

So many interesting things cross our desk every week that we can't help but share their stories with you.

The Bark SPOTLIGHT



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Daycares, groomers, trainers, boarding facilities, retail outlets: pet-service ventures are on the upswing, according to Teija Heikkila, principal broker at National Kennel Sales & Appraisals, which handles pet-related businesses and real estate. "Anything that supports and enhances consumers' relationships with their pets will contribute to the growth of this industry, as well as to the businesses within it."

People at all life stages seem to be drawn to this field, from young entrepreneurs to retiring boomers. Heikkila notes that most of the buyers her firm works with are in the middle-aged, change-of-career demographic, in a financial position to do something they

feel passionate about. "A large number of buyers are leaving the corporate world and applying their extensive executive skills to these businesses," she says.

To be successful, those interested in putting their dog love to work need the following: solid business, personnel and financial-management skills; an understanding of what companion animals mean to their people; and an ability to work with people and develop community relationships in this trust-based industry. And, of course, a grasp of canine pack dynamics, health and safety needs.

In working with her clients, Heikkila, a native of Finland, draws upon 18 years of experience as an owner/operator of full-service pet care facilities and 15 years as a contract trainer for Canine Companions for Independence. "The relationship between dogs and their people is becoming increasingly more important in our society, and we are experiencing a big shift in how we view the roles they play in our lives."

nationalkennelsales.com



Tree & Shelby, founders of Picky Puppy Samples

For the Picky Puppy

Just like us, dogs have food preferences. So, we wander up and down the aisles at our local pet store, reading ingredient lists and thinking about taste (our dog's, not ours). We make a choice, bring it home and ... nothing. The dog sniffs the bowl and walks away.

The founder of PickyPuppySamples.com, who goes by the name Tree, had this experience with her young Goldendoodle, Shelby. Shelby had a sensitive stomach, and Tree was willing to try anything with him. Alas, Shelby wasn't having it. As Tree says, "We went from sensitive stomach to grain-free diets, trying several of the top brands and spending a great deal of money, only to throw the food out or scatter it for the local wildlife."

Tree knew that samples made sense in the hunt for an acceptable food, but finding them was time-consuming. Fortunately for the rest of us, Tree was inspired to create her web business, which allows us to find samples of many of the top-rated and best-selling brands in one place. Plus, no waste, and time and money saved. For less than the cost of one bag of premium food, your dog can try out as many as 10 brands in several categories. picky puppiesamples.com

Bark readers: enter promo code **thebark** at checkout and receive two free mystery samples.



Holy Carp!

Talk about your classic win/win: The invasive Asian carp threatening the ecosystems of Midwest waterways have a nutritional profile similar to salmon, minus the worries about mercury. BareItAll, a new company located in Chicago, needed a sustainable source of protein for their line of dog food and treats. Problem solved. Today, the company purchases tons of the wild-caught carp from Downstate Illinois fishermen and turns them into clean, protein-rich canine edibles. The company's goBARE Crunchers, Nibblers and Crisps are free of corn, soy and grains and packed with vegetables, fruits, flaxseed, chickpeas and more. Founders Michael Cody and Logan Honeycutt and their posse of rescue dogs are doing well by doing good. bareitallpetfoods.com

iSpeakDog To help improve the relationship people have with their dogs, The Academy for Dog Trainers, the Humane Rescue Alliance, The Bark, and The Pet Professional Guild have teamed up to launch iSpeakDog, a global campaign and website designed to help people better understand dog body language and behavior. The iSpeakDog Campaign will launch as a weeklong campaign March 27–April 1, 2017. The website, ispeakdog.org, will help teach people how to figure out for themselves what their dogs are doing and why. The site will break

down the common behaviors shown by dogs that tend to frustrate their guardians (i.e. jumping up on people, chewing shoes and pulling on leash) and explain the different emotional states that can drive such behavior (i.e. growling and snapping is often a sign that the dog is scared). The iSpeakDog campaign will include in-person and online dog behavior and body language educational opportunities across the globe, as well as social media events including Ask the Expert on Facebook and Twitter. Mark your calendar and join in ...