

Market key events to maximise margins



Tapping into the vast number of awareness days and events that celebrate our nation's pets is a great way to promote responsible pet ownership as well as your business.

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Think about everything that took place last year: National Black Cat Day, Pet Obesity Awareness Day, Rabbit Awareness Week, Pet Diabetes Month, Pet Dental Care Awareness Month, Puppy Farm Awareness Day and more.

These types of awareness events are very important when it comes to promoting responsible pet ownership, and pet shops

are often, naturally, an essential source of knowledge to pet owners. But as well as being important for animals and their owners, events can also give pet shop profits a much welcome boost.

By getting involved and holding special events in-store and online, you can entice more customers to visit your shop and increase awareness of your business, as well

as knowledge of exactly what it is you have to offer.

Not only will you have customers coming in because they specifically need to buy something, you'll also have customers visiting to support awareness of the issue, and you'll find upselling and cross-selling 'special' products much easier than it is during the rest of the year.

8 marketing ideas for pet awareness events

1 Use social media

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are very popular and perfect for increasing the visibility of your business. Furthermore, pet owners of all ages use social media on a regular basis, so it's a very successful way of reaching out to new customers. Start promoting both the awareness event and whatever you're doing to support it on all of your social media accounts, as well as on your website. If you can get online discussions going about the particular event or awareness day, it gives your customers a more interactive and

3 Make it fun to get involved in

Encourage your customers to take part and you'll be drawing them into your shop and inspiring them to buy from you. You could take part in something that requires sponsorship for National Pet Month, with proceeds going to charity, and encourage your regular customers to take part too. For something like Black Cat Appreciation Day, you could hold a 'champion black cat' competition and display photos of the entrants (your customers' pet black cats, of course!). Then, when people visit your shop, you can ask them to vote for their favourite

price, and display prominently how much customers will be saving compared to buying each item separately.

5 Plan stock well in advance

Whatever the event is raising awareness for, make sure that you have plenty of the relevant products ready for the increased demand. The last thing you want is to be celebrating International Rabbit Day and run out of rabbit food!

"The more original your idea, the more you'll be



Dates on the pet calendar 2015

February

Bird-feeding month
Pet Dental Care Awareness Month
20th Love Your Pet Day
22nd Walking the Dog Day

March

3rd What If Cats and Dogs Had Opposable Thumbs Day!
14th-20th Pet Theft Awareness Week
23rd Puppy Day

April



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2 Set up information booths in your shop

Give away leaflets and, if you can, products that relate to the issue, all in a bag branded with your logo. If it's something like Pet Diabetes Month, make sure that both you and your staff are knowledgeable about the specific issue, because your customers will be coming to you with questions about it.

If it's an event with a practical theme, why not bring in an expert for a day to talk to customers and raise awareness?

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4 Offer discounts and special offers on related products

For example, for Pet Dental Care Awareness month you could offer a free dental product (depending on the pet) with every purchase, or have all pet dental products on special offer for the month. This also works if you give a special offer on a bundle of related products: offer X, Y and Z bought together for a special

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6 Consider partnering with other local businesses

Speak to other local businesses that are involved in the pet trade, such as vets or animal shelters, to see if they'd like to partner with you for an event. Not only is it a mutually beneficial deal in terms of each business's visibility, but it might also help to share the cost if you're planning something big.

7 Advertise, advertise, advertise

Put posters up in-store, and advertise online and in your local press.

If you regularly send out a customer newsletter, either as a hard copy or via email, make sure to include information about your events well in advance to start creating a buzz around them.

Maybe your local newspaper would like to do an interview with you about how you're supporting the awareness event. You won't know if you don't ask!

8 Think outside the box

The more original your idea, the more you'll be remembered and the more sales you'll make.

National Pet Month (April, 2015) even runs annual awards for events held during the month, including a specific category for pet shops/garden centres as well as an overall 'best event' award, so aim to win. Just think of the nationwide publicity that the winners get!

For more information, visit www.nationalmonth.org.uk

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National Pet Month

11th National Pet Day

25th Hairball Awareness Day

28th to May 4th Allergy Awareness Week

June

National Microchip Month

26th Take Your Dog to Work Day

August

8th International Cat Day

17th Black Cat Appreciation Day

22nd Take Your Cat to the Vet Day

27th International Dog Day

30th Holistic Pet Day

September

6th Iguana Appreciation Day

13th Hug Your Hound Day

26th International Rabbit Day

October

4th World Animal Day

8th Pet Obesity Awareness Day

November

Pet Diabetes Month

1st Go Cook for Your Pets Day



Holding themed events for International Whale Shark Day on August 30 or Catfish Day on June 25 could entice more customers into your aquatic store.

