

Breeder Tips from United All Breed Registry



A little landscaping makes all the difference



Telling Our Story

Why we can't act like we have something to hide



An attractive, clean exercise yard benefits the dogs and the customers



"From our family to yours" is a phrase that sells a lot of puppies. Why? Buyers want to know that you raise dogs with the same love they do.

My favorite presentation at a recent breeder seminar was by Stacy Mason from the AKC. She titled it 'Preparing for Tomorrow's Industry.' When considered along with a presentation by Bob Yarnall of ACA called 'Increasing the Dollar Value of Your Puppies', we all got an excellent picture of what we have to do if we want to succeed in a changing marketplace. I'll share a few highlights with you today.

Featured Video:



Umpqua Valley Kennels

A nice example of an online video tour. Great idea!

1. **Tell your story.** Animal-rights activists have loaded the internet with ugly stories, posts and images about below-standard pet breeding facilities. They have frightened the public and damaged our industry's reputation. For years, their pressure has driven many breeders into hiding, for fear of being the next target. At this point, the best defense is a good offense: we need to load the internet with good stories, posts by happy customers, gorgeous images of our pristine kennels and ribbon-winning dogs. Write about yourself, your animals, your farm... in a brochure, on your site, in a blog.
2. **Curb appeal counts.** While in hiding, many breeders adopted a 'no visitors' policy. This may have to change, as buyers now distrust any kennel that does not welcome visitors. In addition, several cities have passed laws that no kennel-raised animals can be sold in pet shops (only pets from shelters). If this trend continues, more and more people will switch to taking a drive into the country to look at puppies, like it used to be 40 years ago, if what they want is an 8 week old purebred from healthy stock. This means fixing up the place! Spend that extra \$1000. on flower beds, picket fence and nice signs.

3. **Put out the welcome mat.** What will visitors see at your facility? Show them the care you take to protect your animals from disease by posting bio-security signs and providing shoe covers for them. Post a feeding, grooming, cleaning, vaccine, worming and exercising schedule easily visible to visitors (think of the one posted in the restroom at WalMart) and keep it checked off/initialed daily. Have a nice seating area by your exercise yard where visitors can watch your dogs in action. You can even set up a photo-taking spot that visitors can use for super cute pics of the pups they are considering. The possibilities are endless once you start to think about it. A trip to your kennel should be a memorable family excursion.
4. **Be transparent.** In addition to having nothing to hide, this also means making information about your business accessible to the public. For example, post all of your animals' shot records, DNA tests, OFA results, veterinary assessments, worming records, your return policy, conformation show results, your animal retirement policy, your emergency preparations etc. not only in binders at your site, but even on your website!

Sprucing up and showing off may be the only way to prove to the public who we really are, and dispel the lies being spread by so-called animal activists. Let's show them that we hate sub-standard operations *more* than they do, that we support only *planned* matings of *health-tested* parents, and that we **love** our animals.