

QuickBooks

Point of Sale



INSIDE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL RETAILERS

Small Business, Big Inventory, Smart Marketing



SMALL BUSINESS, BIG INVENTORY, SMART MARKETING



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— Tim Oliver, Co-owner, Tag for Dogs and Cats

Before opening Dogma Catma, their whimsically named boutique pet store, Tim Oliver and Carl Gustafson already knew something about brocade collars, catnip cigars and Juicy Couture pet carriers. What they didn't know was just how much inventory they would be stocking. By the time they opened the doors on their San Diego shop, the partners had logged in some 80,000 items and now carry a mind-numbing 5,000-plus SKUs. “We're probably crazy,” says Oliver. “But there are so many sizes of dogs and cats, so many styles of toys — and we want to be the place to go for hard-to-find items.”

To track their massive inventory as well as their loyal customers' tastes, the partners use QuickBooks Point of Sale. “The system has helped save us hundreds of hours a year by not having to transfer everything to a separate accounting package, or manually by paper to an accountant,” says Oliver.

To get their massive inventory online, the partners began entering it ahead of the shop's opening, as the shipments arrived. The system saved them much rekeying by copying shared data from related SKUs. Intuit's wireless physical inventory scanner will save them even more keystrokes, as well as from the potential for mistakes, at inventory time. “The physical inventory scanner will make the process tons easier,” Oliver says. “There is so much human error introduced from hand-counting, shuffling through an inventory book, and writing it all down. It is much easier and more accurate to simply scan, scan, scan.”

Oliver chose QuickBooks Point of Sale on the basis of his experience with Intuit accounting software, as well as QuickBooks POS' ability to work seamlessly with his bank's Visa and MasterCard services. “I looked at a competitor's product, but it didn't have integrated credit card processing, and I didn't want a separate machine for running charges. With QuickBooks Point of Sale, the reader is built into the keyboard and all the processing is in one place,” he says, including integrated credit card approval via QuickBooks Merchant Services.

The difference may be cosmetic, but for retailers competing with chain stores, looks count. “When you make a purchase at a major retailer, the clerk doesn’t take your charge to a separate machine, and I didn’t want to either. QuickBooks Point of Sale makes us look like professionals.”

At Dogma Catma, QuickBooks Point of Sale tracks not only inventory and transactions, but customer preferences. One day, the partners came up with an idea so seemingly goofy that it had to work: a gift registry. “At checkout, we ask our customers for contact information, but while we’re at it, we also get their pet’s names, food and toy preferences, collar size, and owner’s special taste. It all fits into the notes section on the QuickBooks POS customer screens. Now, some of our customers use it as a wish list registry if they want to throw Fido a party, or if their friends come in looking for a gift.”

Oliver has loaded a second copy onto a laptop, which he uses to access the inventory records from the sanctity of his office. When the holidays come and long lines form, he plans to use the laptop as a second point of sale for credit card and check transactions. The strategy should work among the shop’s best customers. After all, how many fashionista dogs and cats these days pay with cash?

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