



# IPDGA Newsletter

Christmas 2008

## Hello Groomers

Wow, that was some weekend! To say our 12<sup>th</sup> annual grooming championships went well was an understatement. Thank you to all who took the time to get back to us with their comments and so far the consensus has been that it was the best one yet... Having the three City & Guilds dogs all being demonstrated in the weekend seemed to be very popular. Agnes, Tricia and Anita were so easy to talk to and every time I looked over, they were knee deep in people looking at their work and asking questions.

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Congratulations to everyone who competed in the grooming competition. The standard was world class. No other word for it! The excitement was rising throughout the weekend as no-one knew who had won the different classes as the top 4 or 5 were called out at the end of each competition and we all had to wait until Sunday afternoon until the final results were called out and we found out that the winner of the Irish Groomer of the Year 2008 was Nicola Lacey. Well done Nicola! For a full list of all the winners have a look at our website [www.ipdga.com](http://www.ipdga.com)

One of the best things about going to grooming seminars here and abroad is checking out all the new goodies at the suppliers booths. (my husband knows not to look in the car when I come home!) I did some damage to the old credit card at Christies, Mullinahone and Castlelack and then I saw a clippers I had never seen before at the Mullinahone stand. It was a cordless Heiniger and as I have several clippers plugged in at the one time and the wires get tangled together, I love cordless!

I have to say I wasn't expecting to like the clippers as I had never heard of Heiniger (apparently they are very well known in horse clippers and be-

ing Swiss made are very reliable) but my goodness I love them. They fit very nicely in the hand and aren't back heavy as most cordless clippers are. The battery lasts for an amazing length of time and as it comes with a spare battery you will never get stuck. Recharge time is 33 minutes. It is powerful, doesn't heat up in the hand and at 180 euro plus vat doesn't cost as much as a cordless Andis, or Laube mini micro. This will be the clippers of the future.

Just as we were recovering from our own seminar we had to get ready for the Pet Expo the following weekend. The I.P.D.G.A. stand is a good way of informing the general public of the importance of having their dog groomed by a professional. That's us! We had a great weekend with continuous demonstrations which brought over huge crowds to our stand. A huge thank you to all who gave up their time to help out at the stand.

See you all soon, Hairy Mary (Mary Toland Chairperson IPDGA).

Merry Christmas  
Groomers  
and  
a very Happy New  
Year from the  
IPDGA

## Complaints: Are they a Gift?



The short answer is "Yes" but we need to explore that in more depth.

### Why are complaints important?

In order for a business to survive and develop, we need to do two things:

1. Maintain / Increase service to existing customers.
2. Win new customers

### Increasing Service to existing customers

In order to do this, customers need to be satisfied and still want to deal with the business to avail of additional services or recommend you to friends/ relations.

### Winning new customers

New customers have to form a positive impression of a groomer- either from marketing/advertisings or through references - Ireland is a small place.

**Customer satisfaction is therefore crucial to your business.**

Satisfied customers come back - dissatisfied customers do not. Satisfied customers "spread the word" they are our "goodwill ambassadors". They make our lives easier - Dissatisfied customers on the other hand, share their dissatisfaction with anyone who will listen. They are "bad will" ambassadors. They ruin the reputation of our business.

### Statistics on Dissatisfaction

When something good happens, you generally tell 8 people about it (your inner circle) When bad things happen, you tell 22 people about it (anyone you meet until you get it off your chest). Dissatisfaction is a very popular topic as we are negative by nature so that the original dissatisfied customer has told 22 people who are likely to then tell their inner circle, a total of about 176 people who have heard, and now agree with or believe the bad press that has been given out about the company/business. All 176 people who have heard the complaint will then become "bad will" ambassadors for that company/business. This will undermine the effectiveness of any marketing or advertising strategies or activities that have been implemented. So we are making a serious mistake if we think that the number of complaints is the same as the number of dissatisfied customers. We also falsely assume that all of the customers that stay with us are those who are satisfied. Satisfied customers, however spend more- so when we have the opportunity to offer new things they 'buy' more. Potential customers often want to hear from existing customers - if they hear good things, they are more likely to 'buy' than if they don't. Satisfied customers are a source of inspiration- they contribute to us feeling good about what we do - they give job satisfaction. That's why our thank-yous' are so important - so we can continue to take pride in what we are doing and do it better.

**REMEMBER: IT COSTS FIVE TIMES MORE TO WIN A NEW CUSTOMER THAN TO KEEP AN EXISTING ONE.**

So, why do we say a complaint is a gift? Because, a complaint gives us the opportunity to do something about a client's dissatisfaction before they become an ex-client. We are a service industry so our complaints procedure is part of our putting our service right.

Now, we need to establish how easy it is to complain? Or why don't customers complain?

So, if dissatisfied customers have not bothered to complain, why not?

- I don't think that my complaint is welcome
  - I don't think that anyone is going to listen to me
  - Whenever I make a complaint, I am treated with suspicion and doubt
  - Complaining is more trouble than finding a new supplier
  - I have complained but nothing has happened
  - I don't know who to complain to
  - Nobody takes responsibility for my problem, they just pass it on
  - I have received rude treatment when I have complained
  - If I complain in writing, I hardly even get a reply and if I do, it takes ages. Research survey by the Technical Assistance Research Programmes survey shows that: 26 out of 27 customers who have received poor service do not complain. They feel that the complaint itself will be a source of annoyance for them and a waste of time. So, it is up to us to welcome complaints, and indeed seek them out so that we don't have dissatisfied customers in the background "stewing". Your relationship with your clients is vital! You must keep in personal contact with them REGULARLY so that you can tell them if things are not going as they usually do and so that you can ask them if there is a problem. What are their expectations? Do we ask them if they have any complaints? Have we failed them in any way? **Then when we have the complaint, what do we do?** What is our attitude/behaviour like to complaining or being complained about? Think about how other companies behave. Have you ever had a complaint well dealt with? What was good about it? What experiences have you had that have made you feel good about a company or is it just bad experiences that you can remember?
- First put yourself in the position of the person making the complaint.** How would you feel if you were about to make a complaint? How would you react? What would you expect from the organisation that you are complaining to? What would it take to make you happy? What would it take to make you a goodwill ambassador? This, putting yourself in the customers place will give you an idea of how to deal with the complaint. Complaints should be handled in such a way that makes the customer glad that they complained. A positive attitude towards customers and a genuine desire to make things better is what is needed to be effective in handling complaints. So we need to be genuinely happy that we can do something more for our customers. We do not need to have the attitude that it is one more 'picky' person who is finding fault where there is none. We need to be delighted that we have the opportunity to make our

service better.

**How do we do this?**

**Simple Rules** Obviously, the attitude and behaviour has to be right. Imagine your best friend has brought you something wonderful: What is your reaction? You are delighted. Your first reaction is to smile and say thank you. i.e. your body language will agree with the words you are saying. You will be delighted that they have thought of you and have bought you something having, made the effort to choose something that they think you will be pleased with. Try to imagine this feeling again when a customer complains. This customer has gone to a lot of trouble to give you an opportunity to recover their confidence.

**Golden rules for processing complaints:**

1. **Say thank you** - don't sound clichéd like a scratched record; mean it - Remember this is a gift.
  2. **Explain why you appreciate the complainant** - again, don't sound like a broken record - say why you appreciate the opportunity to deal with their complaint. Thank you - I appreciate your pointing this out because it gives me the opportunity to correct it. Or - I appreciate the time and effort you have taken to make this complaint, It can help prevent this from happening again etc
  3. **Apologise for the mistake unreservedly** - don't try and justify anything - even if it may not be a justified complaint. It is always worthwhile to treat a customer better than they expected. It leads to a stronger sense of loyalty when the true circumstances become clear to the customer. If you can't deal with the complaint don't just pass the customer on with the attitude "It's not my department". Give the customer the impression they have come to the right person because everyone takes responsibility for customer satisfaction.
  4. **Promise to do something about it immediately.** Whether you can do so yourself or not. As far as possible, explain what can be done and what you or the organisation can do about it.
- REMEMBER:** Thank customer, Appreciate complaint, Apologise **PROMISE TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE ASKING TOO MANY QUESTIONS.** Your customer is now feeling very positive - You have thanked them for calling / you have said you appreciate the complaint- you have apologised and said that immediate action will take place.
5. **Then ask for more details** e.g. could you help me so I can correct the situation immediately. Make sure you don't give into negativity or cross-examination here otherwise you have ruined all your hard work. Get the information. Ask how you can reach the customer if the matter cannot be resolved immediately.
  6. **Correct the mistake-** If it can't be done straight away tell the customer.
  7. **Check that the customer is now satisfied.** Write, call or meet with the customer and make sure that the customer is satisfied and is still your customer.
  8. **Prevent future mistakes:** See what went wrong and make sure it can't happen again.

**Final Points to remember!**

A customer who complains still has confidence in the organisation otherwise they would walk away and not bother, make them glad that they have complained.

A customer who complains has every right to do so. A customer who complains is giving us the opportunity to correct our mistake. Remember the earlier statistic, only one in 27 complains so this person who is complaining is the spokesperson for all the rest. This customer is one rare few who is making extra effort to help us and point out what has happened. Think of the complaining customer as your friend. They are the person who cares enough to help you do better. If you treat the customer who complains well, they will become your goodwill ambassador.

**A complaint is a gift, treat it as such and you will retain and expand your customer base**

Thanks to Orlagh McCarthy for this article.

## Work With Dogs;

**For as long as I can remember I always wanted to work with dogs but was unsure in which capacity. A few years ago I noticed a sign in a shop window advertising a dog grooming service and new straight away that this was the career for me. I contacted Jenny Hale and after many false starts I finally started the course in February. The first thing that struck me was how different it was to what I thought it would be and how much work goes in to every single dog that comes into the salon. I also remember thinking that I would never ever get the hang of it.**

**As the days went by all the things Jenny had thought me began to slot into place. But some days I would go in and do a good job the next day I could barely hold a scissors. As the course was coming to end I felt a lot more confident in my ability but thought without Jenny I would never be able to make a decision on my own. I wanted to stay on the course forever and never have to venture out into the real world on my own. I didn't think Jenny would like the idea of me hanging around forever so sadly I had to venture out!!**

**Shortly before I opened up my place, I did a few days refresher and then attended a seminar. This week helped me so much and did wonders for my confidence. Going to the seminar and meeting so many people who understood how I was feeling made me realise that I wasn't out in the real world on my own. I had the support of a big organisation with members that had made mistakes and learned from them and were even able to laugh about them!**

**My advice to anyone starting out is too attend seminars, keep in touch with other groomers and most importantly of all, HAVE JENNY HALES PHONE NO ON SPEED DIAL!!**

Rita Byrne

# Groomer of the Year 2008

IPDGA would like to thank our Judges Mrs. Agnes Murphy, Ms. Patricia Elms, and Oster Ambassador Mrs. Anita Bax,

## Saturday Awards

### Scissor Class kindly sponsored by Simpsons

Merits : Stephanie Byrne Bichon

Scissor Technique: Nicola Lacey Bichon

Best International Mia Overnas Min.Poodle

3<sup>rd</sup> Nicola Lacey Bichon

2<sup>nd</sup> Natasja Hoekman Toy Poodle

1<sup>st</sup> Suzanne O'Sullivan Toy Poodle in Bichon Style

### Handstrip Class kindly sponsored by Castlelack

Merits Helen Winnington Fox Terrier

Best International Mia Overnas Lakeland Terrier

3<sup>rd</sup> Natasja Hoekman Norfolk Terrier

2<sup>nd</sup> Tom O'Mahony Border Terrier

1<sup>st</sup> Anki Overnas Min Schnauzer

## Sunday Awards

### Clipped Class kindly sponsored by Christies Direct

Merits : Ann Collins Min Schnauzer

Roisin Hogan Springer Spaniel

Best International : Mia Overnas Cocker Spaniel

3<sup>rd</sup> Anki Overnas Min Schnauzer

2<sup>nd</sup> Stephanie Byrne Yorki x

1<sup>st</sup> Nicola Lacey Airedale

### Novice Class kindly sponsored by Mullinahone

Merits Jane Smith Scottie

3<sup>rd</sup> Leeane Swaine Airedale

2<sup>nd</sup> Jeanette Vega Westie

1<sup>st</sup> Sorcha MacLochlain Bichon

### OSTER CAREER START CLASS SPONSORED BY OSTER

Merits Sheila Bulbeck Bichon

Barbara Hanly Maltese

Orla Haughney Cocker

Christina Keenan Westie

Marie Keogh Westie

3<sup>rd</sup> Marianne Dunne JRT

2<sup>nd</sup> Siobhan O'Reilly Cocker

1<sup>st</sup> Marguerite O'Leary Shihtzu

### Best International Award sponsored by Castlelack

Winner : Mia Overnas

### BEST INDIVIDUAL SPONSORED BY CHRISTIES DIRECT

Reserve Tom O'Mahony Border Terrier

Winner Suzanne O'Sullivan Poodle

### Irish Groomer Of The Year 2008 sponsored by Mullinahone

Reserve Stephanie Byrne

Winner Nicola Lacey

Best In Show ( between Best Int & IGOY )

Nicola Lacey

We would also like to thank our generous sponsors as we couldn't do it without them. Special thanks to Bobby and Agnes Murphy of <http://www.technogroom.co.uk> who donated two DVD's and a voucher for £100.00.



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Not forgetting the members and a big thank you for all your words of encouragement and thanks. Do let us know what you would like more of.

## ILL PAY YOU TO WASH MY DOG!

That's how it all started a simple throw away comment from a good friend, during a summer BBQ discussing my next career move. Having worked in marketing my full working life I wanted a new challenge a rewarding career that I controlled, a business that I could do on my terms. Dog grooming had never entered my head, despite my love for dogs I had never imagined I could make a living from them. That was June 2007, 14 months later I eat, sleep and breath dog grooming!!!

I'm still learning - every day is something new. From day one there has been so much to take-in, from the initial steps of basic training to now getting my head around what breed it resembles, what cut I am going to do on it and how much I am going to charge for doing it! .... I'm still nervous shaving matted dogs, I cringe cutting in-grown nails, and pull stupid faces doing anal glands, I struggle to make dogs stand, or hold their legs still, I have had a couple of ear infections which shout out to owners... "how the hell could you not notice this". Sometimes my arms ache, I get pains in my hands after scissoring and I can't get rid of the hard skin on my thumb and finger, I hate the feeling of hair on my face and arms that gets worse the more I try to rub it off, and poo-bags are higher than milk on the weekly shopping list!

This is definitely the hardest I have ever worked in my whole life, I know that people say you always work harder when you work for yourself, but as you all know this job is demanding, physical **REAL** hard work. Today I shaved down two adult Newfoundland's, from start to finish it took me over 7 hours non-stop, and these guys were really well behaved!! I doubt the owner will ever realise just how much work I did on her dogs, and for me that is the hardest part of the job, the owners don't realise the state there dogs are in, and what that means both for me the groomer and the dog!

**BUT** despite all that there is nothing like the feeling of satisfaction you get when you have done a good job and the dog looks great, no matter how long it takes its worth it when you let them off the table and watch them shake and run around with a renewed feeling of freeness looking shiny, fresh healthy and happy. (although it was a little too much when the Newfoundland's started humping each other).

I still get excited when I see a full round westie shape head or when my lion feet come out just perfect. It's not a job for the faint hearted and you definitely need the full support of your partner behind you, but after only a short period in business I know I wouldn't change my new career for the world. It will take me years to perfect the art and for now I can just take every day and dog as it comes and keep praying that I never have to deal with anything more serious than a cut quirk or grazed ball!!

Fiona Manly

On the 12th September 2008 I left my home at 10.40am to go the Irish Grooming Championships at Roadstone social Club, Newlands Cross, Co Dublin. I was competing in the Oster Career Start competition open to new groomers. I was really excited and looking forward to the competition.

I travelled along the Naas Road towards the Red Cow roundabout and some how ended on the M50 southbound and seemed to be going further away from my destination. I started to panic knowing that my dog had to be on the table for 12.30pm for inspection and that the competition started at 1pm sharp.

I decided to pull over on the hard shoulder on the M50 feeling very upset. Suddenly a Garda Traffic jeep stopped behind me. The Garda got out of the vehicle and asked me are you lost. He knew I was upset and he said "are you ok". I told him I had to be at the Irish Grooming Championships by 12.30pm and he said "don't worry I will get you there on time".

I followed the Garda and could not believe that I was escorted to my destination on time. When I arrived I thanked the Garda for the escort and he replied that is my job. I would now like to thank the Garda for his kindness as I did not get his name.

Without the Garda I would have missed out on a great day.

Maria Black

New Groomer

**Diary Dates****Health & Safety Seminar**

9th November 2008 9:15—4:30

Venue Portlaoise Heritage Hotel

IBKCA (Irish Boarding Kennels &amp; Cattery Association)

H &amp; S Regulations

The Insurance Industry

Andrew Hampshire, Kennel &amp; Cattery Mgt publications.

Mary Owens

Suppliers Trade Show

Cost members €45.00 Non Members €55.00

Contact Helen Mc Keon 041 983 5868

Price includes picnic lunch and tea/coffee on arrival.

**CITY & GUILDS 7750 & Higher DIPLOMA DATES**7<sup>th</sup> February 2009

2008/2009

Venue Dogsboddy Dublin

If you wish to attend please apply as soon as possible and not later than 6 weeks prior to examination date.

Pauline Tompkins  
Administrator*Bedford Business Centre  
170 Mile Road  
Bedford  
MK42 9TW  
Tel: 01234 273 933  
Fax: 01234 273 550*[www.petcare.org.uk](http://www.petcare.org.uk)**GROOMER TIPS**

Hello guys,

I eventually got around to setting up a web page!! I bought a 'Mr Site; takeaway website' package and I have to say it was so simple to set up. Might be worth mentioning this product in the newsletter? Perhaps other groomers might find it useful. > Many thanks & regards,

Pamela Ross

Woof Cuts

Riverpark Kennels &amp; Cattery

Moate

Co. Westmeath. [www.riverparkkennels.com](http://www.riverparkkennels.com)**CLASSIFIED****Your Membership is now due for renewal.**


Work Experience sought, Dublin area. After Christmas will be starting a grooming course and would like to get some experience. Contact Gina Lawlor at; [ginalawlor@yahoo.com](mailto:ginalawlor@yahoo.com)


**CITY & GUILDS STUFF****Nail Structure**

On a black paw, do not trim beyond the small white dot at the center of the nail bed.



Trim the nail as short as possible without cutting into the vein.