

outreach



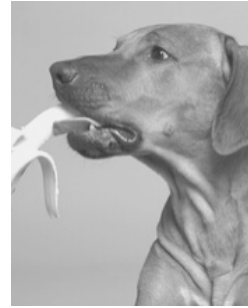
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**THE MORE DEMAND WE
HAVE FOR
NUTRITIONALLY
DEFENSIBLE™
PET FOOD,
THE MORE POWER WE
HAVE IN THE INDUSTRY.**

-- Dr. Cathy Alinovi,
Director, Next Gen PFMA

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from dr. cathy

Marketing is one of the last things we do in daily business because it always seems to take time that isn't there. Whether it's the blog post or e-mail blast, we are all guilty of saying "I'll write it tomorrow," when time is crunched... as it often is. At other times, we may have the time, but the creative juices aren't flowing and the problem is simply "I don't know what to write."

While these are the most common reasons to put off your marketing until "later," it's critical to start/continue marketing now. For us, it's more than "just" taking market share or maintaining contact with our end users. It's about demonstrating demand, and pre-empting those hard conversations.

The more demand we have for nutritionally defensible™ pet food, the more power we have in the industry. The more people demand alternatives to the big box brands, the less bold the regulatory agencies can be in deliberately targeting us. The consumers WILL speak and be heard. So, every marketing effort isn't just helping your bottom line, it's also growing awareness of our industry.

Of course, because fresh food is high in the regulatory eye, it's also important to have conversations with your customers now. Marketing builds relationships. You already have great relationships with your customers because you make great products; but reinforcing those relationships before there are problems keeps your raving fans coming back to you in the long run.

Marketing is meant to keep the conversation going, to educate and to build client base. Then, if the worst happens, and you're faced with the recall, your customers are informed and can continue to support your product so that the end result will not impact your sales. The present day regulatory climate suggests that we must all be on our guard—and we can do this best through education. Our education and education of our customers.

This marketing / outreach plan is designed to not only educate but keep your raving fans supporting your product, to provide an outline of discussion topics so that at least the question of "what to write" is answered and you can —simply — fill in the blanks.

We're taking as much of the hard stuff out of it, leaving room for minimum or maximum personalization... and giving you all you need to deepen the connection you have with the discerning pet parents that are the core of what we do.

Dr. Cathy

DR. CATHY ALINOVI
DIRECTOR, NGPFMA.ORG

38 Blog Post Themes to Build Demand

- Ingredient Focus Post x 5 (Detail a primary ingredient in your food and why it's important.) Do this for the top five (or more) ingredients in your food. Let the reader know why you chose these ingredients.
- How To Read a Pet Food Label
- Guest Post: Talking to Your Veterinarian About Nutrition (Interview a veterinarian, or have a veterinarian write this post.)
- Prescription Food from Your Veterinarian: What You Should Know
- Case Study x 12 — We want to do one of these posts per month, featuring our best customers. We have a template on how to do this on page 13, but these are posts that require very little time, your customers love them, and they get shared more than any other post. They follow the following basic storyline: "My dog was _____. I started feeding _____, and now she is _____."
- Why Pet Owners Love ____ Brand _____. This is a list post. You simply list 4-6 testimonials in one post. EASY!
- In Defense of Raw or Fresh Pet Food. This can be focused on science and nutrition, or simply why you choose to feed your own pets a raw diet.
- What Your Pet Would Ask to Eat, If He Could Talk.
- Signs Your Dog / Cat Needs a Nutrition Overhaul. This is another guest post opportunity. Have it written by a veterinarian or veterinary nutritionist.
- Ways To Involve Your Pet in Meal Prep.
- List of Symptoms Veterinarians Say They've "Cured" With Nutrition Alone. I've included a post I've written on this topic on page _____, which I invite you to swipe and deploy on your own blog.
- Holiday Foods Your Dog Should Avoid
- How To Help Your Pet Lose Weight
- Why _____ Is Commonly Found in Most Pet Foods (And Why You'll Never Find it In Ours.) This is an opportunity to educate your market about the ingredients in most pet food brands.
- The Most Harmful Ingredients Commonly Found on the Pet Food Aisle at Your Local Grocery Store
- Birthday Cake Recipes for your Pet. Feel free to share (and properly link to) a pet bloggers favorite recipe here.

- Guest Post: Party Planning Tips for a Pet Party. Reach out to a great pet blogger or party planner and ask them to contribute to your blog. Most bloggers actively look for opportunities to guest post and do not seek compensation for these collaborations.
- Guest Post: Look Out For These Warning Signs When Brushing Your Pet. This is a great opportunity to get your favorite groomer some extra exposure.
- Add _____ To Your Pet's Food to Keep Fleas Away
- Make Your Own Ice Cream for Fido (A great hot weather post)
- Best Training Treats You Already Have in your Refrigerator
- How To Switch Your Pet from Kibble to Raw Food (Or Other Food)
- AAFCO Convention posts... why you're going and what you're learning.



Customizable Blog Posts

The following blog posts are written for you. You'll literally be able to cut, paste, customize and publish. You'll notice the customization prompts are primarily found in the first 100 words. This is because the first 100 words are what Google looks at to be sure this is an original post. But we invite you to customize them further if you'd like.

Post: October is Adopt a Shelter Dog Month

At ____insert company name____, we love our dogs. It's why we got started down this crazy path of producing food that ____insert your primary "differentiator" here____. Our mission was to _____. (Alternative: Tell the readers about a dog you've adopted.) But we love all dogs and since October is national adopt a shelter dog month, it's a great opportunity for us to support the dogs who haven't yet found a home to grow old in.

Even if you can't adopt, here are some creative -- non-standard -- ways to support your local shelter, other than volunteering to walk dogs, volunteering to clean cages, donating food, money or treats. But, other than the basics of a clean kennel with food and water, what does an adoptable dog need?

- Skills to make it an easy transition to a new home, of course! These skills often mean something as easy as sitting, or walking calmly on a leash, so no need to be a licensed trainer. It only takes a few minutes of practice to teach a dog to sit for a treat. A little bit of training may just help them find a forever home sooner, rather than later.
- **Insert your own idea here:**
- Take pictures of the adoptable dogs. Another great selling point is if dogs are good with children. So if a shelter dog gets along well with one of your kids, take a picture!! You've heard the saying a picture is worth 1000 words - a picture of an adoptable dog sitting with your cute two legged child - priceless!
- Super motivated? You could even sponsor a fundraiser and give a portion of the proceeds to the local shelter.

Hopefully this sparks some ideas. But, here's a BONUS pumpkin cookie recipe safe for dogs. And the occasional adventurous cat!

Pumpkin Biscuits (from book, Dinner PAWsible)

Ingredients:

2 eggs, raw

1/2 cup (125 ml) canned or fresh pumpkin

2 tablespoons (30 ml) freshly ground cheddar cheese

1/4 teaspoon (1 ml) sea salt

1 teaspoon (5 ml) dried parsley or 1/2 teaspoon (3 ml) cinnamon

2.5 cups (625 ml) brown rice flour (or almond meal flour)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Whisk together eggs and pumpkin. Stir in cheese, salt and parsley (or cinnamon). Add flour gradually, combining with spatula or hands (dough will be very stiff). Drop by spoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Press flat with a fork. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until edges begin to turn brown.

Post: The Focus of Veterinary Medicine is Changing

We're often asked why we embarked on the crazy journey to make ____brand____ a commercial option for pet parents like us. The short answer is _____insert the WHY behind your company._____. We wanted pets in every area to enjoy _____. Our focus on __descriptor word__ nutrition for pets is becoming increasingly in demand.

The number of pet parents interested in a holistic approach to health -- including but not limited to nutrition -- is increasing... along with the number of holistic veterinarians who focus on nutrition.

Holistic veterinarians are just like more holistic physicians for human patients. They don't just do shots or surgeries. They look at the entire picture of the patient and treat the whole picture, not just the one thing that's wrong right now. They take into account nutrition, lifestyle, environment, and other behaviors, and these veterinarians are getting louder and louder about the importance of food and your pet's health.

INSERT QUOTE FROM VET ABOUT YOUR FOOD SPECIFICALLY OR FOOD IN GENERAL. YOU CAN LOOK TO KAREN BECKER'S BLOG OR EVEN MY OWN AND SWIPE A QUOTE TO INCLUDE.

From all of us at ____company____ we want to give a shout out to all the pet doctors and all the pet parents committed to giving animals the very best in nutrition!

Post: The Importance of Food

At _____(insert company name)_____, we're passionate about pet nutrition. We don't eat it, =) but __insert statement about your passion for pet nutrition____.

After all, the one thing we do for our pets day after day is feed them. We do that more than walks, baths, play time, anything really – treats, prewashing the dishes, and meal times – somehow, we spend a lot of time giving food to our pets.

And we know from our own nutrition that the better we eat the better we feel. The same thing is true for our pets.

At mealtime, your dogs wouldn't care what's in their dish, as long as they finish theirs first and have a chance to clean one of the others' bowl. But WE can see what food does to our pets so WE know what's in there IS important. Retired veterinarian, Dr. Cathy Alinovi says, "Lower quality food is linked to bladder infections, diabetes, shedding, seizures, hot spots, ear infections, stomach ulcers and so on."

But how to identify great quality food is a challenge because all the labels say the exact same thing! Nutritious! Healthy! And there are great debates about what food is best. In our world, we believe pet food should be

_____.

Just like us, nutrition is the cornerstone of your pet's health... so choosing _____insert brand _____ will do great things to help your dogs and cats live healthier lives.

Template: Getting Customers to Feature

One of the easiest and least time consuming posts for your blog is actually written by your customers, and because you are giving them an excuse to tell the world about their beloved four-legged, it will get a ton of shares. In short, you simply send the following email to your customers and invite them to fill in the blanks. Encourage them to send it back with a picture of their pet and with a simple cut and paste, you've got a customer case study ready to go.

Send an email like this: Hi! I'm _____ and I do _____ for _____ company name _____. We're excited to feature our best four-legged clients on our website and also across our growing social media network. I'd love to hear more about your pet or pets and what they think of _____ brand _____. Would you be willing to answer the following questions for us and also attach your favorite picture of your pets, so we can show them off? Thanks so much in advance!

- Tell me more about your pet. Age, breed, adoption story, favorite toy, treat or game... whatever makes them so unique. (Please write about your pet exactly the way you'd like it posted on our site.)
- What made you fall in love with him or her?
- What do you think your pet THINKS when you fill their dish with _____ brand _____?
- What should other pet parents know about _____ brand _____?

Template: Ingredient Focus Posts

These posts are super easy. They allow you to put the spotlight on the ingredients you have chosen for your foods and tell the world why you made these choices. You can feature meat, vegetables, herbs or supplements you include. There's a simple "structure" to these posts, which makes them fast and easy to create.

TITLE: Focus on ____Ingredient_____.

or

TITLE: Meet One of Our Culinary Super Heroes: _____Ingredient_____.

Post:

_____ is one of our most important / top ingredients because it _____.
_____. Pets love _____ingredient_____ because _____,
but it's also a powerhouse of _____.

Essentially, you just write about the properties of that ingredient that make it both tasty and nutritional. You can find several examples of this on my own blog under the Special Ingredient Saturday tab: <https://healthypawsibilities.com/category/special-ingredient-saturday/>.

Template: Your Pet's Food is on the Recall List

Most of the time when we hear of another pet food company — especially one of the good guys, one of our own members — experiencing a recall, we tend to keep our head down, feeling bad for them but grateful it's not us. But, recalls affect all of us and all of our customers. As an example, when one raw pet food company is the target of a recall, anyone feeding raw is at risk of being “educated away” from feeding raw. To the extent you're comfortable, here's a short template that will help guide how you may use recalls as an opportunity reassure, educate and empower your own customers.

As you may have heard, there's been a recall for ____insert type or brand of food____. These recalls, which can happen even when not a single pet has been harmed or hurt by the pet food in question — can bring up all sorts of questions about the safety of pet food and even the choices you make as a pet parent.

While we are not affected by this latest recall, we did want to open lines of communication with you. Like you, we are passionate about our pets and determined to provide them with nutrition that helps them live better, longer. Please know that we're always here (insert email or phone line) to answer your questions.

Sincerely

Name

Template: Getting Case Studies / Customer Stories

Getting your raving (barking or purring) fans to give you a shout out isn't as hard as it seems. Most pet parents are incredibly excited at the thought of having YOUR BRAND show off their beloved pet! Featuring pets on your blog is a great way to infuse your site with personality and SHARE-ABILITY. Wouldn't YOU share the post that your favorite pet food company did on your pet? So will they.

Here's a cut and paste template you can use to get the information you need. Feel free to customize the questions you ask or how you ask them. Once you receive the information from your customer, you can do a just a BIT of formatting and upload the post.

Email Subject: Can We Tell the World About Your Pet?

We're doing something fun... searching the country for ____insert brand ____ favorite pets.

Post: Conditions "Cured" Through Pet Nutrition

This is a post written by veterinarian and pet nutrition expert, Dr. Cathy Alinovi.

What most people don't understand is that almost any condition out there can be improved, if not cured, through good nutrition. Whether it be separation anxiety, kidney disease, or cancer, the better the nutrition our pets receive, the less likely they will suffer from ill health.

It seems so simple to say that 80% of ill health can be fixed through nutrition. But there are numerous sayings that affirm this. From "you are what you eat" to "let thy food be thy medicine," humans have discussed the benefits of great nutrition and subsequent good health for centuries. It applies to animals just as well as it does to humans. So let's pick three conditions and briefly discuss them. It doesn't really matter which conditions. For continuity, how about the three listed above?

Separation anxiety: Regardless of the cause, or a dog's previous history, whether it was a rescue or malnourished or, or, or. Without good nutrition there's no possible way the separation anxiety situation will improve. Consider for a moment what most dogs with separation anxiety are eating: kibble. Most kibble is 65 to 75% carbohydrate. This would be like a human toddler eating pastries and caffeinated soda all day. These kids are jacked up! Anyone on a diet of sugar/carbohydrates is going to have a very hard time paying attention, maintaining good behavior, let alone learning in school (dog school). So for the pet with the separation anxiety/behavior problem, starting with high-quality nutrition based on protein and fat which is great for brain development. Bottom line: good food is critical.

Kidney disease: There is much mis-information and confusing information on the Internet about kidney disease! This is also one of those conditions that veterinarians have forgotten what they learned in veterinary school and instead repeat the “training” (programming, in truth) given by the kibble companies. We are told, by the conventional pet food companies, that in kidney disease pets, we need to feed low protein diets. I’ve even had people go so far as to suggest a pet eat no protein diet! This is someone who absolutely doesn’t understand physiology. The body uses protein to make muscle. The heart is a muscle. The body is a muscle. So in most conventional pet foods, so-called kidney diets, these diets are low in protein, meaning they have even more carbohydrate than the regular kibble diet.

So these cats and dogs who are put on protein restricted diets to “treat” their kidney disease lose muscle weight and become fat. Look at a picture of the stereotypical cat in kidney failure. All of the muscle has wasted away off of its back. You can see all of the vertebrae, and the cat has a tremendous potbelly. How is this possibly healthy for the cat?

Regardless of species, in the case of kidney diets, what holistic veterinarians are finding is more important is to feed high-quality proteins. The conventional pet food companies have done “research” on kidney diets. What they have found is that if you don’t feed much protein, then the protein byproducts of kidney disease are lowered in the blood. Well that’s logical. No protein in means no protein out. Protein byproducts are what is leaked out of the kidneys into the urine in kidney disease. What these studies fail to do is discuss quality-of-life. Where is the quality of life when you have no muscle and a drooping potbelly? These studies definitely don’t look at longevity!

More logically, we recommend diets high in moisture using high-quality meat ingredients so the body can get what use it can out of the protein in the diet. Kidney disease takes a multi-pronged approach.

Diet is one key factor. Quality water, perhaps herbal therapy, and exercise are all fantastic adjuncts to help the kidney patient.

Cancer: This is a diagnosis that no pet parent ever wants to hear! Sadly, it is becoming more and more common in younger and younger animals. But it definitely doesn't have to be a death sentence.

Research indicates that 80% of cancer is caused by environmental input. Considering the biggest thing pet owners do for their pets is feed and water them, it makes sense to look at diet, which is a primary environmental factor, whether your goal is to avoid cancer or treat it.

Cancer gets its number one fuel from carbohydrate, which suggests that anyone concerned about a cancer diet should be avoiding carbohydrates. Certainly, avoid kibble diets like the plague. But there are an awful lot of canned foods that are made from high carbohydrate waste products as well. Starches and gluten meals are just another word for carbohydrate soup. Pet food companies use carbohydrates in diets because they are cheap sources of calories and these foods can fuel -- rather than stop -- cancer.

Our pets are part of the family, which is why we don't advocate cheap sources of calories for our pets! Protein and fat has been shown in multiple species to be beneficial in a cancer situation. (Fat and protein, as in a ketogenic diet is even more preferable.) Our food gets you there.

So pick the condition. And we can talk about it in a little bit of detail. Regardless, nutrition is the key.