



Pet Store Pro[®] Maximizes the Impact of Employee Training

Stop by Critter Company, a 7,000-square-foot, family-owned pet store in Bossier City, Louisiana, on Friday afternoons and you'll find class is in session. That's when the ten employees at this busy store gather to learn about pets and pet products and to review Pet Store Pro training modules.

Owner Randy Moore and his daughter, general manager Juhree Moore, turned to Pet Store Pro as a way to accelerate the training process for their employees.

"When we first saw Pet Store Pro at a distributor open house, we knew immediately how much time it would save us," said Juhree. "We offer a full line of pets and pet products and we need a confident, knowledgeable work force, but we didn't have time to develop a course ourselves."

Created by the Pet Industry Distributors Association (PIDA) and offered free to qualified retailers, Pet Store Pro is an online training tool for people in the pet industry. Separate modules cover customer service and selling skills, merchandising techniques, as well as pet care for birds, cats, dogs, freshwater fish, saltwater fish, turtles and tortoises, snakes, lizards and small animals. A new module on nutrition provides critical information for selling pet food. Pet Store Pro can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection for maximum convenience. And the study guides and tests can be printed for offline use.

"We need our employees to understand and communicate information that pet owners need," said Juhree. "Pet Store Pro helps us reach our goal because it is so comprehensive."

Employees are embracing the training with enthusiasm. They review modules online at the store or at home, depending on their schedules. Then Randy and Juhree hold one-hour review sessions each week, using the information from Pet Store Pro as the foundation of each class. Some employees print the study guides to use as references when they need them. Juhree noted that the people who take the classes most seriously are the highest performers.

"Training pays off right away," said Juhree. "When we finished the saltwater and freshwater fish modules in Pet Store Pro — and they are very information rich — our folks were able to answer questions faster and serve customers better."

The level of detail in Pet Store Pro help the Moores craft review sessions that are focused on the store's particular needs. "Most of our employees are already familiar with dogs, cats, and small animals, but fish and reptiles are a different ballgame," said Juhree. "We need to get everyone up to speed on everything in the store and Pet Store Pro is a great way to do that."

"This is really a no-brainer," laughed Juhree. "Pet Store Pro is comprehensive, easy to use, and it's free! What's not to like?"

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.

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Juhree Moore, Critter Company
Bossier City, Louisiana