



Helping the Bereaved Customer

Courtesy of: Pet Age Magazine, Source Betty Jane Carmack

Losing a pet is a devastating experience for many pet owners, so shopping for memorial products isn't exactly fun for them. However, you can make things easier. In addition to guiding customers toward the right products for their particular tastes and requirements, be prepared to offer a little extra help during an emotionally difficult time.

Here are some tips and ideas for assisting grieving customers:

- Treat the pet's death as one that deserves the same respect as for a human family member. The grief is very real and should not be trivialized.
- Take time to listen. When people lose a pet they want to be around others who "get it." Ask the customer to tell you about his or her deceased pet and listen to their stories. If you're familiar with the pet, acknowledge how wonderful it was and participate in the remembrances.

- Put together a packet or brochure that connects customers to support resources. Include a list of books on pet bereavement and information about rituals and memorials. Include community resource, such as counselors, support groups and online services. Offering these resources further validates and legitimizes a person's grief, which can be very comforting.

- Create a section in your store to honor pets that have passed on - a memory wall or remembrance board where people can share photos and cherished memories, for example - and invite your customers to participate. This respectful way of honoring your customers' losses and showing compassion in a time of need can be not only a unique way of setting your store apart from the competition, but also could result in positive word-of-mouth and increased patronage.



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Top 10 Pet Friendly Cities

As it becomes more common for people to travel with their pets, cities around the country are beginning to appreciate the discernible impact the doggie dollar is having on their economy. Many cities have adopted the name "Pet Friendly City."

But what does it mean for a city to adopt this title? Generally-speaking, "pet-friendly" can be equated with "dog-friendly" as canines are undoubtedly America's most well-traveled animals.

For this study we look at over 20 criteria. Naturally, it has to be a fun place for dogs and their owners. However, excellent veterinary care and an active humane society are also key elements of a pet-friendly city.

The Top 10 Pet Friendly Cities are:

- San Diego, CA
- Long Beach, CA
- Carmel, CA
- Portland, OR
- Seattle, WA
- Chicago, IL
- New York, NY
- Orlando, FL
- Colorado Springs, CO
- Austin, TX

Courtesy: Dog Fancy & MSNBC.com



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