

# Contemplating Pet Grooming's Future

## *Where Mindfulness & Innovative Technology Meet*

By Dave Campanella



Over twenty-five years ago I met my best friend and wife, Tracy. Those of you who know us understand how I owe my passion for the pet industry and career to her. That's because behind every good man is a loving woman, and in my case talented pet groomer. She introduced me to the joys of dog companionship, pet grooming as a profession, and ultimately my job at Best Shot Pet Products. Together we've witnessed grooming evolve, and each of us along with it. You could say everything leading up to now was history in the making.

So how will professional grooming evolve over the next twenty-five years? I've often pondered what the future beholds for us? Take a look into my crystal ball.

### **Mindfulness Guides Our Path**

"What is Mindfulness?" you ask. Some may associate it with Yoga, but the art of Mindful Practice goes way beyond that! While its roots can be traced back many thousands of years to Buddha's teaching, its modern-age renaissance into mainstream life is a movement many believe will shape the world's future. Mindful practice is being embraced by corporate culture, internal medicine, and therapy treatments, in our schools and by environmental groups.

Noted psychologist and author Dr. Stephen McKenzie, in his book entitled, "Mindfulness at Work: How to Avoid Stress, Achieve More and Enjoy Life" sums up mindfulness as, "Focusing one's attention on what is, rather than being distracted by what isn't."

We live in a fast-paced world full of clutter and distractions. No doubt the pet grooming community certainly faces its' fair share. Just look at all the opinions and misinformation one has to dodge on social media as evidence today.

We need to let go of the belief that we know what's best, and the only way to work through a challenge. We must learn to see each new situation clearly. Try seeking out credible fact-based resources when questioning something and put aside all assumptions.

For instance, some time ago what started off as genuine consumer concern for safe wholesome ingredients somehow got perverted into false notions that "Science is bad" and "If you can't grow it, or pronounce its name, it's a toxic chemical."

Somewhere along the line, non-mindful companies eager to comply may have jumped the gun. In my opinion, they chose not to take the necessary time to educate consumers responsibly on why their ingredient choices were safe or healthy. Instead they eagerly over-emphasized and exaggerated their products to fit demand, consequently redefining what "more natural" meant by the enticement of misleading claims and deceptive imagery leading to what's now an out of control "all natural" bubble ready to burst. The ambiguity of what "natural" is has rampantly become status quo for many industries

and apparent in ours. Perhaps companies assumed the public couldn't handle the complexity of the matter, and took the easy way out?

Fortunately mindfulness and science work very well together. So in our future I envision managing a pet salon will encompass a more mindful fact-based grooming process at its very core; where each of its fundamental elements seamlessly interrelates to each other.

What if pet groomer licensing became reality in our future? That would mean core curriculum standards and mandatory testing. Is it such a terrible thing to consider? Essential knowledge of "coat and skin physiology" and "how grooming liquids work" would be required of us as it is for many human cosmetologists today.

Nowadays, the apparent lack of core curriculum standards has created an up-hill struggle of trial and error for many groomers. This may have even lead to some of the recent inexcusable pet grooming fatalities we've heard about in national news reports. Being accountable for established trade knowledge and guidelines can lead groomers to mastering their tools and equipment, methods and techniques, as well as overlooked health and safety standards. Think about how many problematic issues could have been avoided by recognizing a more standardized grooming process.



Recently the PPGSA (Professional Pet Groomers and Stylists Association) established its "Standards of Care for Safety and Sanitation" guidelines. It's a fabulous example of one step towards a more mindful future in grooming. Starting to get the picture? Our future is dependant upon more structure and accountability. Keep an eye out for further evolving developments.

## Embracing Technological Innovation

"Progressive Grooming Logic" is a Mindful concept I profess in my seminars that's worth noting here. It acknowledges how each phase of the grooming process interrelates with each other, and specifically what correlating methods work best for optimal effect. I see us merging certain tools, methods and concepts for greater efficiency in our salons in the future.

By letting the creative flow of fact-based consciousness blossom, fresh new innovations begin to emerge. We've all dreamed of the "magic wand" that miraculously releases mats and tangles, erases stains, eradicates foul odors, or would fix stupid. We've envisioned carwash type contraptions for dogs that would save time and effort. Have you longed for a lightweight dryer that wasn't so loud, wouldn't blow fuses, never broke down, and dried in half the time? What new computer marvels or smart apps can you imagine in our future?

We can all bear witness that some of these not so far-fetched ideas may have already been attempted or are brewing. Regardless of their degree of success or failure in the past, I'm encouraged by the abundant inventiveness within the grooming community. I've seen a lot of re-purposing of existing technology adapted to fit our industry. However in my opinion, there's also been a lack of fresh genuine innovation. Until now!

Below are a few examples of technology worth following:

## **Extraordinary Grooming Liquids**

Today humanity has welcomed technology into day-to-day life, so I foresee a day when groomers eagerly embrace the science and chemistry responsible for their liquid products. Product performance will notably improve. Groomers will come to rely confidently upon future shampoo and conditioners that “actually work” to quickly release shedding undercoat; annihilate foul odors, and many other challenging situations.

Advancements in chemistry will enable bathing without tedious pre-brushing; safely releasing more hair in the tub and with a blow dryer rather than pulling and ripping with a brush beforehand. These will also enable force dryers to act as a virtual brush; harnessing water and air to do much of the hard work. Coats treated with these formulas will smell fresh longer; stay cleaner and more manageable for weeks. All thanks to science!

## **Futuristic Bathing Systems**

Now imagine these advanced formulas simply sprayed directly into a dry coat. No pre-soaking needed. The bather quickly sprays the entire animal with shampoo, rinses after a few minutes, and applies a light non-oily conditioner or final leave-in spray before drying. Voila!

Such an innovation would be a must for any mobile groomer with limited water supply onboard. Perhaps everyone in the future will have to conserve water, and could benefit from such a Mindful device. Did I mention this futuristic bathing unit will defy any shampoo dilution rate quandaries by conserving shampoo usage beyond fathoming? Well it will!

## **Hi-Efficiency Hair Dryers**

Close your eyes and picture a much quieter force dryer that doesn't routinely set-off your shops electrical breakers. With just the flick of switch, this dryer engages a pulsating stream of negative ions that disperses water molecules at an accelerated rate enabling 50% faster drying time. All this while smoothing cuticles on every hair, adding shine, with zero static and no alarmingly hot air. Since the coat was pretreated with advanced liquid technology, you now brush with this dryer, waving it as if the magic wand once dreamed of!

## **Final Thoughts**

Imagine doing more with less; less shampoo, less water, less energy, less effort, less time, etc. What if you didn't have to wait too long for the future to come? How long must we wait? What if I said these dreams are within your grasp? These breakthrough innovations in technology are out there just waiting to be discovered.

Come and step through a virtual time portal with me, into one of many grooming trade shows, and experience exactly what I'm talking about. Throughout America and abroad there's a thriving pet grooming industry beckoning you to come and discover its' future. Your future!

Put aside any hesitation and assumptions. Register today for that seminar or workshop. Explore up and down every aisle of a grooming trade show. Reach out to vendors, manufacturers and experts. Your future can be so amazing and bright. Be mindful. You deserve more, so start enjoying your grooming career today. The future is now!

***About the Author:** Dave Campanella is an informative and entertaining seminar speaker, contributing trade columnist, and genuine grooming enthusiast. He is Best Shot Pet Products sales and marketing director and has over 25 years of pet industry knowledge and experience. He and his wife Tracy co-owned a full service pet salon and self-wash in Ohio prior to relocating to Kentucky. They enjoy exhibiting at grooming shows, being industry ambassadors, and showing their Kerry Blue Terrier and Samoyed dogs.*