



Since inventing the Groomers Helper pet safety and positioning system in 2000, I have had the pleasure of traveling around the country and attending an average of 15 grooming shows a year. What an exciting journey it has been! I especially like meeting with groomers and discussing the grooming business. So many great people and so many great ideas and questions!

I was recently a featured speaker at the Ontario Dog Groomers Association in Barrie, Ontario. Believe me when I say that they have exactly the same problems and concerns in Canada that we have in America (the only difference being that many of them speak French).

And although the lecture I was asked to give was on the subject of safe pet handling and how to use the Groomers Helper, the real issues that the groomers expressed were how to increase their profits and earn what they were worth.

One of the most important things that a groomer can do to increase their profits is to increase their own self-worth. After all, we are the champions of the grooming industry! Every day, we are asked by thousands of pet owners across the country to take their uncooperative biting matted “kids” and make them look beautiful. And then after struggling and fighting and working with razor sharp clippers, we manage to perform our duties.

And what do we get in return? Often, a pet owner will inspect their dog and tell us everything that’s wrong with the groom and how “he looked better the last time you did him.” Most pet owners don’t tip, despite the fact that they would give their own hairdresser ten or twenty dollars without thinking twice.

They look for discounts at every turn, insisting that it is their right as a customer to make such outrageous requests. Or they balk at the price, despite the fact that they brought in a dog that hasn’t seen a comb or brush since their last groom.

Many of us put up with this behavior from our customers because we think it is the normal way to do business. We think that people just naturally balk at pricing, demand discounts and refuse to tip. But I can tell you from my own experience that this just isn’t so.

And although I could spend hours telling you about the many ways to increase your pricing, upsell your clients and keep your appointment books full, it won’t matter one bit if you do not realize that you are the champion of the trade.

Look around you! Every day on television, you will see well groomed dogs. Consumers are supposed to think that it was the dog food in the advertisement that magically made the dog look so great. Yet, we all know it was a professional groomer who achieved that look. Without our skills, those advertisers would suffer.

Look in a magazine and you will find the same thing. Hundreds of ads for chew bones, doggie treats, pet food and pet services featuring well groomed, beautiful dogs that didn’t just turn out that way because of good luck. It took a professional groomer to achieve that look.

And how often do groomers help their customers save their dogs by finding problems such as tumors? Yet it is the veterinarian who is seen as the champion for saving the dog’s life.

Your own self-worth will help to determine your value as a groomer. If you perceive yourself as a champion and a professional who provides a vital service that matters not only to your customers but also the pets they keep, then your ability to charge what you are worth for services becomes easier. I find that groomers do things that no other service provider does, especially when it comes to going the extra mile for their customers. And yet they are the most hesitant to charge for those duties or the real time they devote to a pet.

Can you imagine your mechanic working for free because he thought it would take an hour to complete work on your car, but during that time he discovered other problems and went ahead with the additional time and repairs free of charge? He knows what his are worth on an hourly basis!

But when a groomer discovers a problem after quoting a price – perhaps a dog that is matted or is especially difficult to handle during the groom – they will hesitate to charge any more for fear of losing the customer over the new price. Why should we be any different than other professionals who know the true value of their time and services?

Until the day when all groomers look at themselves as professionals who are champions to an ever growing sector of pet owners, the public will continue to see us as somehow second best to other service providers that they depend on. Until then, the media will continue to focus on the negative issues that may occur in our industry instead of praising us for the difficult jobs that we perform on a day to day basis.

So keep a positive attitude, wear a winning smile and realize that you are a champion!

About Chuck Simons:

Chuck Simons invented the Groomers Helper to provide a safety and positioning system that thousands of groomers have benefited from. He continues to attend grooming tradeshow across the country and Canada, while assisting his wife Beth Simons, a certified Master Groomer, in their busy pet salon located in Margate NJ. Chuck has 23 years experience in the pet grooming business and continues his efforts to elevate the image of the professional pet groomer.