

SAFEGUARDING YOUR PET BRAND: NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND PROTECTING BRAND INTEGRITY IN THE EVOLVING PET INDUSTRY

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The pet industry is a vibrant and growing sector, but it also faces several challenges that pet brands need to overcome to protect their brand integrity, pricing policies, and combat unauthorized sales. As a brand protection expert in the pet industry since 2014, I have observed these challenges firsthand and have worked with numerous pet brands to develop strategies and solutions to address them. Here are some of the key challenges I've discovered and some experienced insights on how to navigate them successfully.

One of the primary challenges in the pet industry is the presence of unknown and unauthorized sellers. These sellers often misrepresent brands and violate pricing policies, which can significantly damage a brand's reputation and erode retailer margins and sales. To combat this, pet brands need to establish robust brand protection measures. This includes developing intellectual property right protections and authorized resellers agreements that detail material differences for sellers they want to work with.

Another significant challenge is the existence of distribution blind spots. Pet manufacturers often work with distributors to reach a broader market, but this leads to a lack of visibility into where their products are being sold. Retailers can acquire inventory from various sources, including authorized distributors, liquidation channels, or even diverting products meant for specific markets or channels. This lack of transparency makes it challenging for brands to control their distribution channels and detect unauthorized sellers. Pet brands should foster strong relationships with their distributors, encourage transparency, and implement comprehensive distribution policies that provide greater guidance.

Building and maintaining relationships with distributors is vital for pet brands, but it can also present friction. Distributors often have limited resources and time to thoroughly vet customers or provide detailed account lists to brands. This lack of information makes it difficult for brands to identify

the source of unauthorized sales or enforce brand policies effectively. To address this challenge, companies should prioritize open communication and collaboration with their distributors. By establishing clear expectations, sharing best practices, and fostering a mutually beneficial partnership, brands can work together with their partners to ensure compliance with brand guidelines and pricing policies.

The influence of major retailers cannot be ignored in the pet industry. Retail giants like Amazon, Chewy, Petco, PetSmart, and Walmart hold significant market power and can disrupt pricing standards and distribution strategies. These retailers often employ aggressive price-matching strategies and have a wide reach, which can impact a brand's ability to maintain consistent pricing and distribution. This also affects specialty pet retailers. Pet brands should closely monitor the pricing practices of major retailers, adapt their strategies accordingly, and develop effective discount programs and pricing policies that protect their brand's value and ensure fair competition.

Intense competition is yet another challenge that pet brands face. The pet industry is highly competitive, with numerous brands offering similar or substitute products. This level of competition gives retailers and consumers ample options, making it essential for pet brands to differentiate themselves. Protecting pricing integrity, maintaining a consistent brand image, and actively enforcing brand policies are crucial elements of a successful brand protection strategy. By prioritizing brand protection and consistently delivering

high-quality products, pet brands can establish themselves as trusted leaders in the industry and cultivate customer loyalty.

As an industry expert, I have witnessed the impact of effective brand protection strategies in the pet industry. By partnering with MAPP Trap, hundreds of pet brands have gained access to advanced technology and expertise that has helped them navigate these challenges successfully. MAPP Trap's brand monitoring tools, real-time monitoring of online marketplaces, and proactive enforcement actions have proven to be invaluable in combating pricing issues, unauthorized sellers, and protecting brand integrity. Pet brands that have worked with MAPP Trap have seen remarkable improvements in margins and the reduction of undesired sellers.

The pet industry presents unique challenges that require comprehensive brand protection strategies. By addressing unauthorized sellers, navigating distribution blind spots, fostering strong relationships with distributors, monitoring major retailers, and differentiating themselves in a competitive landscape, pet brands can protect their brand integrity and ensure long-term success.

Partnering with a trusted brand protection solution like MAPP Trap can provide pet brands with the necessary tools and expertise to effectively combat unauthorized sales and navigate the evolving pet industry with confidence. Together, we can create a stronger and more resilient pet industry that upholds the values of brand integrity, fair competition, and customer trust.



Ronald Solomon, CEO of MAPP Trap, brings his firsthand experience in copyrights and trademarks to help companies protect their brands from the impact of uncontrolled e-commerce. With successful defense of his own intellectual property, Solomon established MAPP Trap as a solution for manufacturers in various industries, including pet, toys, gift, nutrition, beauty, outdoor, and sporting goods.