Retailer of the Year is all about pets, but has never sold one

All Pets Considered places emphasis on community involvement, support

Merida wore something special to celebrate.

She’s always smartly dressed, but on the day after All Pets Considered was named GMA Retailer of the Year, she showed up at work sporting pearls.

The single strand choker accented her lacy skirt and contrasted nicely with her silky smooth coat.

Merida is a red dachshund. Her human, Alison Schwartz, is manager at All Pets Considered. Schwartz wore jeans that day, as she often does.

Merida stayed close by her human’s side as she circulated through the store’s nearly 12,000 square feet at the corner of Battleground Avenue and Cone Boulevard.

When Merida isn’t helping her human keep an eye on things, she relaxes in a cozy bed underneath Schwartz’s desk. Merida, a rescue dog who worked her way into Schwartz’s heart, doesn’t say much, but her calm demeanor speaks volumes.

It’s good to have a human associated with All Pets Considered.

On the other side of the store, Brandy – a golden retriever/poodle mix – stood patiently on a grooming table as she got a spa treatment from groomer Heather Watkins. Hair, nails, the whole package. What female doesn’t like to be pampered?

Meanwhile, customers came in to pick up things such as all-natural pet foods (mostly for dogs and cats) and shop the pet-related fare ranging from door mats to apparel (for animals, not people).

Schwartz and store owner Kristine Godfrey, who opened the store 23 years ago in its first location in Lawndale Shopping Center, know many of their customers by name and their pets.

“We are 99.9 percent dog and cat oriented,” says Godfrey. “We have a tiny little bit of bird food.”

“We specialize in premium, natural nutrition,” Schwartz says.

There’s kibble in cans, freeze-dried pet food, dehydrated, and raw fare as well. Different foods for different tastes, needs, and diets, she explains.

“Just as people are becoming more aware of their own health, they’re becoming aware of the benefits of feeding their pets a less-processed diet,” Schwartz says.

All Pets Considered enhances its reputation through its support of many animal welfare and community activities.

The store is involved with several rescue and foster pet organizations, which find homes for animals in need. It typically donates...
more than 200 gift baskets each year to community groups of all kinds for fund-raisers and special events.

“It doesn’t have to be a pet-related event,” Schwartz says. It has a community room that stays busy with special events, such as adoption fairs and educational seminars. On the day Merida wore pearls, it was set up as a studio for a day of pet portraiture.

The GMA Retailer of the Year Award was presented May 5 at the annual Small Business Awards luncheon and sponsored by the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce.

All Pets Considered employs about 30 people, with about half of those working full-time. Many staff members are approaching a decade of service.

“We are very adoption friendly. We, of course, don’t sell animals. Never have,” says Godfrey, owner of two rescue dogs and three ferrets.

Schwartz has been involved in dachshund rescue efforts for 16 years, a passion that introduced her to All Pets Considered and, more recently, to a dachshund with a thing for pearls.

All Pets Considered
2614 Battleground Ave.
Greensboro, N.C. 27408
(336) 540-1400

Join your GMA friends at the ballpark June 14
It’s GMA Night at the Grasshoppers
GMA’s annual pre-game picnic and baseball game with the Greensboro Grasshoppers is June 14.

The catered picnic begins at 5:30 p.m. in GMA’s employee parking lot at the corner of Eugene and Bellmeade streets. The picnic will be catered by Culinary Visions Catering.

From there, it’s a short walk across the street to NewBridge Bank Park and the 7 p.m. Grasshoppers game with the Asheville Tourists.

Tickets are $12 per person.

All employees of GMA member companies, family members and friends are eligible to attend the picnic and game. Just reserve your tickets by June 9.

Purchase tickets by calling Lisa Daas at 336-378-6350.

Sharing marketing insights
GMA member Jessica Byerly, an authority on social media, recently discussed how to better use video for Internet marketing. She spoke to a packed house in GMA’s newly remodeled Community Room as part of GMA’s Digital Marketing Institute. The series, open to all employees of GMA member companies, is a free member benefit. Upcoming Digital Marketing Institute events are May 25, July 27, and August 3. Details are on page 6.
Web search criteria are changing – it’s time to listen to Google

BY ADRIENNE CREGAR JANDLER

Read Google’s press releases regarding its search algorithm updates and you’ll quickly learn that search engines are paying more attention to things like content, currency, searcher intent, engagement, and link authority.

These factors come up repeatedly when evaluating the different ways that search rankings are now being calculated. Amid these is an even bigger message that Google is trying to get across...and one that marketers often do not recognize.

Listening to Google is a good idea, and not just because it can send you thousands of visits each day. The engineers who run the search engine are also at the forefront of new technology and behavioral research.

They can see data and trends the rest of us can’t. Here are a few things they keep telling us.

Google wants what searchers want

Google has gained its status as the web’s most-visited portal because it recognizes real-life individuals are on the hunt for content that is unique, specific, informative, and up-to-date. They want search results that are personalized to their own needs and preferences.

Knowing that search users have these preferences, Google is prioritizing them in its search results. That way, it can keep people coming back, instead of using a different search engine and losing out on viewership and ad revenue.

Google hates what searchers hate

If each algorithm update is about giving searchers what they want, it is also about giving users less of what they hate. And we all know what searchers hate: web pages that load slowly, broken links, scraped content, and information that’s irrelevant or out-of-date.

Google is starting to tweak its formulas in ways that punish websites with these problems, or ignore them altogether.

Searchers hate any result that provides them with a low-quality experience.

Anything that makes your website less usable or visitor-friendly is going to hurt your search engine rankings, as well.

Looking back won’t get you ahead

Despite Google’s advice and common sense, lots of business owners and marketers are desperately clinging to ideas that used to work but don’t any longer.

Rather than update their tactics to adjust to the times, they are doubling down on keyword stuffing, link farming, and copied content, making things worse for themselves in the process.

It’s time to listen to Google.

If you want your website to stand out – with search engine spiders or with actual customers – you need fresh, relevant content, current technology and none of the old SEO tricks that now harm your credibility.

BY ADRIENNE CREGAR JANDLER

Career paths may change, but relationships built through GMA last

When GMA staged its version of an “Amazing Race” scavenger hunt last fall, volunteer Pennie Shiflett Melton was assigned to the Greensboro Science Center. As teams deciphered clues and traveled to the Science Center to check it off their lists, Melton was on hand to represent GMA and handle the frenzied contestants.

At GMA networking events, Melton can be found wearing a necklace of LED lights around her neck and handing out stickers for the get-acquainted game. She’s also a member of the RACERS, GMA’s membership development group.

Melton, who has been involved with many organizations over 20 years, says volunteering is one way to give back. And while volunteering, she’s also networking for the future.

“Over the years, I have discovered the importance of networking,” says Melton, director of sales for Best Western Windsor Suites and Best Western Plus Airport hotels.

“Networking,” she says, “is not an instant reward. But it has a huge payoff in the long run.”

For example: Individuals who Melton met more than 20 years ago, when she was a teenager working in a different industry, are still part of her business network today.

Those connections remained strong through GMA.

“I’ve been in sales and marketing in this area for about 25 years,” she explains. Her first sales positions were with her mother’s company, EMSI, which coordinated physical examinations for health insurance companies. She later worked in real estate until the economic downturn, then moved to the hospitality industry.

Her responsibilities as director of sales include booking contracts with businesses that need hotel accommodations on an ongoing basis.

This guarantees that business a specific rate, even if rooms are needed during a holiday weekend or an event such as the High Point Market or an ACC basketball tournament. Melton also books the hotels’ meeting space, which often is used for events that are held off-site and by companies that don’t have adequate conference facilities.

Melton got reconnected to GMA about four years ago at the invitation of GMA member Wayne Ford, who suggested she attend a meeting of one of GMAs three formal networking groups.

Melton ended up joining a different networking group, the GURUs, because its meeting time better suited her schedule.

“That’s what got me involved, got me volunteering, and really seeing the benefit of what GMA is doing for our economy – which is priceless,” Melton says.

Connections made through her networking group are her second-highest revenue source for her hotels, she says, after Google searches.

And, she emphasizes, networking contacts continue to generate business over the long term.

“They are generally lifelong clients,” she says. “It’s not a one-time thing. It’s a relationship you build forever. That’s where being involved in GMA is so important. Because if you just pop in one time, every now and then, you’re forgotten.”

Pennie Shiflett Melton
Best Western Plus
336-662-7520
Types – Published for members of the Guilford Merchants Association

Members share

“Business and personal online banking has had the biggest impact on the banking industry. Clients can transact business after traditional banking hours, and this increases cash flow as well as allows for real time information after the bank is closed.”

Jackie Cameron
First Citizens Bank

“Document scanning gives us the ability to save paper file storage space as well as obtain signatures quickly from customers without being face to face. Really compliments the online direction our agency is moving in.”

Tom Needham
Tom Needham Insurance

“Definitely the smartphone. I can do most of my business on the road.”

Lisa Musko
Unique Office Solutions

What technology innovation has had a significant impact on your business?

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What technology innovation has had a significant impact on your business?
Tim Bauguess was a college student when he got his first job with R.H. Barringer. He was a helper on a delivery truck, replenishing Anheuser-Busch products sold by retailers throughout the Greensboro area. After graduation, he went to work there full-time.

Today he’s still with R.H. Barringer Distributing Co., serving as general manager since 2007.

The company, founded in Greensboro in 1933, became an Anheuser-Busch distributor in 1935 at the end of Prohibition. R.H. Barringer had around 270 SKUs (stock keeping units), or individual products, when Bauguess went to work full time in 1986. Now the company has more than 1,200 SKUs, more than 415 employees, and distributes a wide range of non-alcoholic beverages as well as many brands of beer. The company also owns American Premium Beverage, which distributes wine.

The business founded by Robert Barringer remains a family-owned company. “The family’s still involved, third generation,” Bauguess says. “Mr. Barringer’s grandsons, Mark and Rick Craig, are continuing to build on our success.”

GMA records show that R.H. Barringer has been a member since 1984.

In addition to the Greensboro headquarters, the company has distribution centers in Winston-Salem, Burlington, and the Davidson County community of Linwood.

Bauguess says the company’s acquisition of American Premium Beverage in 2007, which distributed several beer brands in addition to wines, was R.H. Barringer’s first expansion outside of Anheuser-Busch brands.

That move set up the company to capitalize on the surging popularity of imported and craft beers. Additional territories and brands were added with the 2011 purchase of Silver Eagle Distributing of Linwood.

Silver Eagle was an Anheuser-Busch distributor that also distributed other beer brands, and R.H. Barringer was able to add some of those franchises as well. Bauguess is responsible for three locations serving 22 counties in the central and northern Piedmont.

About 15 North Carolina craft breweries contract with R.H. Barringer to distribute their beers, Bauguess says. “We represent over 120 suppliers of beer brands,” he says. “We’ve come a long way.”

Among its non-alcoholic brands are V-8 Juice products packaged for purchase at convenience stores, Calypso Lemonade products, and Sparkling Ice brand products.

The company has a long tradition of being active in its hometown. “We try to stay involved in the community,” Bauguess explains. “We all grew up here. Our kids go to school here. We want to give back and be involved.”

R.H. Barringer is a regular sponsor of GMA networking events, such as After Work Networks.

Bauguess says that as a result of the company’s expansion into craft beers and wine, his palate has expanded. Depending on the occasion, he may choose an I.P.A. or a pinot noir, his favorite wine. But on a hot summer day at the beach, he remains true to his roots. “I like a Bud Light,” he says.

Success on tap since 1933: R.H. Barringer delivers liquid refreshment to Piedmont
As this issue of Trends reaches GMA members, our community will have just concluded another observance of National Police Week.

President John F. Kennedy designated May 15 as National Police Officers Memorial Day in 1962 and the week in which it falls as National Police Week.

National Police Week remembers those officers who lost their lives in the line of duty and pays tribute to all officers who serve our community.

Over the decades, 10 Greensboro police officers have died in the line of duty.

They are among the 21 Guilford County officers who sacrificed their lives in service to the community.

Since 1991, GMA and the Greensboro Police Department have partnered to observe National Police Week.

The week’s activities celebrate the city’s police force and acknowledge the service and heroic deeds that law enforcement officers perform daily.

Among the events are a Joint Law Enforcement Memorial Service; a Memorial 5K Run through downtown Greensboro; and a golf tournament that benefits the Special Olympics.

Another highlight of the week is the Police & Citizens Appreciation Dinner and Awards Ceremony. Officers are awarded commendation bars, medals of valor, lifesaving medals, and superior service bars.

Citizens and businesses that have been instrumental in crime prevention efforts also are celebrated.

GMA understands the importance of recognizing and celebrating our local law enforcement departments and officers, and we are proud of our longtime partnership with the Greensboro Police Department.

We say thanks to law enforcement officers during National Police Week

Tell the world about your business has never been easier, thanks to the Internet and social media.

And everything is virtually free, right?

Wrong.

Effective social media marketing involves targeted ad buys. Kristen Daukas of Atlantic Webworks will share her insights on creating a viable social media presence for your business at GMA’s May 25 Digital Marketing Institute.

The program begins with lunch and networking at 11:15 a.m. and concludes at 1 p.m. Admission is free for all employees of GMA member companies.

Daukas will discuss Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Other topics in the series include a two-part session on digital marketing law, presented by attorneys with Brooks Pierce on July 27 and August 3.

The September 28 program will focus on content marketing, presented by Adrienne Cregar Jandler of Atlantic Webworks.

The series will conclude November 16 with a topic to be announced later.

For more information, call GMA at 336-378-6350.

Sharpen your online marketing skills with GMA’s free seminars
June 9 Workplace Workshop

‘Why Be Normal?’ with Terry Watson

Thursday, June 9
Embassy Suites Hotel
204 Centreport Drive
7:30 a.m. refreshments
8–10 a.m. seminar
Free for all employees of GMA member companies!
Registration deadline: June 7
Call 378-6350 or register online at www.mygma.org
Please let us know if you need additional services for employees with disabilities.

FirstPoint Management Resources earns industry accreditation

FirstPoint Management Resources, an affiliated company of GMA, has been accredited by a global organization of association management companies.
AMC Institute has awarded accreditation to only 82 association management companies (AMC) out of more than 500 such organizations worldwide. AMCs specialize in managing associations and not-for-profit organizations, providing leadership and professional management services through experienced staff, best practices, and shared resources.
Accreditation demonstrates FirstPoint Management Resources’ commitment and ability to deliver the highest level of professional management services to association and not-for-profit clients.
“We applaud FirstPoint on this significant achievement,” said Greg Schultz, chair of AMC Institute. “AMCI accreditation requires that association management firms demonstrate adherence to operational and ethical best practices. Accreditation distinguishes FirstPoint’s ongoing commitment to leadership in association management.”
The AMC Institute accreditation process reviews measurable performance practices, including contracts and service delivery; employee recruitment, training and professional development; and financial management and internal controls, among others.
Once accredited, AMCs must earn re-accreditation every four years, demonstrating to an independent outside auditor that they continue to meet the standard.
FirstPoint President & CEO G. Mark Prince applauded the many staff members involved in the accreditation process.
“This accreditation recognizes FirstPoint’s commitment to quality and client service,” he said. “I want to thank the many FirstPoint employees who contributed their time and talents to helping us achieve this milestone.”
“At FirstPoint our clients come first,” said FirstPoint Management Resources General Manager Ellen Gioielli. “We continually strive to provide our clients with outstanding customer service,” she said. “These accreditation requirements have reshaped our daily operations, ensuring consistent performance.”

Beach Music Blast series opens on June 2

The Fantastic Shakers, a band based in Lincolnton and celebrating 35 years of performing beach music, kick off Bill Black’s Beach Music Blast on June 2.
The show and party begin at 6 p.m. on Commerce Place in downtown Greensboro. Bill Black’s Beach Music Blast benefits the Children’s Home Society of North Carolina.
Tickets are $7 per person and available at the gate.
Other Beach Music Blast dates and bands are:
• June 9 / Too Much Sylvia
• June 16 / Special Occasion Band
• June 23 / Sleeping Booty
• June 30 / The Embers

The Embers return to the Beach Music Blast on June 30.
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  RALEIGH SYMPOSIUM - November 3, 2016

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– Wade Pack, Managing Partner

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Results that Matter

“We needed a new look and a website with highly customized functionality. Atlantic Webworks exceeded our every expectation. They provided us with a responsive website that was perfectly suited for our business and a new look that matched the quality of our American-made landscape lighting products.”

Brandon Hefner CEO, ClaroLux
www.clarolux.com

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