



# Pet trends that are good for business

**Pet humanisation is not a new trend, and it is here to stay. US pet industry economics are staggering, and humanisation is one of the best development opportunities around.**

### From baskets to beds

According to the American Pet Products Association (APPA) National Pet Owners Survey, as pets have moved from their baskets to their owner’s bed, total pet industry expenditure has increased to over \$72 billion (€63 billion), up from \$56 billion (€49 billion) in just five years. Owners’ pet purchase preferences are running increasingly parallel with their personal choices of products and services, and they are integrating their pets into more and more areas of their lives.

### Insurance benefits

As humans focus more attention on their own physical well-being, APPA cites steady upward trends in pet wellness practices and preventive care, with over fourteen million dogs and cats having health

insurance. In addition to pet-specific insurance providers, pet insurance is offered by top insurance companies such as Progressive and Nationwide, with pet wellness and ‘nose to tail’ accident and illness insurance. Many do, however, exclude pre-existing conditions, plus preventive, elective and cosmetic procedures. Pet insurance is now the hottest employee benefit, says Fortune magazine, with nearly one in three Fortune 500 companies offering it to employees.

### Pet-friendly employers

Pet ownership has undergone an important shift. Millennials are now the largest segment of owners at 35%, representing a greater proportion than baby boomers. To cater to this demographic and to attract millennial talent, employers are increasingly

providing pet-friendly workplaces. Currently, 9.3 million pet owners say their workplace allows pets, with 18% of millennial pet owners reporting pet-friendly work environments. Employers do this in different ways, using creative solutions to bridge the divide between employees who feel stress relief and those who feel stressed out by having pets in the workplace. Some offer on-site pet daycare, allow pets in their owners' offices or provide pet-prohibited spaces for general meetings, while others subsidise off-site daycare.

### On the road

More and more Americans are incorporating their pets into their travel plans, for a day or longer. APPA's survey reports upward trends over the last decade with 19-37% more dog owners and 5% more cat owners travelling with their pets in the car. Hospitality services are reaping the benefits, with over 17 million dog owners staying in a pet-friendly hotel and 11% going to a pet-friendly restaurant.

### Birthday gifts

Pet owners spare no expense on gifts for their companions, with more than 60% doing so according to the APPA report. Millennial dog and cat owners spend on average over \$20 (€17) per gift. 74% of small animal owners, 69% of bird owners and 62% of horse owners also buy gifts for their animal friends.

APPA's survey reports 10% of US pet owners saying that they spend more money than ever on their pet in the current economy – and that is good for business. ♦



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