Why Rallyware

As one of just a handful of pet food providers in the direct sales industry and the only one with a customized approach to pet nutrition, pawTree is a truly different kind of startup. While its unique business model gives pawTree an enviable position in the direct sales market, it also presented some unique challenges for the fledgling company.

All direct sales companies rely on a volunteer workforce to sell their products – people who can work as much or as little as they want on any given day. Tami Vanhoy, director of development for pawTree, said direct sales is an active, social industry – people who are drawn to direct selling are all about people. *"To ask them to sit down and read something is like asking them to go to the dentist,"* she said.

One of the biggest challenges pawTree faced was getting its "Pet Pro" sales force to complete the necessary training to succeed in reaching their sales goals. Another challenge was that most of pawTree's Pet Pros including those that become team leaders were starting with very little experience in the direct sales industry. Vanhoy explained,

> *"We were not only introducing a brand new concept to the direct sales market, most of the people we were attracting with our product line had never done direct sales before."*
>
> Tami Vanhoy,
> Director of development for pawTree

Leaders were recruiting new Pet Pros for their teams at the same time they were trying to learn the ropes themselves. *"So, I knew about a year into it we would need to improve our training,"* she said.

When pawTree launched, its training program consisted of a manual and a series of videos. To encourage PawTree's "Pet Pros" to complete more training in sales and team building, Rallyware worked with the company to develop its new Fast Start Training – an onboarding program for new Pet Pros. The Fast Start program includes new training content in short, easy modules most of which can be completed in a few minutes. Rallyware also worked with PawTree to "gamify" its training program with challenges and rewards to keep Pet Pros engaged in the program and to encourage them to complete more modules.

Results

Training content delivered in short, easy-to-complete tasks

Vanhoy said Rallyware's appeal is that it's short and quick, "Rallyware takes that big manual and breaks it into little tiny bite-sized pieces. So, I can jump on my smart phone, or my tablet or computer, or I can sit in front of the TV and finish a five-minute training." Vanhoy said breaking up the training material makes it quick and easy to complete, which motivates her Pet Pros to do more. "Before they know it," she said, "they've completed 30 minutes of training. And, if you'd asked them to sit down and read a workbook for 30 minutes – it wouldn't have happened."

"For any direct sales company the easier and more intuitive training, the more successful you'll be"

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pawTree's early results bear this out:

- Pass rates for almost all of the tasks modules – the number of users successfully completing them – were greater than 90 percent.

- Average training completion time – the time it takes Pet Pros to complete the Fast Start program starting from their first login– is 15 days.

Leaders can focus on recruiting new members to their teams instead of training them

pawTree's Fast Start program lets team leaders do what they do best – build and lead successful sales teams. Rallyware does the training for them. Vanhoy said Team Leaders love the training program because they're volunteers just like the Pet Pros they work with. They don't want to spend a lot of time training their teams. She said with Rallyware, her Team Leaders can simply say, "Just click that link".

Vanhoy is confident that her sales force is getting the training they need to succeed. In her experience, the most common complaint from sales reps in direct sales is that they don't know what to do, which can lead to a high drop-out rate. She said with the workflow Rallyware developed for Pet Pros "It's what I haven't heard that tells me the program's working. I'm not hearing 'I quit because I didn't know what to do.'"

Increasing engagement by rewarding participation in training

Engagement is crucial to pawTree's success. Vanhoy said that given the appeal of pawTree's program, it's not uncommon for people to sign up on an impulse to become Pet Pros.

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Their success – and pawTree's – depends on how soon those new recruits engage with the company's processes and information and its community. According to Vanhoy, 20% engagement in any one segment is a very good industry standard in the direct sales business. She said, "With a volunteer sales force, you expect some of them to be part timers or even some-timers." Early 2016 results for pawTree's Fast Start program show more than 70% of its sales force is engaging at some level. "Now I know what my stretch goals can be," Vanhoy said, adding, "I look forward to seeing growth in that number, but I'm really happy with what I'm seeing so far."

To get these results, Rallyware introduced gaming into pawTree's training program by assigning points to each of 51 tasks. As Pet Pros completed more training, they would accrue points toward a higher level of recognition. Within 3 months of implementing the Fast Start program, pawTree found:

· 78% of those who activated their accounts with Rallyware logged in a second time and almost all of them completed at least one task.

· 28% completed the training in an average of 15 days.

Vanhoy said that the kind of people who are drawn to pawTree's business model and products are typically very social and always eager to get started. The sooner new Pet Pros complete their training, the better the chances are that they will stay engaged in the program, which is critical to PawTree's success.

Although Pet Pros can complete their training at their own pace, Vanhoy said the Claim Your Reward feature that Rallyware built into the program was instrumental in getting new recruits engaged quickly. This feature incentivizes engagement by offering a monetary award for Pet Pros that complete their training within 30 days from the time they sign up for the program.

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But, according to Vanhoy, it's more than money that keeps her new Pet Pros coming back to learn more. "Rallyware is fun," she said, "You don't even have to call it training. I would tell any direct sales company, the easier and more intuitive you can make it, the more successful you'll be."

Rallyware made the program easy to implement, too

"I loved the experience of launching our Fast Start program," Vanoy said. She added that other software service companies could learn some things about onboarding clients from Rallyware. "I knew exactly what was going to happen next, and I understood the process we were going through. It gave me confidence that we were going to end with a good product, not a cross-your-fingers-and-hope-it-works product."