



Everyone knows I am a dog lover. My Airedale Terrier, Clementine, appears on my [site](#) as an avatar of loyalty. Really, I just like seeing her there. I'm afraid we are dangerously close to being that "older couple" in whose empty nest a pet has taken the place of kids long gone and grandkids not yet on the horizon. When our sons visit, they think we're a little over the top; in their Millennial memories, they were not as pampered as Clementine.

But then, they weren't as cute.

Anyway, I was reading a piece in ModernRetail about pet brands "chasing" customer loyalty. Nice headline, BTW. After the surge in spending on pets during the pandemic, the sector is softening now, and with inflation and the possibility of a recession, many are turning to loyalty efforts to shore up sales.

Petco is expanding existing efforts and guaranteeing auto-replenishment subscribers not to raise prices. Chewy is sending coupons for significant discounts to regular customers (a loyal customer base that includes our household).

And then there's Wild One, which the MR piece labelled a "pet lifestyle brand." I confess I was not really aware of them, and that descriptor caught my eye. I suppose it's a natural, since our pet certainly enjoys a lifestyle some humans would envy. At the same time, it's a pretty boujee concept.

The site features some great marketing, with unique products – "high quality dog essentials" and an exclusive collection of accessories by designer Isaac Mizrahi ("in two iconic hues"). Eschewing a formal loyalty program, they offer subscriptions – a great loyalty tactic IMO – and depend on a personal touch, including hand-written thank-yous, to foster customer loyalty.

It's another example of the endless variety of brand-appropriate approaches to loyalty

and engagement, with or without a structured program. Far from being a confining construct, loyalty efforts can be as diverse and creative as any element of marketing. And the more challenging the environment, the more that creativity is needed. **Your thoughts?**

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