



Good for Pets, Great for Business

Using National Pet Shop Day to Strengthen Your Brand Story

Ask most pet shop owners why they got into the business and you'll rarely hear "for the margins". The answer is almost always something closer to a genuine love of animals, a desire to help pet owners make better decisions, or a belief that the kind of personal service an independent shop provides is worth fighting for. Those are compelling values, and they make for a compelling brand story.

The challenge for most independents is finding the time and the platform to communicate that story. Day-to-day retail doesn't offer many natural pauses for reflection, and it can feel uncomfortable to talk about the things you stand for when there are products to shelve and customers to serve.

National Pet Shop Day gives you both the time and the platform. It's a moment when the spotlight is already on independent pet retail, when customers are already paying attention, and when the things that make your shop different from a supermarket pet aisle or an online retailer are genuinely worth talking about. Here is how to use it.

Know what your brand story actually is

Before you can communicate your values to customers, it helps to be clear on what they are. This doesn't need to be a formal exercise, but it is worth spending a few minutes thinking about what genuinely sets your shop apart, because that is the material your National Pet Shop Day communications should be built around.

Some questions worth asking yourself:

- Why did you start the business, and is that reason still visible in how you run it today?
- What do you stock, or refuse to stock, and why? Are there sourcing decisions you've made that your customers might not know about?
- What do you know about animals and pet care that most pet owners don't, and how do you share that knowledge with the people who come to you?
- What is your relationship with the local community? Think about the rescue centres, the charities, the dog walkers and groomers, the families with their first rabbit. How does your shop fit into their lives beyond the transaction?
- Have you made any changes to the way you operate in response to concerns about sustainability or animal welfare? What prompted those decisions?

The answers to these questions are the raw material of your brand story. They're also the things that your customers are least likely to know unless you tell them.

Let your sourcing decisions speak for you

If you've put thought into where your products come from, whether that means choosing British suppliers, avoiding brands with poor welfare records, or seeking out manufacturers with stronger environmental credentials, National Pet Shop Day is the time to bring that to the surface.

Pet owners are more interested in this than many retailers assume. They want to buy from shops they trust, and trust is built on specifics, not generalities. A sign beside a product range explaining that you chose it because of how it's manufactured, a short social post introducing a supplier you're proud to work with, or a conversation at the counter about why you stopped stocking a particular brand: these are all ways of making your sourcing values tangible.

You don't need to overhaul your entire range or position yourself as a specialist ethical retailer. Being honest and specific about the decisions you've already made is enough. Customers respond far better to "we switched to this food range because of X" than to a vague claim about caring about quality.

Show your community connections

One of the strongest arguments for shopping independently is the relationship between a local business and the community it serves. As a pet shop owner, you are likely more embedded in your local pet-owning community than you realise. National Pet Shop Day is a good moment to make that visible.

Think about the relationships your business already has:

- **Local rescues, rehoming organisations, and animal charities:** Do you point customers towards local adoption rather than purchases? Do you stock a fundraising product for a rescue, or donate a percentage of sales on particular lines? If so, say so, and use National Pet Shop Day to amplify that partnership.
- **Pet health professionals:** A relationship with a local vet practice that recommends your store, or a nutritionist whose advice informs what you stock, adds credibility to your offer and signals that you're part of a wider network of expertise.
- **Dog training clubs, breed societies, and pet owner groups:** These communities are full of exactly the kind of engaged, passionate pet owners who will become your most loyal customers if they aren't already. National Pet Shop Day is an opportunity to reach out, offer something of value, and deepen those connections.
- **Schools and families:** If you've ever spoken to a local school about animal care, hosted a visit, or supported a community event, that is part of your story too. A shop that invests in helping young people understand animals is a shop that is thinking beyond its own bottom line.

None of these relationships need to be formalised or structured to be worth communicating. A genuine, longstanding connection with a local rescue is just as valuable a story as a corporate partnership agreement. What matters is that it's real.

Talk about sustainability in plain terms

Sustainability is a word that can feel slippery in a retail context: overused, vague, and easy for customers to be cynical about. The way to make it land is to be concrete about what it actually means in your shop.

Small, specific steps are more convincing than large, general claims. If you've reduced single-use plastic at the till, say so. If you stock a food range with a lower environmental footprint and you know why, explain it. If you've switched your own packaging, or started a food bank collection point for local rescue animals, or chosen suppliers who publish their welfare and environmental standards, those are all details worth sharing.

Pet owners who care about these things, and a growing number do, are not looking for perfection. They are looking for honesty, and for evidence that the businesses they buy from are at least thinking about the same questions they are. National Pet Shop Day gives you a reason to have those conversations openly.

Put your expertise front and centre

The single greatest advantage an independent pet shop has over every other retail channel is the knowledge and experience of the people behind the counter. This is your most valuable asset, and it is one that National Pet Shop Day gives you every reason to showcase.

Think about how your expertise shows up throughout the day:

- **In the advice you give:** A customer who comes in unsure what to feed their new puppy or kitten and leaves with a confident, personalised recommendation has had an experience they cannot get online. Make sure your team know that this kind of interaction is as much a part of National Pet Shop Day as any formal activity.
- **In the content you create:** A short video answering a common pet care question, a social post busting a popular myth, or a printed leaflet on a topic your customers frequently ask about all demonstrate your knowledge in a format that travels beyond the shop floor.
- **In the conversations you invite:** A dedicated slot for customer questions, a drop-in session with a visiting expert, or even a simple sign inviting customers to “ask us anything about your pet” signals that your shop is a place where knowledge is freely shared, not guarded.

Keep the story going after the day

One of the most common missed opportunities around events like National Pet Shop Day is treating them as self-contained. The content you create, the conversations you have, and the values you communicate on the day all have a longer life, but only if you deliberately extend them.

A post about your sourcing standards can become a monthly supplier spotlight. A customer interaction captured on video can become a testimonial that sits on your website. A partnership with a local rescue strengthened on National Pet Shop Day can become a standing arrangement that your customers hear about throughout the year.

Your brand story is not a single statement. It is built from everything you do, everything you stock, and everything you say, repeated consistently over time. National Pet Shop Day is one of the best single opportunities you have to put that story in front of your customers, and everything you create around it is material you can keep using long after the bunting comes down.

For more ideas on how to make the most of National Pet Shop Day, visit nationalpetshopday.com.