



Pet Store Pro® Helps Launch New Product Line

Pet Mystique in Odessa, Texas, is an independent, full-line, 4,500-square-foot pet store that carries a wide range of pets and pet products. In addition to puppies and small animals, this is the go-to location in the region for exotic birds like macaws. The operation is also licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry rare animals like wallabies and primates.

When owner Cindy Beason decided to add freshwater fish to her store's successful retail line, she looked for a way to get her staff up to speed quickly and easily. She read about Pet Store Pro in Pet Age magazine, and decided to give it a try.

"We needed a way to increase our knowledge of fish, especially pond fish, and Pet Store Pro was the ideal program," said Cindy. "We found the program made a big difference throughout our operation."

Created by the Pet Industry Distributors Association (PIDA) and offered free to qualified retailers, Pet Store Pro is an online training tool for pet store owners, managers and employees. Modular content for front-line employees covers customer service and sales, merchandising techniques and basic pet care for birds, cats, dogs, freshwater fish, saltwater fish, reptiles and small animals. Business resources for owners and managers include online retail calculators, how-to articles and an interactive tutorial on retail finance basics.

Pet Store Pro is becoming an integral part of the extensive training program at Pet Mystique.

"Pet Store Pro is helping my people master a wide range of basic and advanced animal care concepts," said Cindy. "I particularly liked that the content does not promote one brand over another."

Cindy offers incentives to employees who complete sections in Pet Store Pro and do well on tests, which inspires her team to pay careful attention to the material. "The tests are challenging!" said Cindy. "They really make you focus on the information and learn it."

Cindy reports that as her staff advances through Pet Store Pro, store sales are on the rise.

"I think the merchandising module really makes a difference," said Cindy. "For example, my sales team became more aware of changing end cap displays and moving product to the front of shelves, and good merchandising increases sales."

The employees at Pet Mystique have a deep commitment to customer service. The staff is known for carrying purchases to customers' vehicles.

"Customer service is what sets us apart from other stores," explained Cindy. "And the smarter we are, the better our customer service."

About PIDA

The Pet Industry Distributors Association (www.pida.org) was organized in 1968 to promote progress within the pet industry and to conduct programs and activities on behalf of the wholesaler-distributor. PIDA's mission is to enhance the well being of the wholesaler-distributor, to promote partnerships with their suppliers and customers, and to work cooperatively with other organizations in fostering the human/companion animal bond. Members include pet product wholesaler-distributors, companion animal wholesalers, and pet product manufacturers.

