

TO BE GREAT, INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE

Searching for a career is never an easy task and grooming is no different, however, there are definite steps you need to take to achieve success. It is easy to simply state that you are a groomer or veterinarian, but can you say that you are at the top of your game? In order to be a veterinarian, I had to have 8 years of college and pass 2 eight-hour national exams followed by hour to half day tests in every state I wanted to apply. Does passing the tests make me a great veterinarian? The answer is no, it just proves I can pass a test.

To excel in a career, it takes drive, motivation, and of course common sense. There was a statement that floated around veterinary school: The students achieving A's and B's will work for the C students. Why? Because often we get so wrapped up in the grades, we forget about how to use common sense to achieve a goal.

Let's look at a few examples. Typically, groomers go through a school or an internship with one teacher. Do they have all the answers? Are they the best teacher available? Too often we find someone close or inexpensive because it is easy. This is a career choice that may direct the rest of your life. Is choosing cheap the best way to make that decision? Make sure you seek out education from the people that are the best at what they do. Research their background for what you want to accomplish. Not all of us may have the same goals. Some may want to be competitive groomers, some may want to solve skin issues, while others may want to open up 5 salons. Whatever your goal is, seek out what you are looking for and make sure you pick the best individual to fit your needs. The other important factor in education is to never stop learning! Always keep current with new information and techniques or your knowledge in the field will become antiquated. Don't wake up one day to realize the profession has passed you by. Personally I take 20-30 hours a year of continuing education and it still never seems to be enough. To stay current and relevant, you should be attending tradeshow, virtual seminars, or local seminars. Even hiring a professional to give you private tutorship would be a strong move. These are great investments for your career.

Another area of significance is the products and equipment that you utilize. What you choose will have consequences in your future. This is an area we can say you get what you pay for. If you buy a cheap shampoo and conditioner, you get less than ideal results. Often, your client doesn't notice until someone down the street decides to invest in a quality product producing better results. These clients don't often return even if the other salon doesn't meet their needs because they labeled you as the salon that uses cheap products. Some have found their businesses rapidly decline and they don't even realize the cause. A good statement to remember is you can't save your way into prosperity. The best way to succeed is offering consistent quality.

Buying cheap scissors or tools also has consequences. If you buy a pair of scissors that doesn't fit in your hand or are not balanced, you will put more strain on your hand and eventually arthritis will be the price you pay. So, make sure you do your research, turn to experts, and invest well in products. Again, this is a big purchase that should be considered a long-term investment. Not a place to put cost as the only deciding factor.

How about things like our dryers, tables, mobile vans, etc.? These are all things that are good to be researched to get the best VALUE you can. Yes, price is an issue, but if you end up spending costly repairs

on an inferior quality product then have you really saved that much? Always investigate how reliable the equipment is before you make the decision to purchase.

On a physical level, the techniques we use in grooming can have a significant effect on career longevity. This can include everything from how you hold your scissors, to the flooring you stand on (fatigue), and the way you contort your body for those hard areas to groom. When we are young and invincible, these are not things we worry about. If you listen to mature groomers (sometimes even middle-aged groomers) you will hear a lot of "I wish I had taken care of my body better when I was young" statements. You will also hear a lot of groomers that now only do small dogs or are fighting "groomers lung" and can hardly walk across the room without struggling to breathe. Thinking about your health and doing things accordingly is a huge investment in yourself and will result in a strong, extended career.

So what should you think about as a young groomer? Invest in your future! Don't compromise what you do and your health for a cheap price. Make a long-term plan and don't be so quick to jump to the easiest route. Make sure your chosen path is in line with your goals. How you approach this is strictly based on what you want to accomplish. Don't be afraid to make changes along the way and don't be so discouraged by the thought of failure that you fail to succeed. My favorite quote is, "the man (or woman) who succeeds is the one that may fall down 99 times but gets up 100 times." Never give up, never stop trying, and never stop learning. The more you learn (and apply) the better you will be at your chosen pathway.