People Director

### KEY LEARNINGS

- » Culturally, hundreds of colleagues are now trying to spot a job well done as opposed to reprimanding for a job done poorly.
- » 'Colleague of the Month' programmes, as well as vouchers that award people for great work, are just two examples of ways noticing effort has impacted day-to-day behaviour.

#### Outcomes are everything

We'd love to share what we've helped Pets at Home and thousands of other clients achieve.

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