

# Selling with Precision

*Precision Pet Products has grown from the back of a pickup truck to the forefront of the industry.*

**B**ack in 1985, while working as a salesman for a southern Calif.-based wire mill, David Link was invited to go work for one of his clients, a company called Precision Wire Products. One of the terms of his employment with the former client was a fifty-fifty partnership to create a spin-off company that would focus on wire dog crates, hence the creation of Precision Pet Products.

"I would spend five days a week selling oven racks, refrigerator racks and displays," says Link. "Then, on the weekend, I would load up my pickup truck with dog crates and sell them, swap-meet style, at all-breed dog shows."

After two years of this, Link starting getting burned out by the 7-day-a-week work schedule, and decided that there had to be a better way to sell the crates. Right around this time, Precision Pet Products signed on a young PETCO (the retailer had just 25 stores at the time, and mostly served professionals) as its first major account.

"That account allowed us to get our volume up, get our products on automated equipment, and get our prices down," says Link.

Business continued to grow for Precision Pet Products, with the company selling its products through wholesale distributors and major retail chains. By the mid-1990's, however, Link was getting concerned about increasing competition from low-end manufacturers who could low-ball Precision's price points. This led Link to develop a partnership with a Taiwan-based manufacturer,

which allowed the company to meet the competition head-on with new, lower prices.

"That worked out well for awhile," says Link, "but as things kept getting more and more competitive, the advantages decreased. Being partners with a manufacturer is a great way to start a business, but it's not the most competitive way to buy products."

The competitive climate of the market has driven Precision Pet Products to strive for lower price points while continuing to live up to the high-quality reputation of its products, in order to maintain the consistent growth that it has experienced since 1999.

One way that the company ensures it is meeting this goal, explains Link, is by filling its staff with top-notch professionals.

"Our motto is, 'We don't want good people; we want the best,'" he says.

Now that the company imports most of the products it sells from multiple sources, it can focus on the marketing of those products. "One of the things we do best is marketing," says Link. "We really try helping the retailers to sell product with things like point-of-purchase displays."

While the company uses independent sales representatives, Precision is making an effort to increase the presence of its own representatives out in the field. "Not only representatives that sell to distributors," says Link, "but also people that are responsible for helping retailers with selling."

Some of the strategies that Precision uses in its effort to help retailers at store level include coupon programs and in-store displays that focus on crossmerchandising.

Looking ahead at the future of Precision Pet Products, Link says that the retailers can expect a continued commitment to producing high-quality products at competitive prices. The company plans on adding offerings in the small animal and bird product categories, while continuing to maintain its role as a market leader in dog products. □



David Link



So, in 1999 Link bought out both of his partners and brought in a new minority financial partner. "This gave us the capital to really try and grow quickly, which has been our business plan ever since," says Link.

#### TODAY'S PRECISION

Today, Precision's offerings span a wide range of products, including not only dog crates, but also pet beds, exercise pens, dog houses, rabbit homes, cat cages, grooming tables and vehicle barriers.