



pet peeves

ANONYMOUS VENTINGS FROM PET BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

NO. IT'S NOT THE SAME.

It's super annoying to hear someone complain about grooming price increases and tell me, "It's the same service." It's not. Costs of providing the service have increased, including but not limited to shampoo, electricity, NNN expenses, rent, tool-sharpening services and freight for supplies. It's difficult to find a good groomer, and we pay a liveable, competitive wage to ensure we retain talent. Plus, groomers are skilled labor and it took them years to refine their craft (don't get me started on people asking for grooming discounts). Do you complain at the grocery store about price increases? Your favorite restaurant? Airlines when you booked your spring break trip? Am I supposed to supplement your dog ownership by keeping my grooming prices the same year after year? I don't think so. Do you want a pay increase every year? I'm pretty sure you do, and I want to reward my groomers for their performance. My operating costs increase each year so I have to adjust my pricing to stay in business.



LYN M. FALK ON STORE DESIGN

SIGN ON

Create design criteria for signage to help customers more easily navigate your store and its products.

How many of the signs in your store do you think customers are really reading? Most likely, not many. Sign pollution is alive and well in today's retail environments, and here's why customers aren't reading them:

- + Signs are poorly designed and/or have too many words
- + Signs are not coordinated and have multiple layouts, colors, etc.
- + Signs are outdated
- + Too many signs in general, posted throughout the store

There is a way to design your signs so customers will actually read them. First determine all of the types of signs you currently have on your selling floor, ie:

- + Department
- + Product description/benefit
- + Sale/promotion
- + Informational

Next, create design criteria for each category of signs, addressing:

- + Overall size
- + Font
- + Layout
- + Graphics

- + Color
- + Material
- + Frame
- + Sign holder

So for instance, all of your sale/promotion signs could have a red stripe border, the text in one of your brand fonts in a brand color against a neutral background, and be displayed in a 5-by-7-inch acrylic frame.

Product information could perhaps have your logo along the side, and have the same size, layout, color scheme, etc. Of course, you can have fun with some out-of-the-box designs for larger signs if your brand is whimsical. Just remember to be brand-focused with all of your sign designs.

Then strategically place your signs. For example, customers should quickly see directional and department signs from a distance when entering a store. They want to know what you carry and where items are located, all within the first few seconds. Even if they are only coming in for cat toys, they should be aware that you also sell supplies for dogs, fish, reptiles, other small animals, etc. Information

signs regarding store policies, returns, services offered (training, grooming, etc.), should be easily seen at the transaction counter, along with your store's name/logo.

After you have implemented this sign design criteria and all signs are well defined, schedule a "sign audit" once a year. Even with procedures in place, you'll be surprised how often some signs get left up beyond their timeline, or you run out of standard holders and someone improvises. Remember, the consistent use of design elements is key to keeping your sign system looking good, and consistency in implementation is key to keeping the program running smoothly!

In summary, *think* before you put up a sign. Ask yourself: Is it necessary? Is it well designed? Will it be seen by a customer when and where they need to see it? When you consistently use a predetermined set of design elements, you won't get a variety of mismatched signs that only become visual distractions and not informative sales talkers. Know that you can actually train your customers to find,

More sign tips:

+ LESS IS MORE.

Incorporate symbols, photos and graphic images to communicate messages without using a lot of words.

+ DON'T HAND-WRITE YOUR SIGNS.

Unless you are changing prices daily like a café does, hand-written signs are a no-no. They decrease the value of your

brand as customers are more likely to feel they can negotiate a price when they see a hand-written sign.

+ DON'T TAPE SIGNS.

Again, this cheapens the image of your store. Instead, put signs in acrylic holders (with suction cups for use on glass).

+ LIGHT IT UP.

Be sure to illuminate your logo signs to highlight your brand.

read and understand your signs via the consistent use of design elements.



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