Customer Relations – an essential part of creating a no kill community

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Results overview

How committed are you to adoption/rescue (as opposed to getting a pet from a pet store or breeder?)

- **Very**
- **Somewhat**
- **Not really. I just want a great pet.**

[Pie chart showing the results]
What has been your experience with the adoption process?

- Very positive and happy: 51%
- Mostly positive and Happy: 27%
- I haven't had an experience yet: 6%
- Unpleasant Experience: 16%
- Very Unpleasant Experience: 7%
How many times will you try to adopt before you would consider going to a pet store or breeder?

- **I will never give up, 60.2%**
- **(Fragile), 39.8%**
  - 1 --> Buy, 1.9%
  - 2 --> Buy, 7.3%
  - 3 --> Buy, 7.0%
  - 3+ --> Buy 23.6%

Even among a population of 97.3% committed to adoption, response time matters.
Implications of unresponsiveness

Have you ever contacted an adoption group and received no reply?

- Yes 40%
- No 60%

- Makes respondents 3x more likely to characterize shelter/rescue people as unprofessional
- People are less likely to describe themselves as “very committed” to adoption
- 4x more likely to describe their adoption experience as “very unpleasant”
- People who had previously received no reply were 4x more likely to consider a pet store if they encountered patronizing or slow attitudes
- Almost twice as likely to give up on adoption
You are courteous and professional when they do reach you (94%)

Are shelter workers courteous and professional?

- Very: 51%
- Somewhat: 43%
- No: 6%
When you lose market-share to pet stores or other shelters

- Annoying policies: Totally turns me off of adoption
- Patronizing: Makes me consider a pet store/breeder
- Unresponsive/slow: Makes me consider another adoption group
- Depressing atmosphere: I will pursue this pet no matter what
- Puppies/kittens
- Desire for a healthy pet
- Hours/location
- Desire for expertise
- Well behaved pet
How perceptions inform shelter versus foster group decision

- Variety of pets
- Doing the most good
- Desire for ease/pleasant
- Their 'tude toward me
- Their 'tude toward the pet
- Their expertise/advise
- Cleanliness
- Health of the Pets

[Chart showing the percentage of responses for each category, with the following breakdown:

- Variety of pets: 70% Makes me choose a shelter, 30% No difference
- Doing the most good: 60% Makes me choose a shelter, 40% No difference
- Desire for ease/pleasant: 50% Makes me choose a shelter, 50% No difference
- Their 'tude toward me: 40% Makes me choose a shelter, 60% No difference
- Their 'tude toward the pet: 30% Makes me choose a shelter, 70% No difference
- Their expertise/advise: 20% Makes me choose a shelter, 80% No difference
- Cleanliness: 10% Makes me choose a shelter, 90% No difference
- Health of the Pets: 0% Makes me choose a shelter, 100% No difference]
Would you rather adopt from a shelter or a rescue/foster group?

- Don't care: 51%
- Don't know the diff: 6%
- Shelter: 19%
- Foster Group: 24%
Foster groups have a slight advantage over shelters

**Foster groups** need to focus on the adoption experience and responsiveness.

**Shelters** should promote expertise of their staff and make sure they know the pets.

What elements of customer service might provide you with an “edge” in your community?

Is being “no kill” a market driver?
Causations and correlations with patronizing attitude

• 50% of people with:
  – a “very positive experience” with adoption and
  – who have already found a pet they are interested in
   will still consider another adoption group if they encounter a patronizing attitude.

• People who have previously received no reply are 3x more likely to consider a pet store if they encounter a patronizing attitude

• 62% of people will be totally turned off adoption if:
  – they encounter both a patronizing attitude and
  – unreasonable adoption policies (only 7% will pursue the pet no matter what
  – down from 30% if everything else is positive
Unreasonable and annoying policies

- 67% of the people who encounter annoying policies who have previously had a very happy adoption experience will “pursue this pet no matter what”
- 80% will consider another group if they encounter a slow/unresponsive staff along with annoying policies – even if they’ve already fallen in love with a pet in your group!
- Only 3% of the people who have had a past negative experience will pursue their next pet from a shelter no matter what
- 60% of the people that encounter annoying policies and a lack of responsiveness will consider going to a breeder or pet store
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Take home

Most groups are doing a good job

Must treat people right to keep them

Customer service matters