

The Well-Groomed Pet

Supplies in the segment freshen up category sales.

May 2, 2016, 04:10 pm By Kathleen Furore,

“Demand for grooming is huge for both dogs and cats.”

That statement, from blogpaws.com, underscores the potential profit retailers can reap by stocking grooming products in the pet aisle.

According to the Greenwich, Conn.-based American Pet Products Association (APPA), expenditures for grooming products are growing at an impressive clip. APPA estimates that 2015 U.S. sales for grooming and boarding supplies and services will total \$5.24 billion, an anticipated jump from actual sales of \$4.84 billion in 2014.

Shay Moeller, North American product manager for consumer pet at Sterling, Ill.-based Wahl Clipper Corp., confirms that the grooming category — which includes shampoo, clippers and other items the company carries — is on the rise. “There has been a big uptick in grooming [product] sales,” notes Moeller.

Trend Drivers

Consumers’ desire to keep their pets well groomed dovetails with the humanization trend, which finds today’s pet parents treating their furry friends as full-fledged family members.

“Pet owners have a strong desire to make sure their pet kids are provided with quality, safe and beneficial products to promote health and happiness,” says Moeller. “This desire is what is driving the growth of grooming for both cats and dogs.”

Many of those pet parents are Millennials, who spend more on pet products and services than their older pet-owning counterparts, according to “Millennials as Pet Market Consumers,” a March 2016 report from Rockville, Md.-based Packaged Facts.

Pet owners in the 18-to-34-year-old age group are much more likely than those in the 35-and-over age group to splurge on pet care services, and to pamper their pets. Dog owners in the 18-to-34-year-old age group are more likely to have purchased pet products and accessories, including grooming supplies, the Packaged Facts report notes, citing Simmons NCS data.

At-home Opportunity

“More and more pet parents seem to be embracing professional grooming services, but are also using grooming tools for at-home use,” remarks Carol Bryant, who handles BlogPaws’ marketing and social media.

“Time, money and the desire to interact with their pet is why more and more pet owners are grooming pets at home,” echoes Moeller. “The connection pet owners get through grooming allows one-on-one companionship. This also gives pet owners early warnings signs if there are skin problems, lumps or



anything else that could be a problem for their pet.”

Consumers' willingness to perform at least some pet-grooming tasks opens the door for grocery retailers to compete with pet specialty stores — traditionally the go-to stops for grooming supplies and on-site services.

“Supermarkets already have pet owners purchasing dog food, treats and other items at their stores,” Moeller says. “We have seen that when supermarkets expand their assortment of grooming products, the supermarkets have seen tremendous growth.”

Calling attention to the selection of grooming supplies can help retailers clean up on sales in this growing pet product segment.

“Supermarkets can use blade signs, product clusters and advertisements to draw attention to the grooming [items] that they offer,” Moeller advises.

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—Shay Moeller, Wahl Clipper Corp.

Pet Product Showcase
Kong Cat Tennis Balls

Why let dogs have all the fun? Kong cat tennis balls promote healthy exercise and fulfill cats' instinctive desires to chase, hunt and capture. Cats won't be able to resist the sound of the interior bell, which encourages exercise in indoor animals. And because they're made with nonabrasive felt, the balls won't harm cats' teeth during play. www.kongcompany.com

Global Harvest Foods Audubon Park Songbird Selections NutriThrive

This made-in-the-USA line of wild-bird food is designed to meet the changing nutritional needs of backyard songbirds. It's made with seeds topped with an oil-based, nutrient-rich coating to provide the vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids they need. No filler seeds are included in the mix.

www.audubonpark.com

Multipet International Pet Products

The company's Pet Voyage Collection, launched at the 2016 Global Pet Expo, taps into trends in pet travel (some 45 percent of pet parents travel with their pets). The line of pet carriers includes products featuring innovative silhouettes enhanced with premium finishes, and evocative materials, including durable ballistic and innovative rip-stop fabrics. Meanwhile, the company's Swingin' Slevins line of squeaky plush dog toys is named for Sean Slevin, who recently became VP of business development at Multipet. The Swingin' Slevins have extra-long arms and legs — a reference to the new veep's 6-foot, 5-inch height. www.multipet.com

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