



From shelf to selfie

How to Create Instagrammable Moments for National Pet Shop Day

You already know your shop is worth talking about. National Pet Shop Day is your opportunity to make sure everyone else knows it too, and the most powerful tool at your disposal might just be the camera in your customers' pockets.

Social media moves on images and authenticity, and your shop has both in abundance. A beautifully arranged display, a golden retriever sniffing out their favourite treats, a proud team photo on the big day - these are the moments that stop the scroll and pull new customers through your door.

This guide shares the many ways you can turn your shop floor into a visual story worth sharing, and how your customers can unintentionally do the legwork for you.

Why the visuals matter

People often have a thought to do something, but require a prompt to act on that feeling. A compelling image on social media, at the right moment, can be the exact push someone needs to make the trip to their local pet shop.

On and around the big day itself, people will be looking at what local pet shops stores are doing to celebrate. A striking photo or a short, joyful video of your shop in full National Pet Shop Day swing is an invitation for them to join. And when a customer shares a photo of themselves in your shop, they are telling their friends, family and followers that this place is worth visiting. That kind of recommendation can be just as effective as paid advertisement, if not more.

Designing photo-worthy in-store displays

You do not need a professional photographer or a big budget to create something worth photographing. All you need is a concept, a way of showcasing it, and an understanding of what makes people reach for their phones.

Think in scenes, not just shelves. A shelf stacked with products is functional, but a scene tells a story. Think about what you want customers to feel when they walk into your shop on National Pet Shop Day, and build a display that reflects that. A corner dedicated to summer pet care with seasonal favourites, a bold colour palette, and an interactive prop or two could draw the eye - and the camera - even more than your usual layout.

Whatever you choose, make sure your display has a clear focal point. The best photographs have a subject, whether it's a standout product, a branded backdrop, or even one of your in-store animals, give your customers something to centre their shot around.

Utilise the National Pet Shop Day branding as much as you can. Your free promotional packs contain balloons, bags, pens, posters and more, so take advantage of it all. They signal that something special is happening in your store, and make your photos instantly recognisable as part of a wider campaign.

Let your team be part of the display. Independent pet shops are defined by their people. A team photo with a campaign badge showing they are taking part, or a shot of a team member with one of the local's pets, shows personality. People buy from people, and customers want to see the team behind the business.

Setting up a selfie spot

A designated selfie spot removes the hesitation from customers who might want to take a photo, but are not sure where or how. Make it easy and take away the awkwardness by setting it up for them - they are much more likely to take part this way.

Choose a location with a background that photographs well, with enough space for one or two people (and potentially a pet) to stand comfortably. Natural or warm artificial light is preferred, such as a spot near your front window. Dress it with the materials from your promo pack, add your props of choice, and position a small sign nearby reminding customers of the official hashtags when sharing a post.

A prompt such as: "Take your own pawtrait! Tag [Insert your social media handle] and use the hashtag #NationalPetShopDay", directs customers on what to do. Many people who would be open to sharing a post might not think to do it in the moment, so it's important to subtle forms of encouragement throughout your shop.

The impact of user-generated content

User-generated content - photos and posts created by your customers rather than you - is among the most trusted forms of social proof available to any business. A customer sharing a photo of your shop is, in effect, telling their entire network they were here, and it was worth it.

There is also nothing wrong with asking directly. After a pleasant interaction, a simple "If you enjoyed your visit, we'd love it if you shared a photo - we're on Instagram and Facebook!" is all it takes. Most happy customers will be pleased to share their thoughts.

When a customer posts and tags your shop, share it to your own feed or stories. This rewards the customer with a moment of recognition and shows to everyone else that your shop is a place where people come to have a positive pet experience.

Don't forget the #hashtag

We have a full article on the importance of the hashtag in our PR Toolkit, but it also fits in here too. Hashtags connect your individual post to the wider National Pet Shop Day conversation. When you and your customers use the official hashtags, your content becomes part of a national movement, visible to thousands of people following the campaign from across the UK.

Use these official hashtags across all your social media activity:

#NationalPetShopDay #LoveYourPetShop #PetShopPower #SupportLocalPets #VisitYourPetShop #ShopLocalPets #JohnsonsVeterinaryProducts

Include a selection of three to five hashtags in every post related to National Pet Shop Day, on the lead up and on the day itself. You can add them to Instagram stories as well as main feed posts.

Working with pet influencers

You do not need celebrities with millions of followers. For a campaign like National Pet Shop Day, smaller influencers are often better. A local pet owner with a few thousand engaged followers, a community blogger, or even a well-known face in your area can have a significant impact on footfall and awareness.

Search Instagram for local pet accounts based in your town or city - there may already be some that spring to mind. Look for community group/forum admins, local lifestyle bloggers, or customers you already know are active online and enthusiastic about your shop.

If you are going to approach them, keep it simple. A direct message along the lines of "Hi [name], we're taking part in National Pet Shop Day on DATE and we'd love to invite you and [pet name] in for a visit - we thought it might make great content for the both of us!" is all you need. You are not asking them to advertise your products, you are simply inviting them to be part of something fun and worth sharing.

What you are offering is access, a fun experience, and something their followers will enjoy. A complimentary treat for their pet or a small gift/discount from your shop can sweeten the visit, but the experience itself is valuable enough.

Always tag anyone who shares a post about your shop. It notifies their followers, extends your reach, and is an easy act of appreciation that encourages them to keep engaging.

Small moments cater for big change

Whilst National Pet Shop Day is a national moment, it is really made up of thousands of small, local ones. A customer pausing to take a photo, a pet owner sharing a post with their followers, a community discovering, or rediscovering, their local pet shop. Your job is to create those moments, or make them more achievable, and social media will turn them into something far greater.

The love for independent pet shops is already out there; this is about making it visible. So, dress your window, set up your selfie spot, brief your team, and get ready to show the country exactly why your pet shop is here to stay.