



# Behind the Leash:

Data-Driven Strategies  
for Pet Care Businesses

Insights from Pet Professionals, Pet Parents, and Industry Statistics



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04 65% of pet parents want this client perk. Only 30% of pet pros offer it.

09 39% There's a 39% gap between supply and demand for 2025's most popular pet service.

13 80% of pet parents are more likely to book a pet pro with this qualification.

17 66% of pet parents are all-in on this pet care trend in 2025.



# Data By and For Pet Professionals

Running a pet care business isn't all nose boops and toe beans. Success comes down to understanding your clients, the industry, and your opportunities for growth.

Not gonna lie, that's a lot! But don't worry, we've had our noses to the ground here at [Pet Care Insurance \(PCI\)](#).

If pets are your specialty, pet pros are ours, so we've made it our mission to learn and share everything there is to know about the pet care business. We tapped into our network of stellar pet care providers, polled pet parents, and took a deep dive into research, sniffing out the essential data you need to level up your business.

[Learn More About PCI](#)



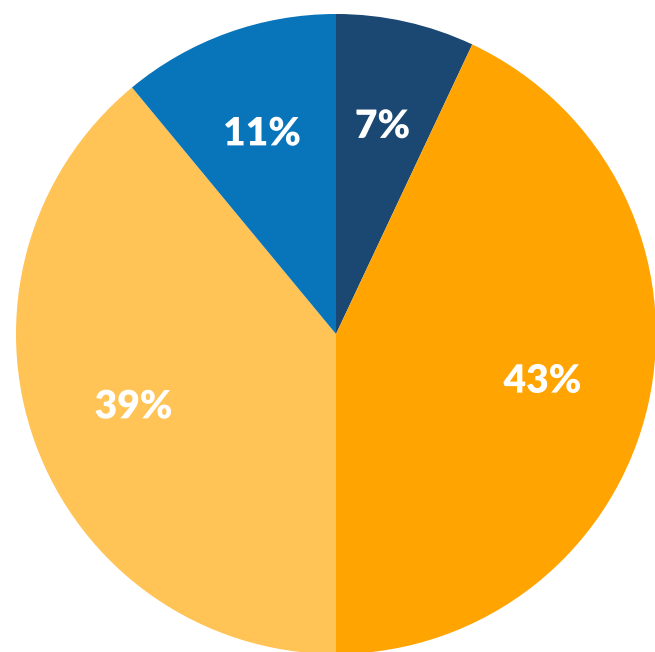
# Demographics

## Pet Parents

- 88% of pet parents have dogs and 79% have cats
- Fish were the third most popular pets, coming in at 18%
- Small pets like rabbits, reptiles, and rodents make up 29% of pet ownership

### Pet Owner Age

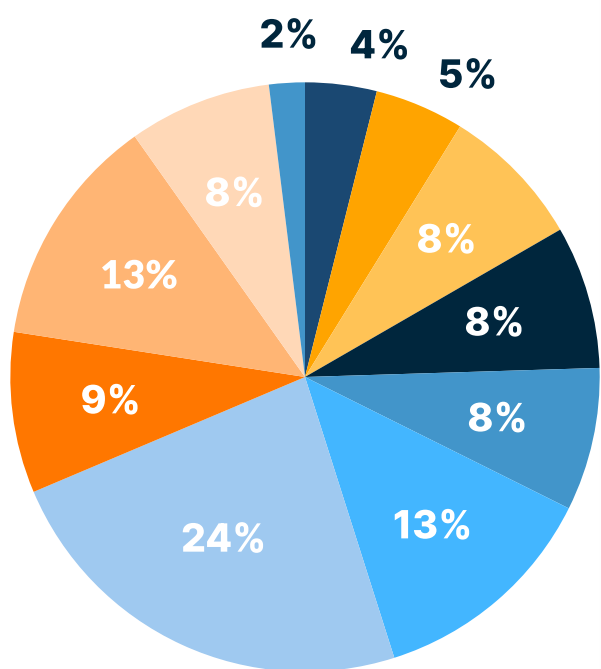
- 18-29
- 30-44
- 45-60
- >60



Millennials lead the pack in pet parents and pet care providers. Who can blame them? Doggos and avocado toast are \*chef's kiss\*!

### Pet Parent Average Income

- \$0-\$9,999
- \$10,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$124,999
- \$125,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$174,999
- \$175,000-\$199,999
- \$200,000+
- Prefer not to answer



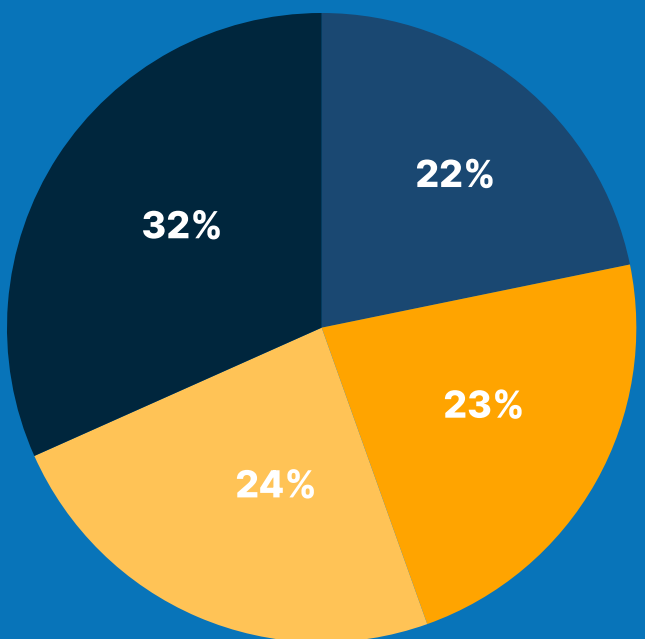
## Pet Care Providers

Some remarkable pets from the "other" category include a handful of horses, a couple of chinchillas, and at least one skunk!

- 25% get the best of both worlds with both cats and dogs
- The pet care industry is the perfect place for the 14% of pros who don't have a pet of their own, but get to live vicariously through their clients
- Dogs really do rule with over 41% of respondents reporting at least one pup in the house.

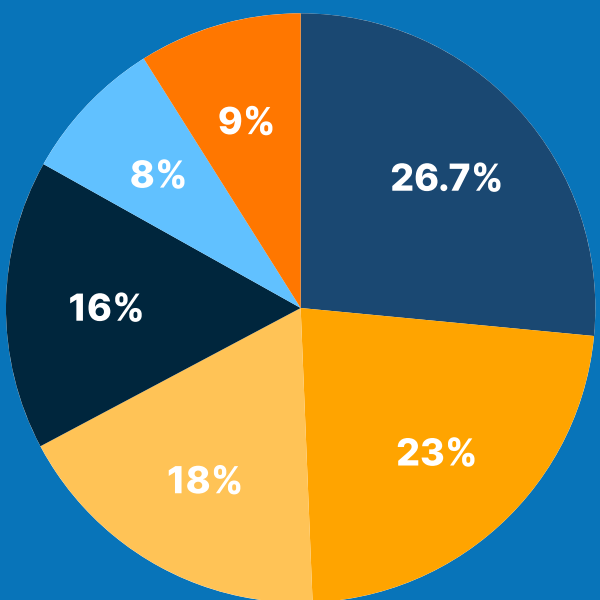
### Pet Care Provider Age

- 18-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55>



### Pet Care Provider Average Income

- \$0-\$20,000
- \$20,000-\$34,999
- \$35,000-\$49,000
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,00+



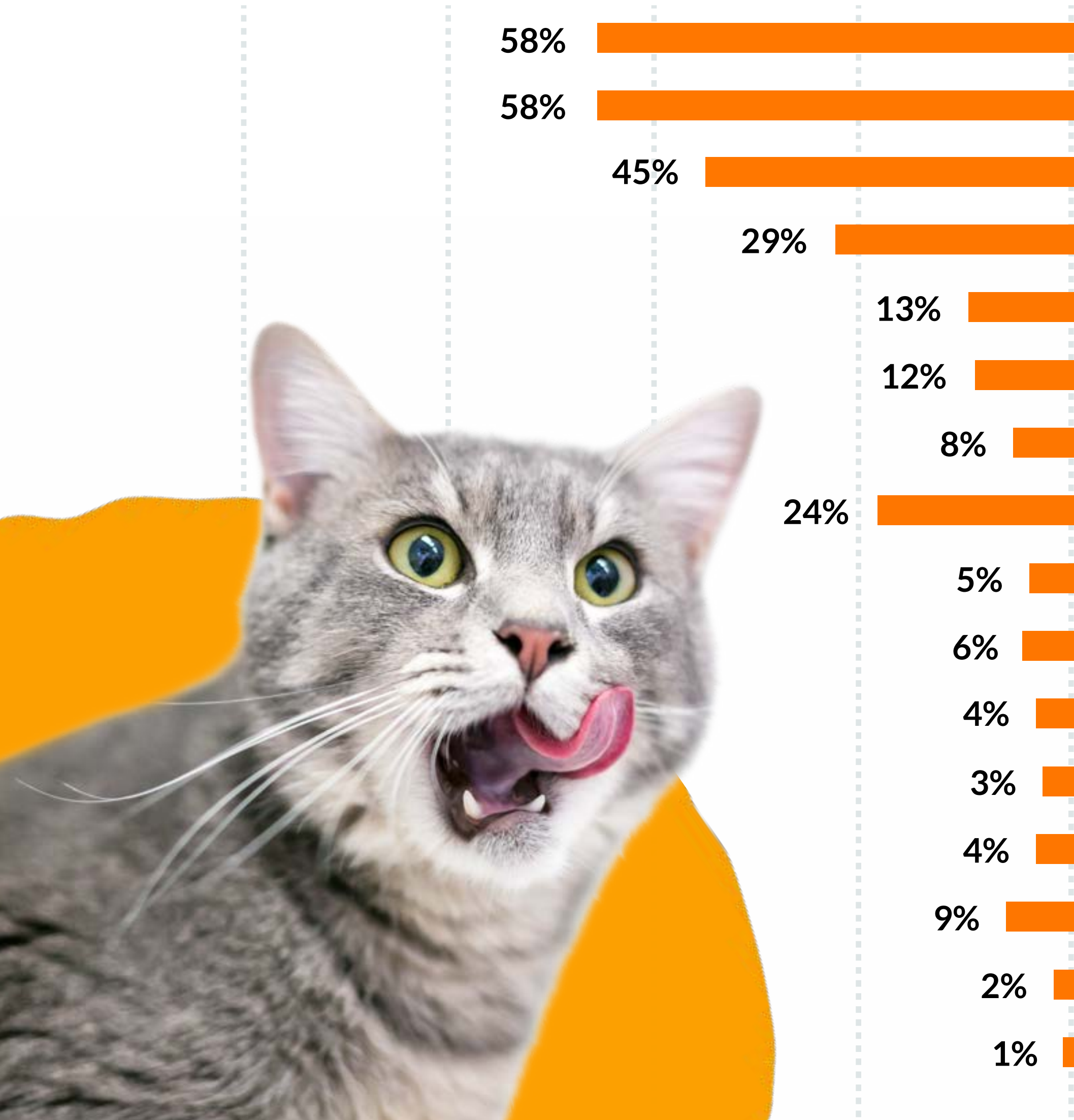
Nearly 90% of our pet professionals have at least some college education!



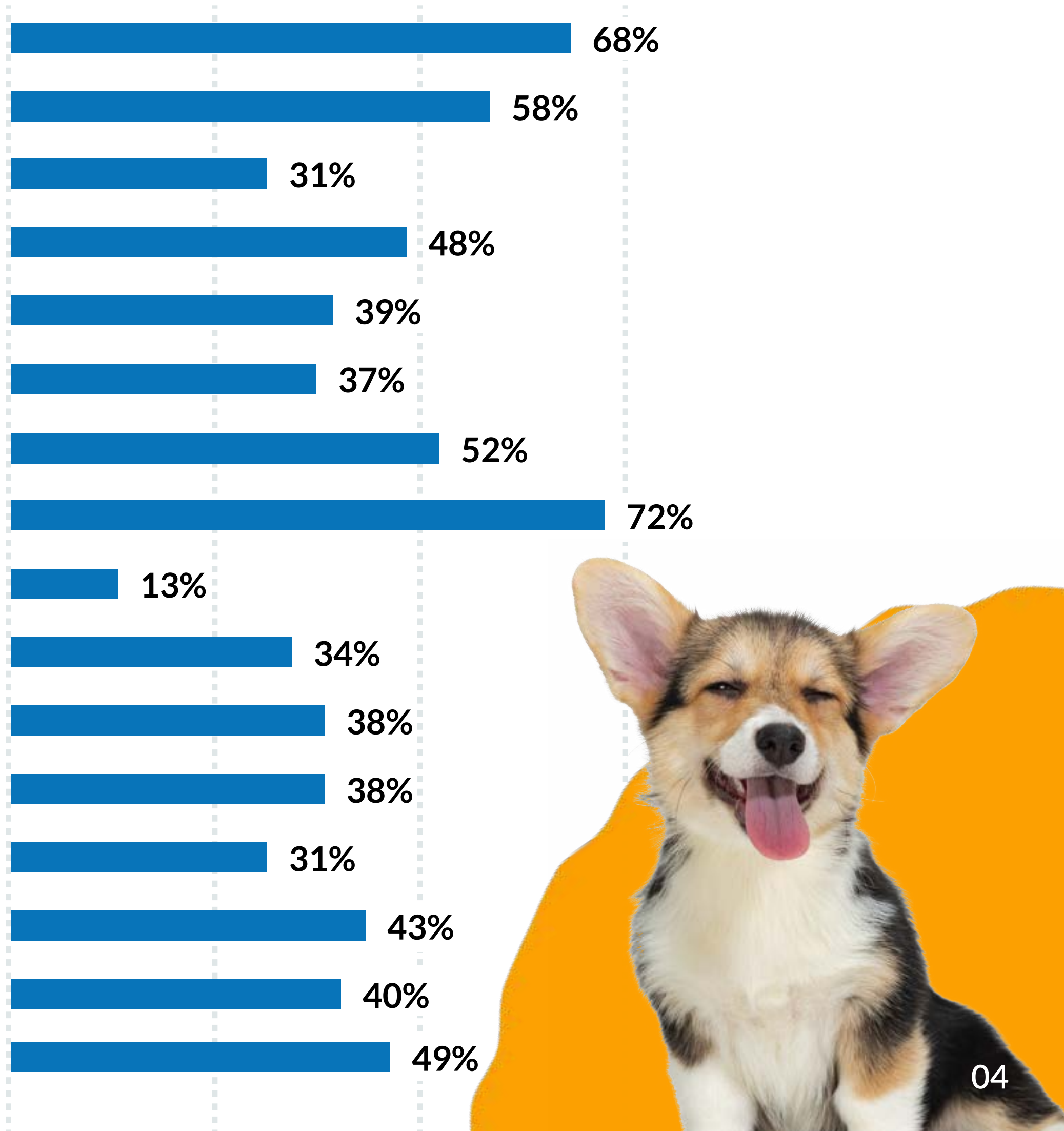


# Where Do You Stand in the Pet Care Market?

## Pet Parents Value



## Pet Care Providers Value





# Good Values = Good Business



## Digging Deeper

An overwhelming **73% of pet parents** said their biggest challenge with finding a pet care provider is **finding someone they can trust with their pet**.

No shocker, our policyholders **embody the traits of ethical business owners**: trustworthiness (72%), strong attention to detail (52%), and flexibility (49%). Customers are on the lookout for businesses that operate with integrity. Show your customers that you’re the right person for the job by highlighting your strengths as an animal lover and business owner.



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

Both groups agree: **compassion for pets and an understanding of how to care for them are top priorities**. You’re more than “just” the dog walker or groomer, you’re a part of their pet’s life. Keep connecting with your clients’ pets and share your expert observations. It shows that you’re invested in their well-being and happiness.



# Pet Pro to Pet Pro: How and Where Do You Meet Other Pet Caregivers?

37%

## Network at Pet Businesses

Take advantage of normal overlap between pet services

- Pick-ups and drop-offs
- On walks, vet visits, and playdates
- Talking to the pros that care for your own pets

- Association forums and directories
- Pet care apps
- Pet care Facebook and Reddit groups

34%

## Join a Community

Meet each other through social media groups

- Animal welfare groups
- Humane society events
- Pet rescue fundraising

10%

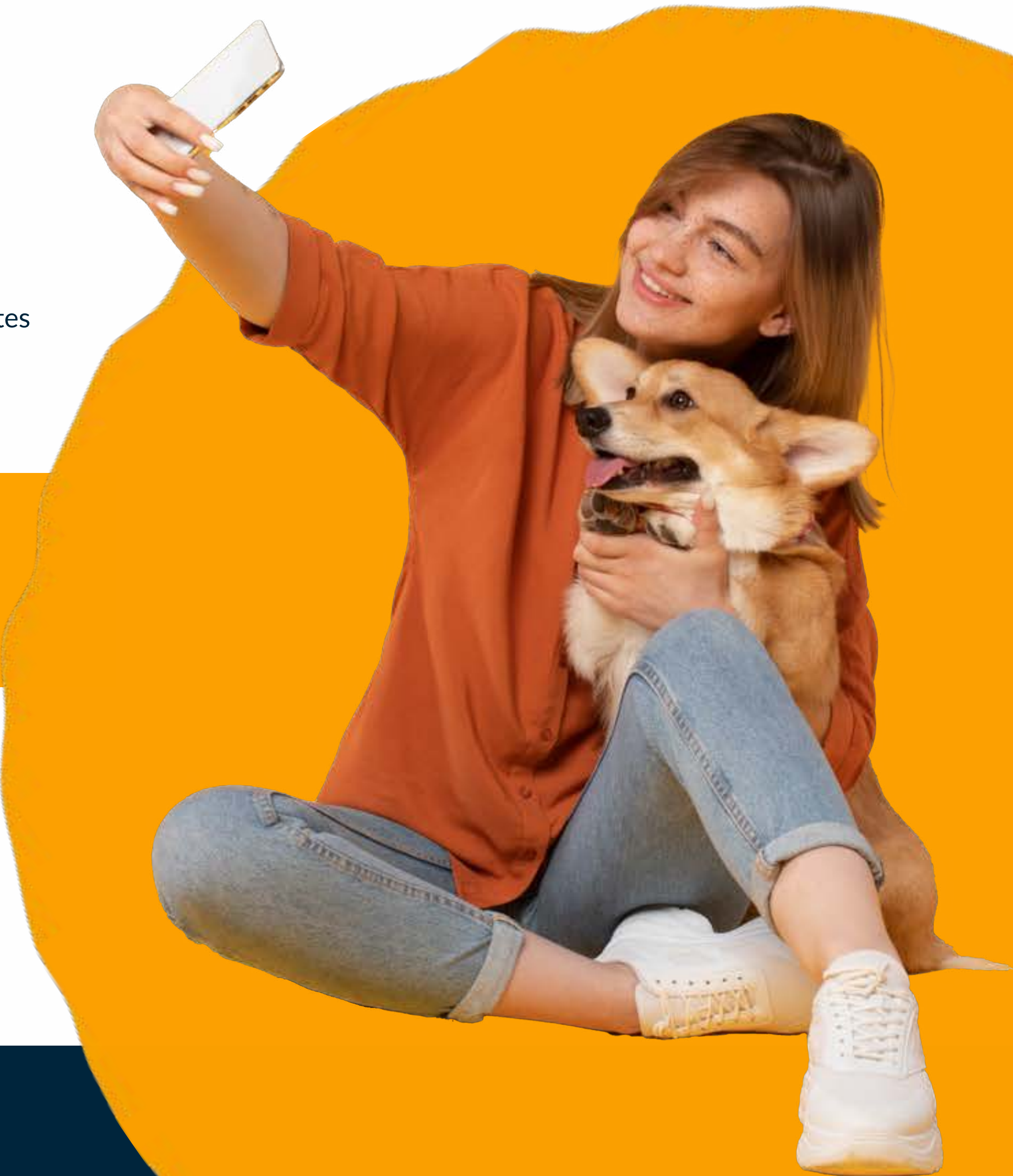
## Be an Advocate

Connect at pet adoption and charity events



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

Looking for more referrals? Partner with other pet pros in your *business* but not your *niche*. Say you're the doggy daycare for active playdates between big-energy pups. Reach out to a laid-back daycare that caters to small and senior dogs. Or partner with a local dog sitter if you're a cat sitter. Referring clients who don't fit their specialty creates a strategic reason to partner with you.





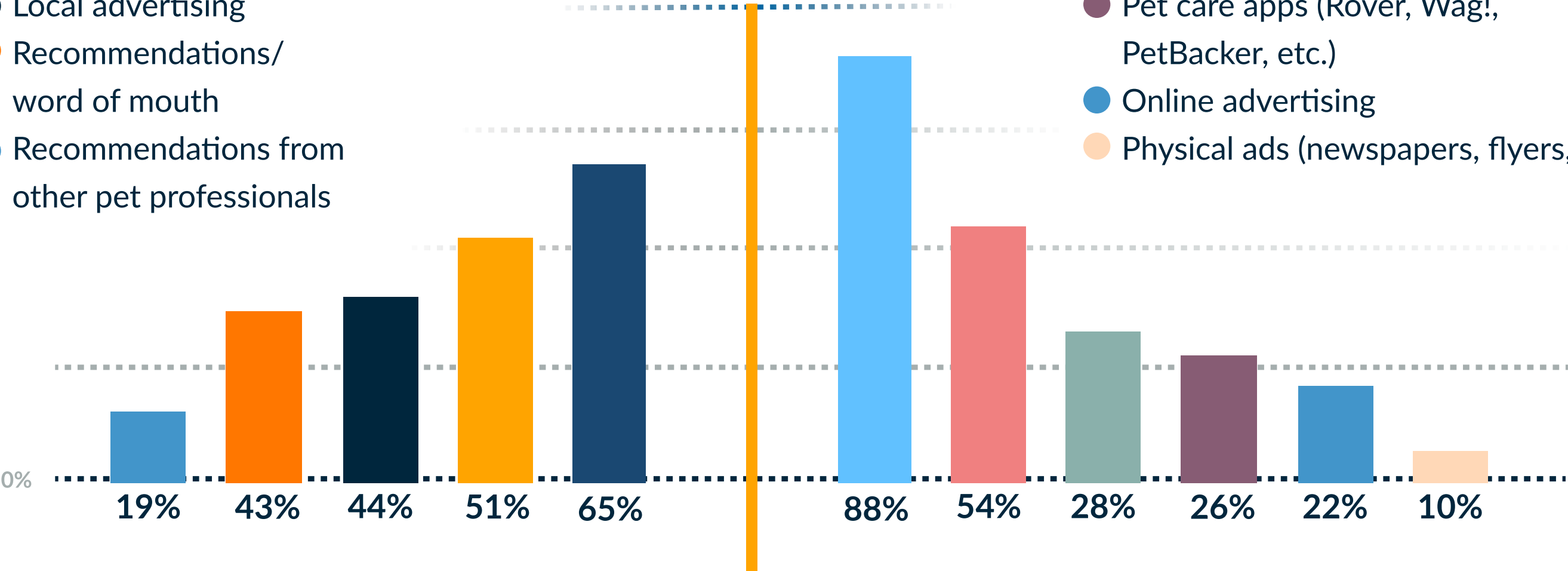
# Where Do Pet Businesses and Clients Meet?

## Pet parents find care providers through ...

- Online searches
- Pet care apps (Rover, Wag, PetBacker, etc.)
- Local advertising
- Recommendations/ word of mouth
- Recommendations from other pet professionals

## Pet pros find clients through ...

- Referrals and word of mouth
- Social media
- Professional networking
- Pet care apps (Rover, Wag!, PetBacker, etc.)
- Online advertising
- Physical ads (newspapers, flyers, etc.)



## Digging Deeper

### Recommendations Make the World Go Round!

The pet care industry runs on recommendations, but the hard part is asking for them. Above, we mentioned partnering with other pros, which is an awesome way to leverage your professional network. Keep that ball rolling by tapping into one of the greatest resources: your satisfied customers.

Encourage clients to leave positive reviews online, on booking apps, and on social media. A few positive reviews go a long way in attracting interest in your services.

- Claim your free [Google Business Profile](#) and encourage clients to give you a boost with a positive review
- When you complete a booking, shoot customers a message reminding them to review your services when they're back home
- Ask followers to share your business social media posts so their friends and loved ones can check you out, too
- Remind customers to pass along your number or card to anybody else they know who needs a good pet groomer, walker, or sitter



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

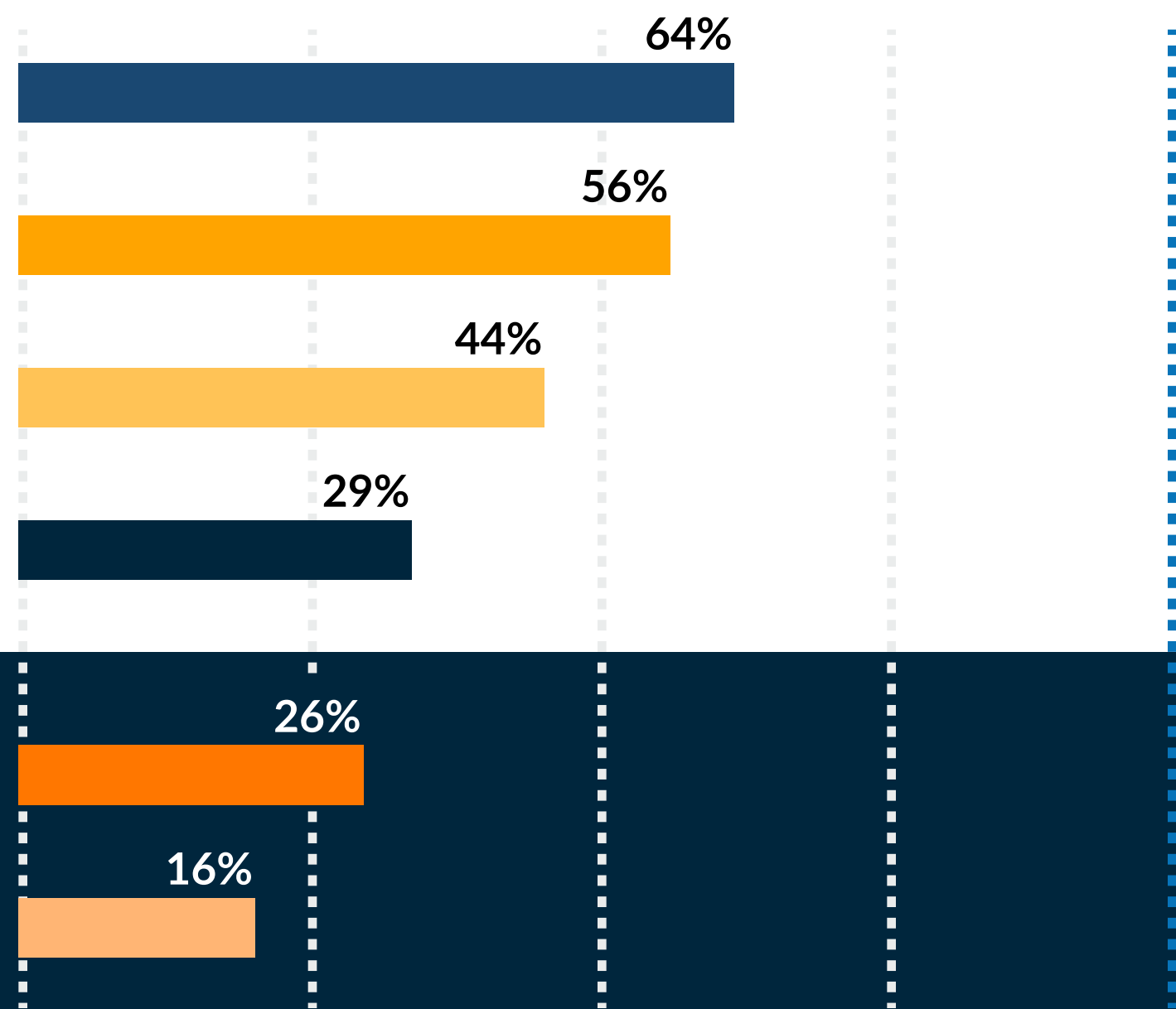
Our survey shows that only 36% of policyholders partner with pet care apps like Rover and Wag!, while 51% of pet parents use them to connect with caregivers.

Many pet sitters and dog walkers choose not to use apps since they often take a percentage of the profits. Even if you operate independently, setting up profiles on the most popular booking apps is a great way to drum up new clients and grow your customer base. You can always take your business relationship offline once you establish connections.



# What Do Pet Parents Want?

- A loyalty program or discounts
- Increased availability
- More types of services
- A more user-friendly website or scheduling app
- More communication before, during, or after pet care
- More conveniences like mobile services, in-home care, or pet pick-ups and drop-offs



## Digging Deeper



### How to Keep Customers Coming Back

It costs five times more to bring in new customers than to cultivate the ones you have. Adding value to your services could give you a far greater return on your investment (if you do it right). Try these tips from your fellow pet pros and business experts:

### Add a Loyalty Program

Pet owners are begging for loyalty incentives, but **only 30% of pet care providers offer them**. This is the perfect opportunity to get a leg up on your competition!

- Offer discounts for clients who refer a friend
- Grandfather pricing for long-term customers
- Provide a free additional service for every five bookings

### Make Booking Easy

You're busy. Your clients are busy. The pets? Well, they just kind of go with the flow. The easier it is to book with you, the more likely your customers will keep coming back.

- Keep your availability up-to-date in any booking apps you use
- Use scheduling software like [TimeToPet](#)
- Include a booking tool on your business website

### Keep Communication Flowing

It requires huge levels of trust for pet parents to leave their babies with care providers. An open line of communication with your clients instills confidence and curbs fears for nervous pet parents.

- Send update texts throughout your service
- Provide a live feed of the playroom or yard so clients can peek in on their pets
- Reach out before appointments to verify appointment details and after to ensure satisfaction with your services



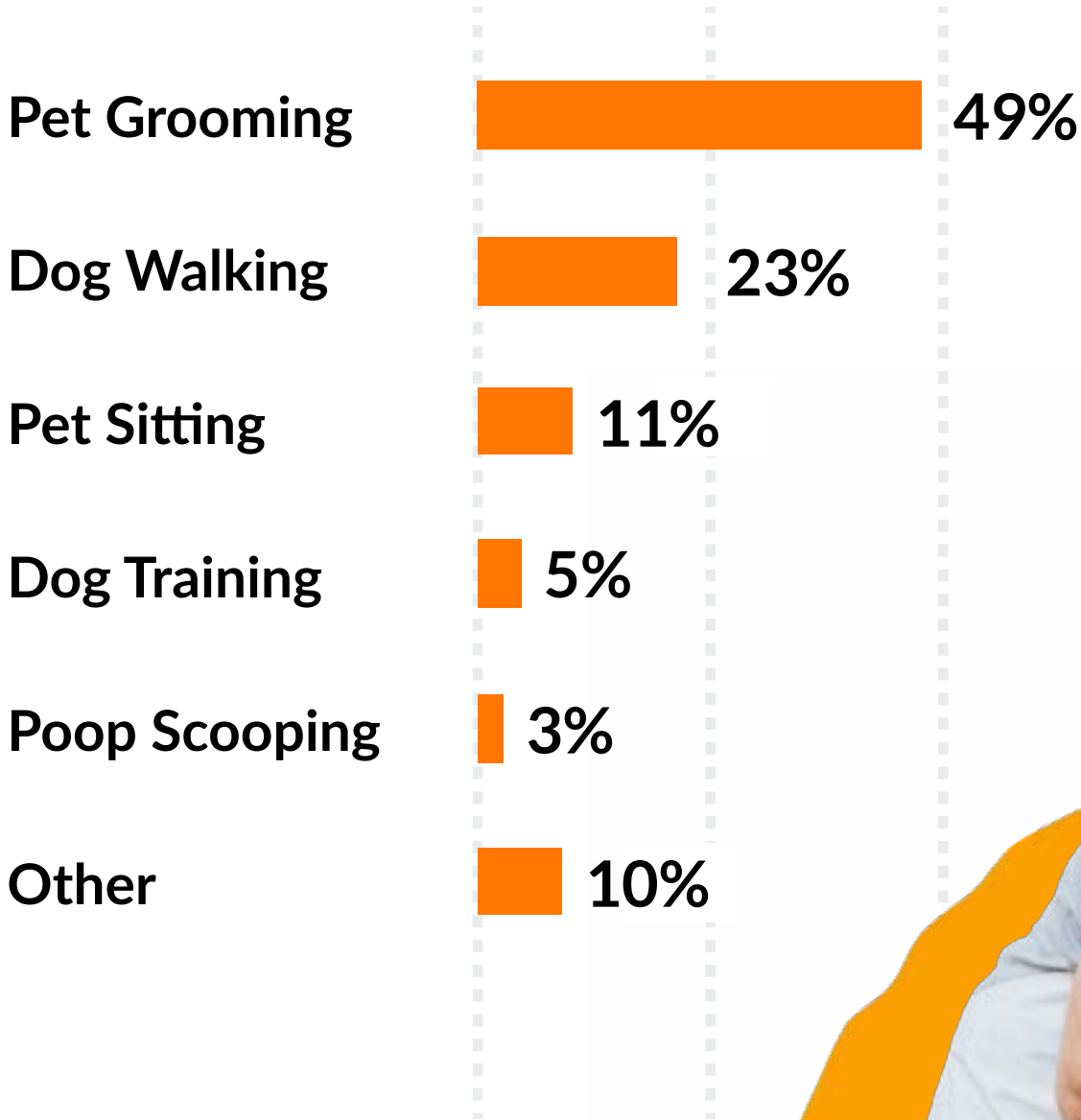
## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

Pet parents want more. More services, more value, and more convenience. On the flip side, many of our pet pros told us their biggest wish was that their business brought in more money, which makes it challenging to add even more benefits without taking a loss.

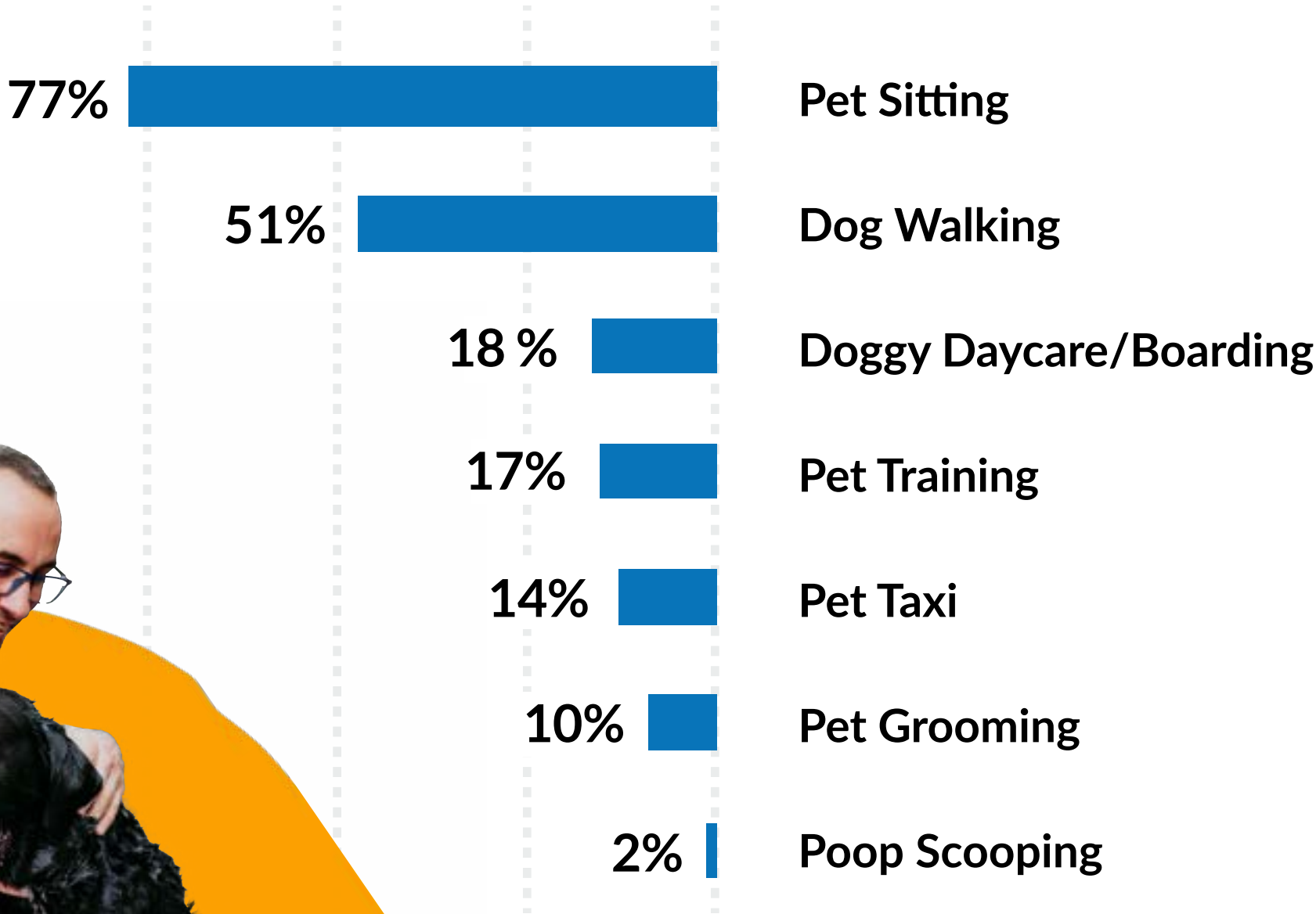


# The Scoop on Services

Most Popular Pet Services to Book



Most Popular Pet Services to Offer



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

**Considering pet grooming?** Network with other local pros. Many aren't taking new clients and have referrals to pass on.

**Already a shear pro?** Now's the time to use your creativity to rethink your staff, schedule, and pricing needs.



## Digging Deeper

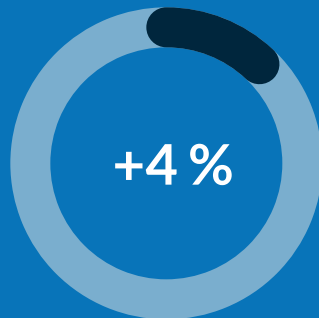
Where Are All the Pet Groomers?

Grooming Demand



Annual Industry Growth

Grooming Supply



More Groomers Annually

\*2019-2024 growth data sourced from [Statista](#), [IBIS World](#), and [IBIS World](#)

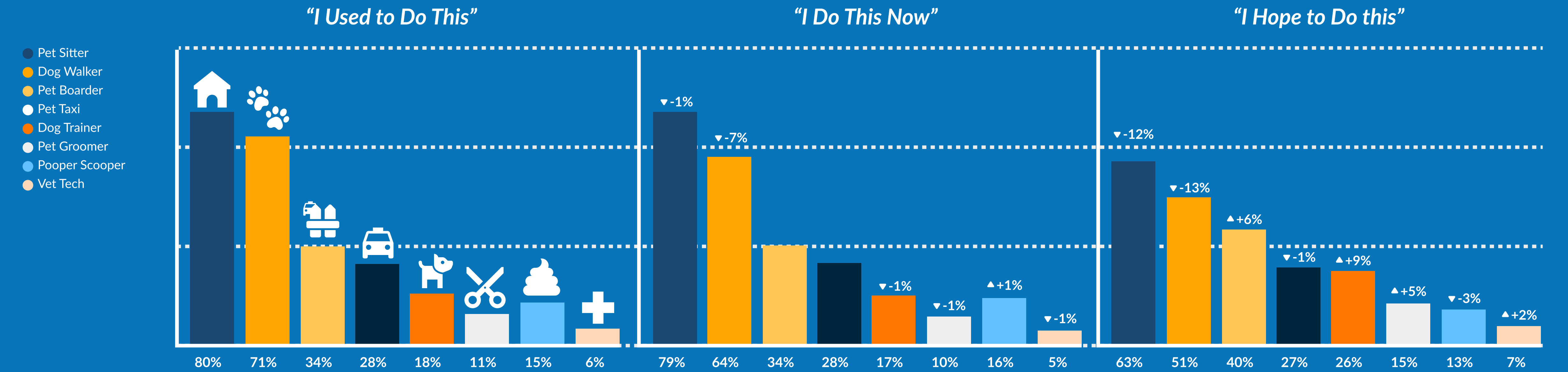
The pandemic puppy boom, increasing pet special needs, and growing pet spending create a perfect storm of pet grooming demand. There are more groomers than ever, but not enough to keep all those floofs fluffed! As these pets age, groomers will also be looking at more complex grooming needs for many, many senior pets.

### Are Doggy Daycares in Trouble?

Not at all. The pet daycare market grew about 8.5% yearly from 2022-2023 and is expected to grow at a rate of 8.1% through 2033. Doggy daycares only have about 1-2% of the pet care market share, but the market is huge, so that's a big opportunity!



# Which Services Are Pet Pros Investing In?



## Pet Boarding, Dog Training, Pet Grooming, and Vet Tech: Net Positive Change

The number of pros who want to get into these services is higher than the number who chose to get out. That means their popularity is growing (at least with the pet pros we asked). These higher-investment services require more training, equipment, or resources on your part to make them work. But once they do, they can add a lot of demand to your business.



## Pet Sitting, Dog Walking, Pet Taxi, and Pooper Scooper: Net Negative Change

Fewer pros wanted to get into these services than were already offering them or deciding to drop them. Their popularity decreased with our insured pet pros, but don't howl. Demand for all four remains strong.

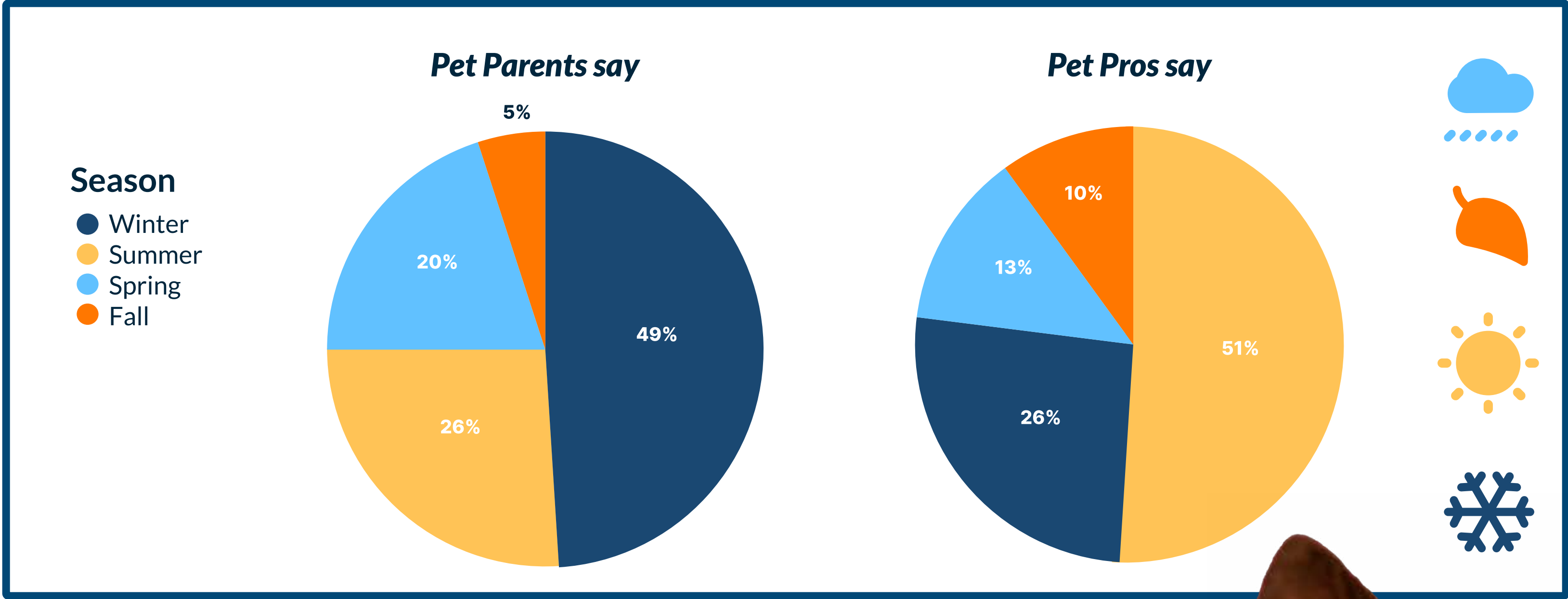
Over the past 5 years, dog walking had a market growth of 1.6% and pet waste management grew at a rate of 5%. And fear not, pet taxis and sitters: the pet travel services market and the pet sitting market are expected to grow at a rate of 9.7% and 10.5%, respectively, over the next 5 years.





# Which Season Is Pet Care’s Busiest?

*Depends who you ask.*



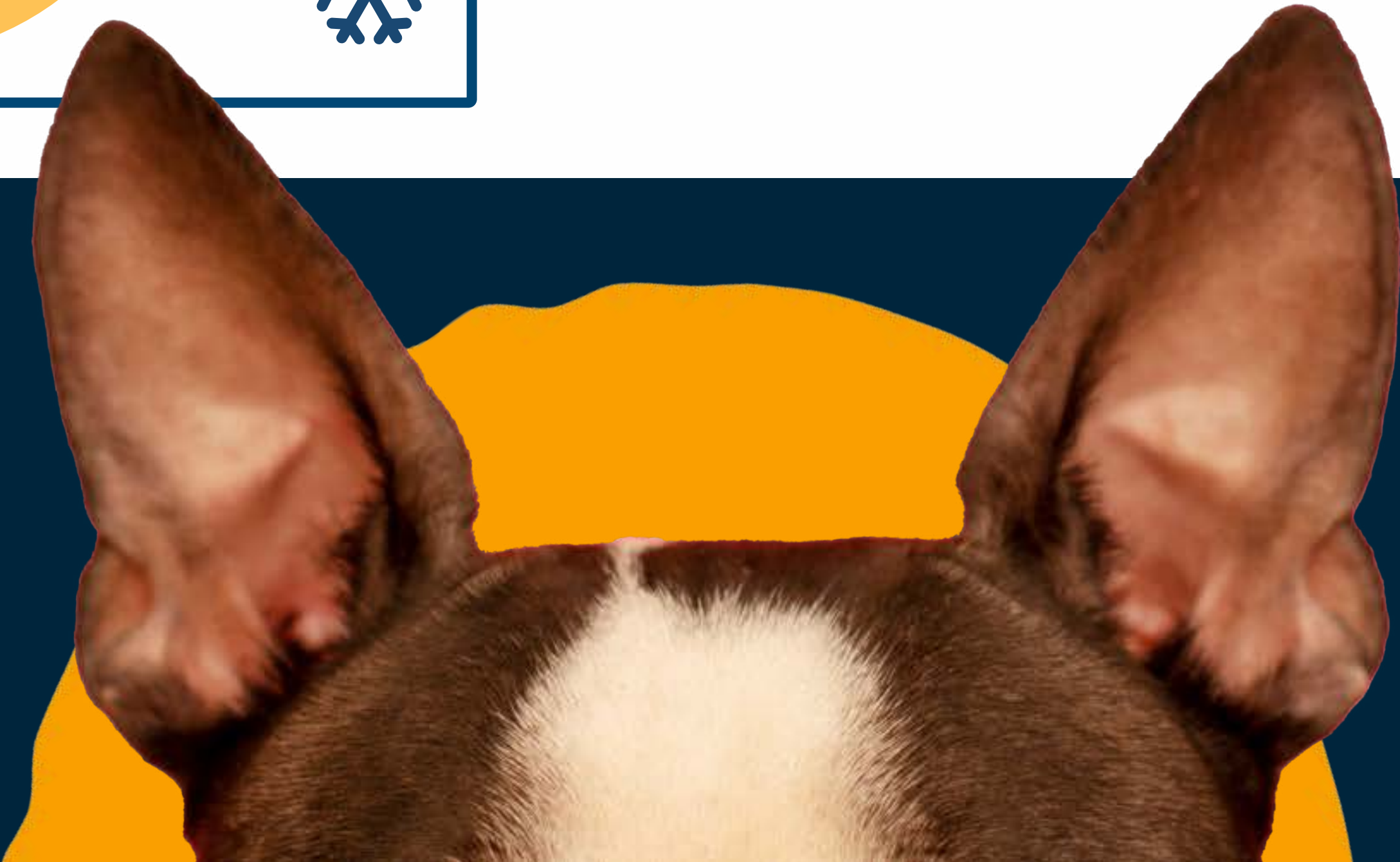
## Digging Deeper

You and pet parents see the busy holiday and summer travel seasons differently. Summer vacations are spaced out, giving you a stable season of constant activity. But you’re slammed around the winter holidays when everyone needs you all at once, and then it’s a ghost town until spring.



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

Turn perception into profit. Market early and often for the winter holidays, when pet parents really feel like they need your help. Upsell winter pet care packages as holiday gifts, too, since clients are already feeling extra fuzzy toward their furry family members.





# The Future of Pet Spending

## Pet Care Pricing Expectations

**#1** **Veterinary care**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$100-\$300 per basic visit in 2025

**#2** **Food and treats**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$20-\$60 per month

**#3** **Toys/enrichment**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$25-\$150 per year

**#4** **Grooming**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$50-\$125 per appointment

**#5** **Daycare/boarding**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$30-\$50 per full day

**#6** **In-home sitting**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$29-\$39 per 30-minute visit

**#7** **Dog walking**  
Actual 2025 cost: \$24-\$34 per 30-minute walk

\*Price research based on average pet care pricing for dogs in February 2025



### The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

Pet parents guessed what they spend on pet needs per interaction pretty accurately. But how many walks will they need monthly vs. how many bags of dog food? Pet owners who use regular services like daycare, walks, and drop-ins might underestimate their costs.



### Digging Deeper

#### Most Popular Add-On Services

#### Pet Taxi

78% of Pet taxi services are an add-on.

Most popular with: doggy daycares

If pet parents can get their fur baby to daycare with no extra work, they might happily pay for the ride, too. Bonus!

#### Doggy Daycare

64% of daycare services are an add-on.

Most popular with: pet sitters

The option to watch pets at your place or the client's gets you more business and lets you offer upsellable services like playdates.



#### Pet Waste Removal

61% of pooper scooper services are an add-on.

Most popular with: dog walkers

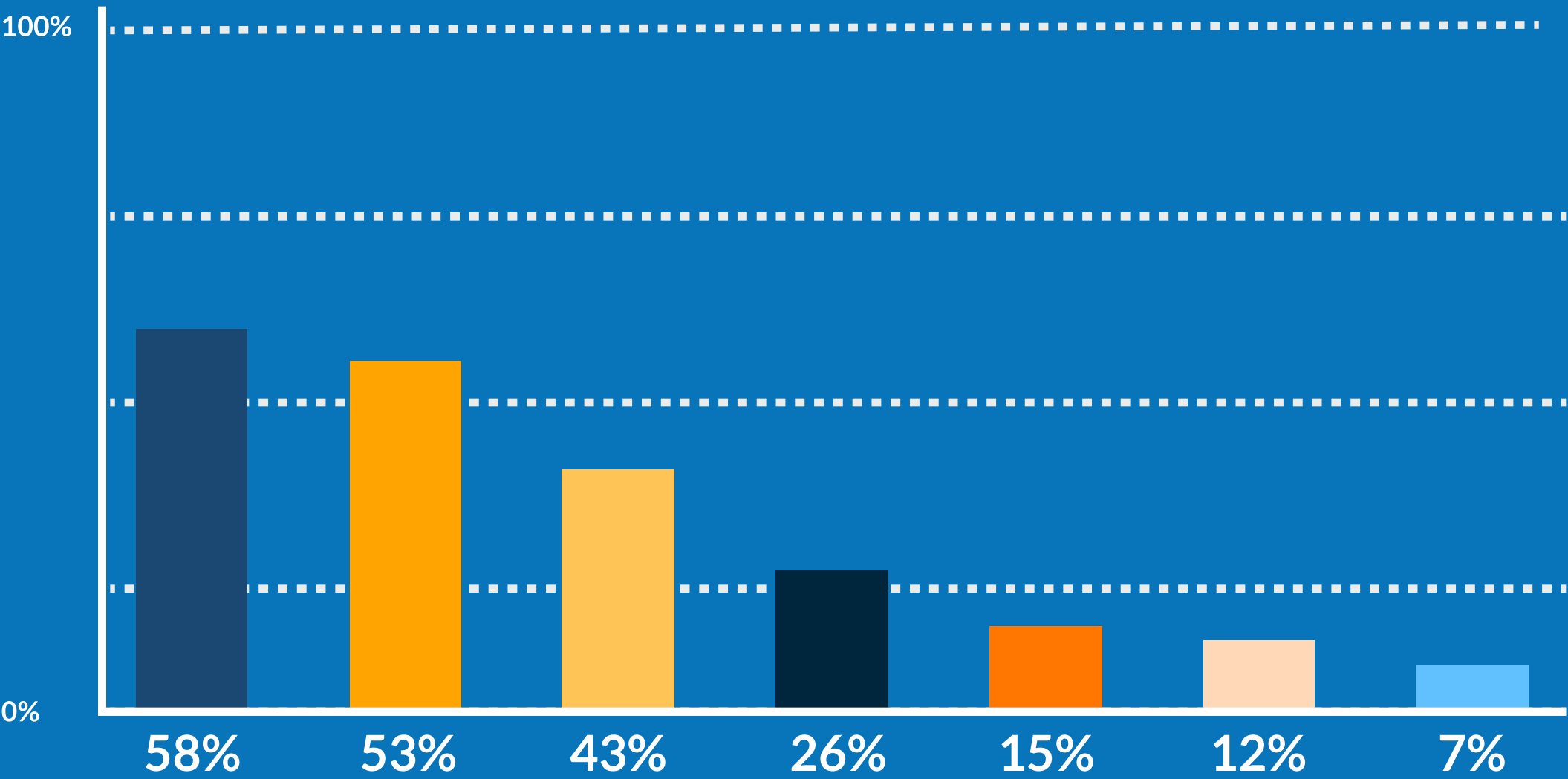
The investment cost is low, there's no extra training, and it pairs well with other services like walking or training.



# Pet Care? In This Economy?

## 2024 Changes in Pet Parenting

- “I haven’t made any changes to my pet spending this year
- “I cut costs in other areas of my life to keep giving my pets the best”
- “I changed where I shop for pet products at least once to get a better deal.”
- “I changed the brands I bought at least once to get a better deal.”
- “I bought fewer extras for my pet than I did last year.”
- “I changed pet care providers (like vets, groomers, sitters, etc.) to get a better deal.”
- “I did more DIY pet care than I did last year.”

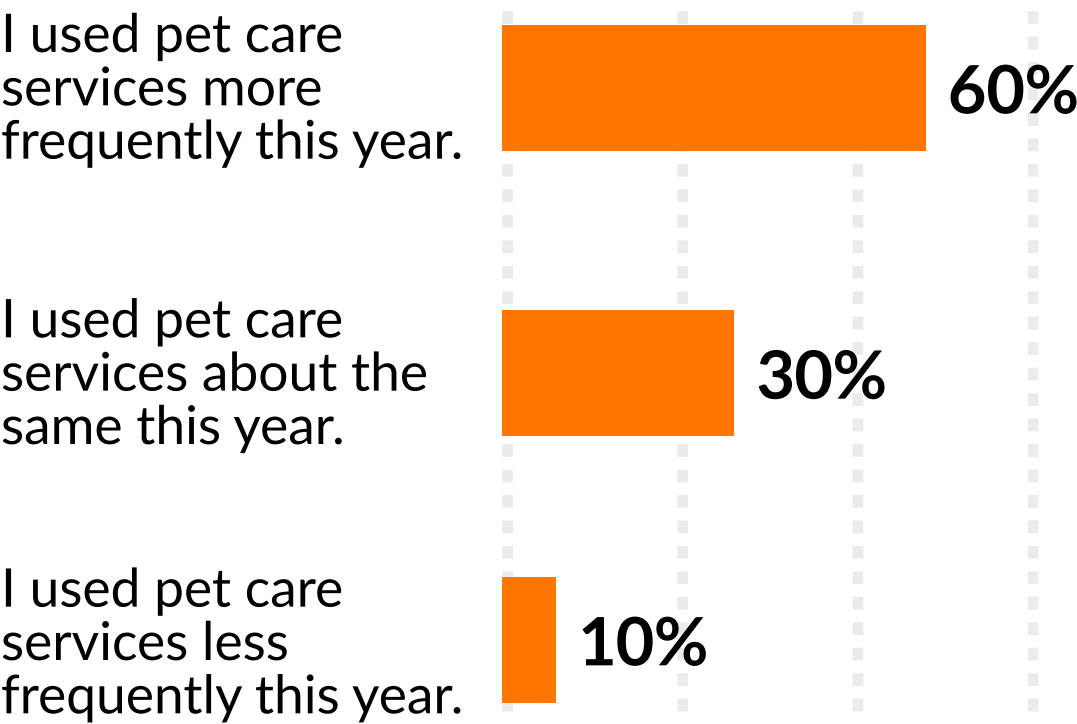


## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

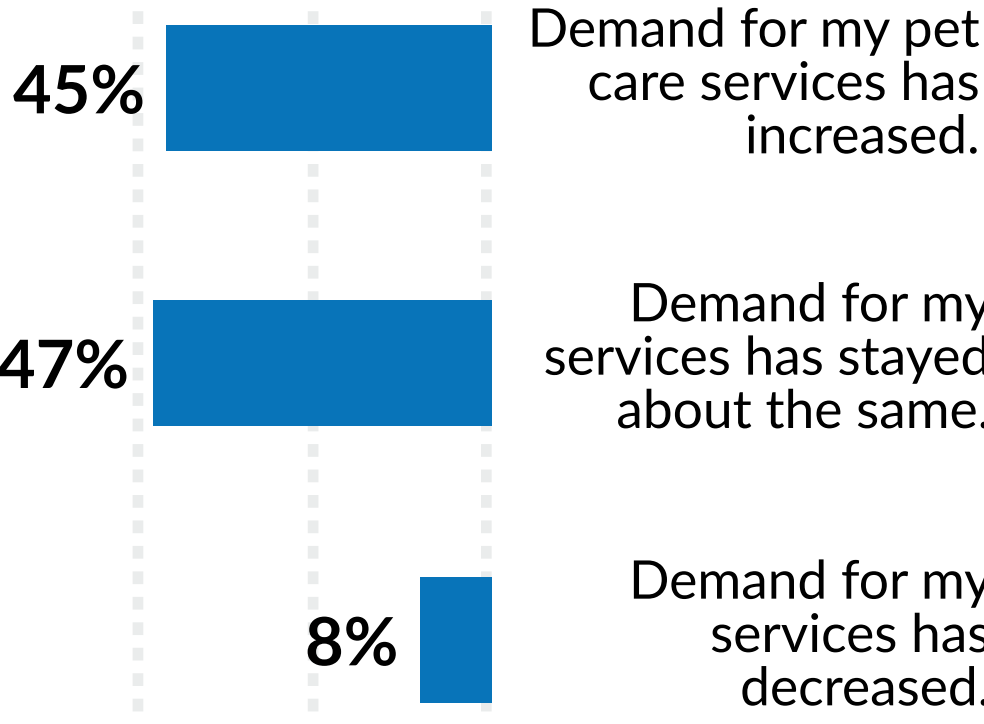
Worries about inflation may be overblown. Pet parents are generally loyal to their pets, and to you, if you can prove your service is essential to their furry friend.

## Pet Care May Be More Expensive, But It's a Need

### Pet Parents Say



### Pet Pros Say



## Digging Deeper

“How much would you estimate you've spent on your pets in the past 12 months?”

Most pet parents (17%) told us:

**\$50 to \$1000**

National average pet spending per household in 2024:

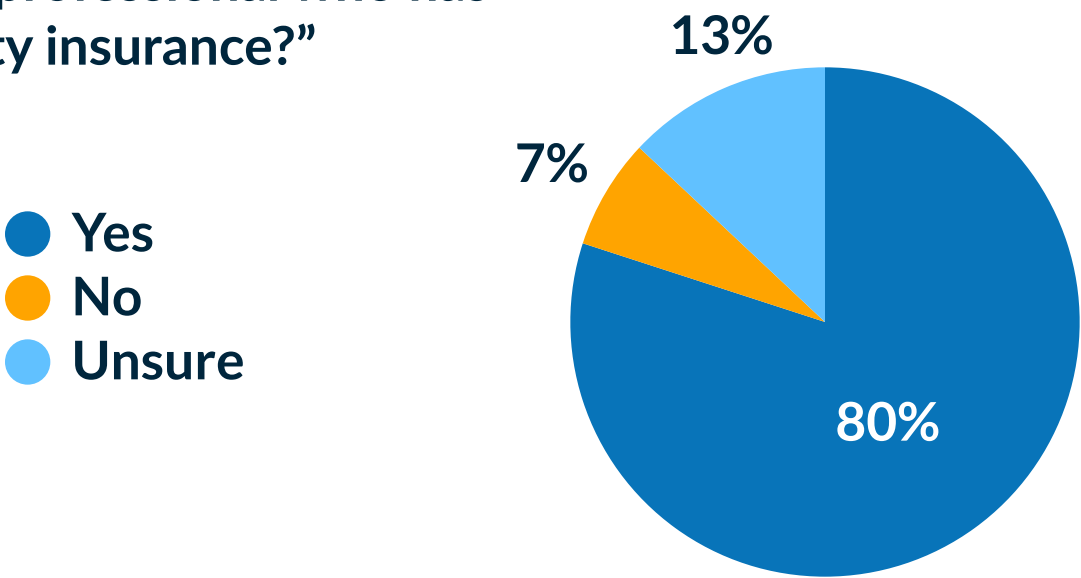
**\$1,515**

Pets always cost a little more than you planned. Pet parents feel like they're using your services more (whether your schedule agrees or not) and spending more on them. Reward their loyalty with some low-cost enrichment activities that add perceived value this year.



# Do Pet Parents Really Care About Your insurance?

“Are you more likely to hire a pet professional who has liability insurance?”



## Digging Deeper

*“Pet insurance is popular. That means I’m double-protected for pet injuries on most jobs, right?”*

**Bad surprise incoming:** only 23% of almost 500 surveyed pet owners had pet insurance. That means less than a quarter are prepared financially to protect their pet if an accident happens, and over three-quarters of your clients will place the financial burden on you while their pet is in your care. No wonder pet parents care if you’re insured!



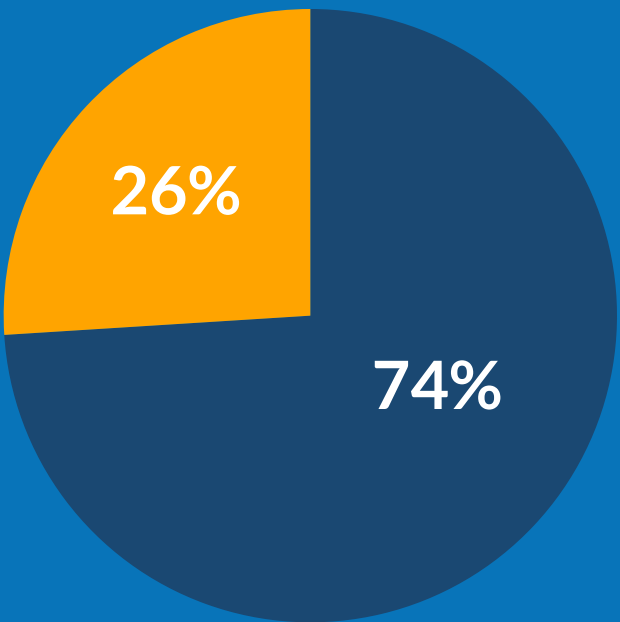
## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

71% of pet parents don’t think to ask about your liability insurance. But, when they see that you have it, 80% feel more confident about booking you – and that’s nothing to sniff at. Promote that you’re insured for the clients who wouldn’t ask but would care.

# Getting the Most From Your Coverage

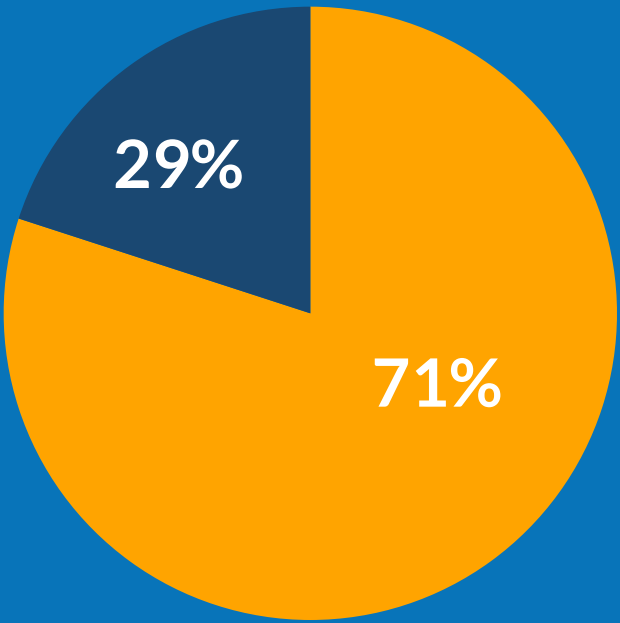
“Does it seem like pet parents value your pet business insurance?”

● Yes  
● No



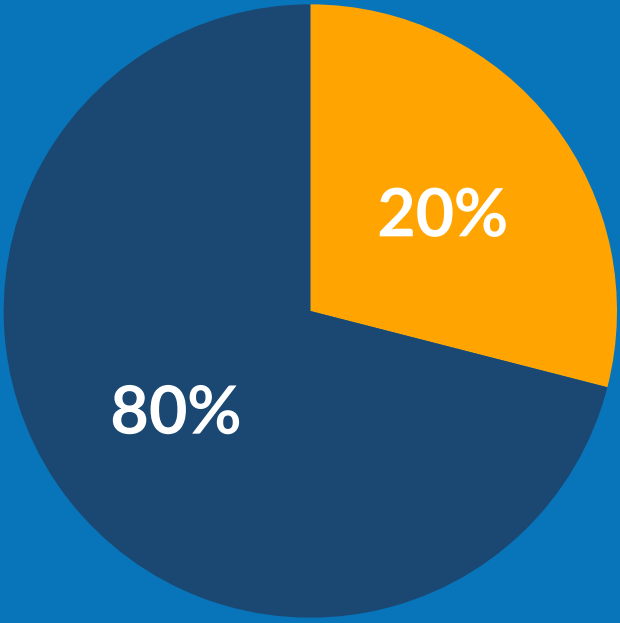
“Do pet parents ask whether you have pet business insurance?”

● Yes  
● No



“Do you tell or advertise to pet parents that you have pet business insurance?”

● Yes  
● No



Looking for paw-some coverage for your pet care business? Get your free instant quote now!

Give PCI a Try!

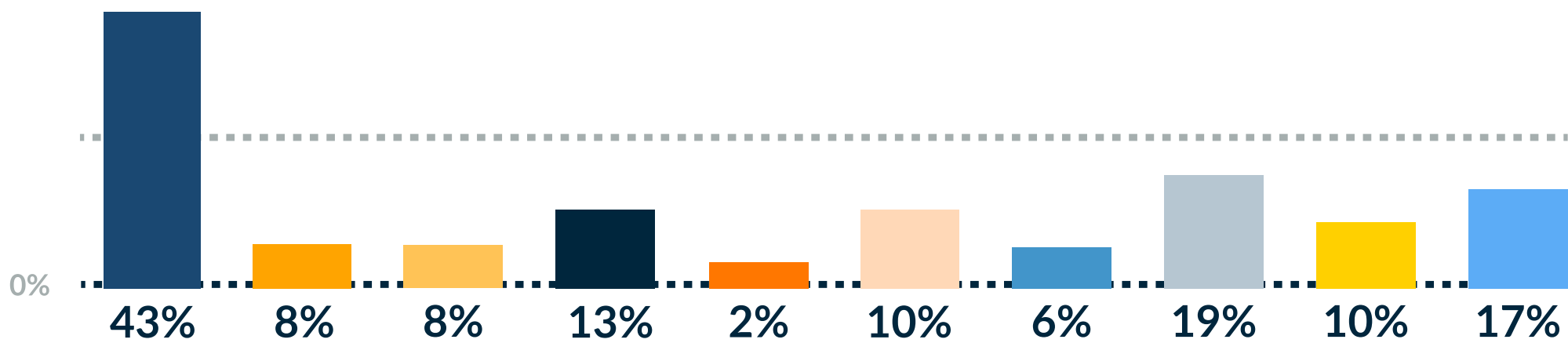


# Pet Health & Special Needs

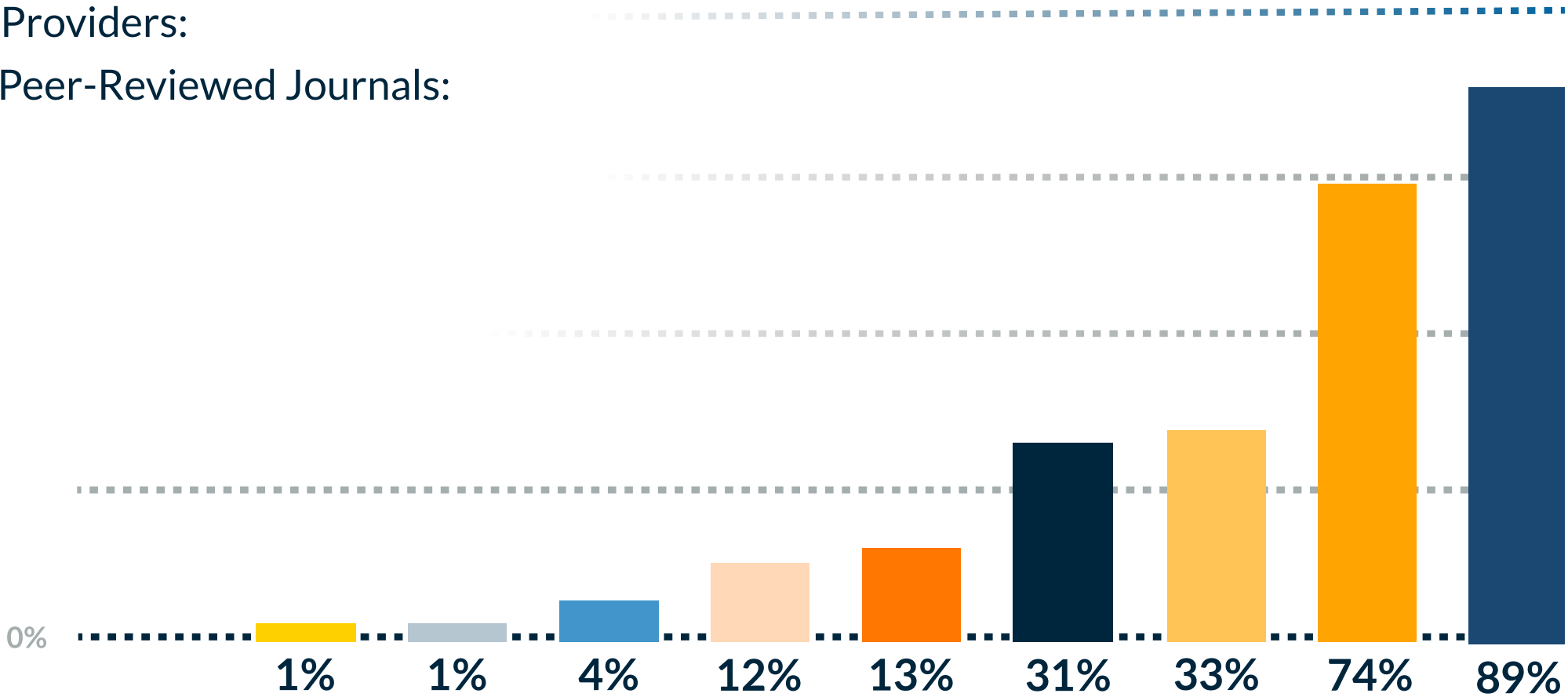
Most Common Pet Special Needs

- Senior
- Hearing Impaired
- Vision Impaired
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Food Allergies
- Environmental Allergies
- Anxiety
- Reactivity
- All of the Above:

Do You Care For Pets With Special Needs?  
86% said yes



Pet Pros' Most Trusted Sources of Pet Health Info

- Veterinarian
- Pet Health Association Website
| Certification Sites |  |
 Friends and Loved Ones |  | Blogs |  | Government Websites |  | Other Pet Care Providers: |  | Professional or Peer-Reviewed Journals: |  | Other |  |


## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Pet Pros

From popular breeds prone to health problems to the rise of pet allergies, 2025 will see continued demand for special needs care. Keep going to the experts to stay up-to-date on the latest tips and research.

You handle a lot of complex conditions to keep pets safe from baby floof to senior kitty-zen. Other responses mentioned:

- Mobility Issues
- Obesity
- Disabilities
- Epilepsy
- Food Aggression

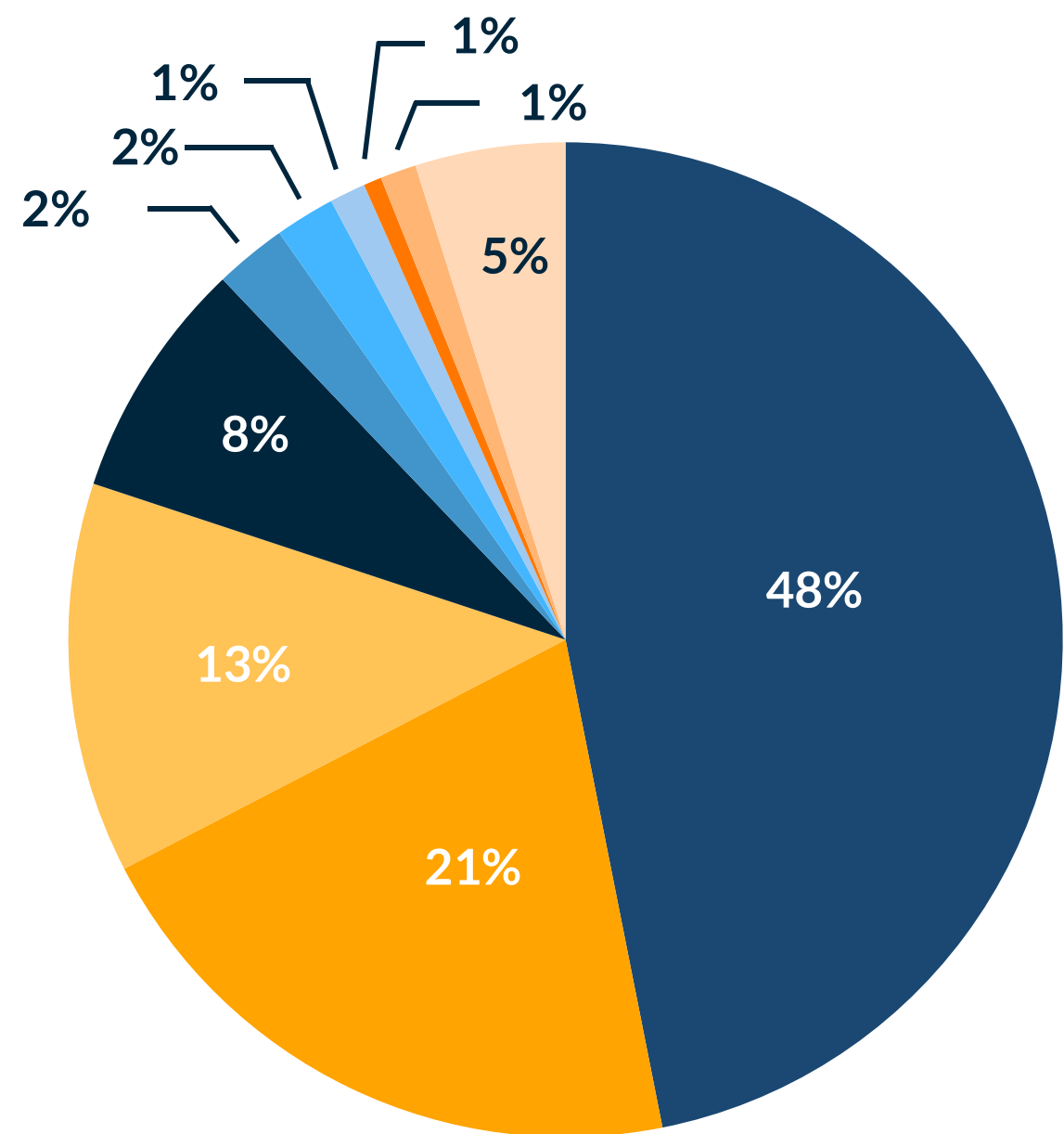




# Fetching New Skills

## Pet Pros' Education & Certification Goals for 2025

- None at this time
- Complete pet first aid certification
- Complete dog trainer certification
- Complete Fear Free certification
- Earn a bachelor's degree
- Complete pet groomer training
- Earn an associate's degree
- Earn a master's degree
- Vet tech certification
- Continuing education for certification



## Digging Deeper

Want to avoid pet health accidents? Train your brain with these course options for your top three certification goals.

### Pet CPR / First Aid

The [Red Cross](#) has one of the most respected pet first aid certification courses around, and it's online. [RECOVER CPR training](#) is an [ACVECC](#)- and [VECCS](#)-recognized non-profit that offers online and in-person pet CPR certification classes.

### Dog Training

The [CCPDT](#) and [Karen Pryor Academy](#) are two of the biggest online programs, but there are many options with different specialties.

### Fear Free Certification

[Fear Free](#) is a veterinarian-developed program that uses behavioral science to teach fear, anxiety, and stress relief for pets. Choose from programs for [pet trainers](#), [pet groomers](#), [pet sitters](#), or [boarders and daycares](#). You can also recommend the [pet parent resources](#) to clients who want to learn more.





# Cutting Edge Pet Care Trends

## Supplements & Probiotics

66%

Propelled by the higher cost of vet services ([up 8%](#) between Feb 2023 and Feb 2024) and increasing awareness of animal behavioral science, pet parents are looking for natural, daily solutions for healthier pets

## New Specialty Products

59%

From the growing popularity of [pet wipes and toothpaste](#) to vet telehealth, convenient pet care products are showing up in more homes. Look for more widespread adoption of GPS collars, smart pet doors, wellness apps, litter robots, and more in 2025

## Pet Product Subscriptions

43%

From pH-reading litter to custom dog food, there's a subscription box or direct to customer (DTC) brand for that. The convenience of home delivery has made subscription boxes explode (also likely contributing to the rising [pet debt](#) phenomenon).

## Raw, Natural, & Freeze-Dried Pet Food

26%

Part of the rewilding and pet fitness trends, many pet parents are looking for foods closer to animals' natural diets in an attempt to avoid pet allergies, obesity, and other serious health conditions.

## Pet Insurance

23%

As vet bills rise, many pet parents have turned to pet insurance. Stay tuned for possible [regulation changes in 2025](#), which would allow pet parents to pay vet and pet insurance bills out of their health savings (HSA) and flexible spending accounts (FSA).

## None/Other

11%

These pet parents might be into emerging or growing pet wellness services like end-of-life doulas, pet massage, dog yoga, and pet aromatherapy, or maybe they're deciding not to fetch this year's trends.



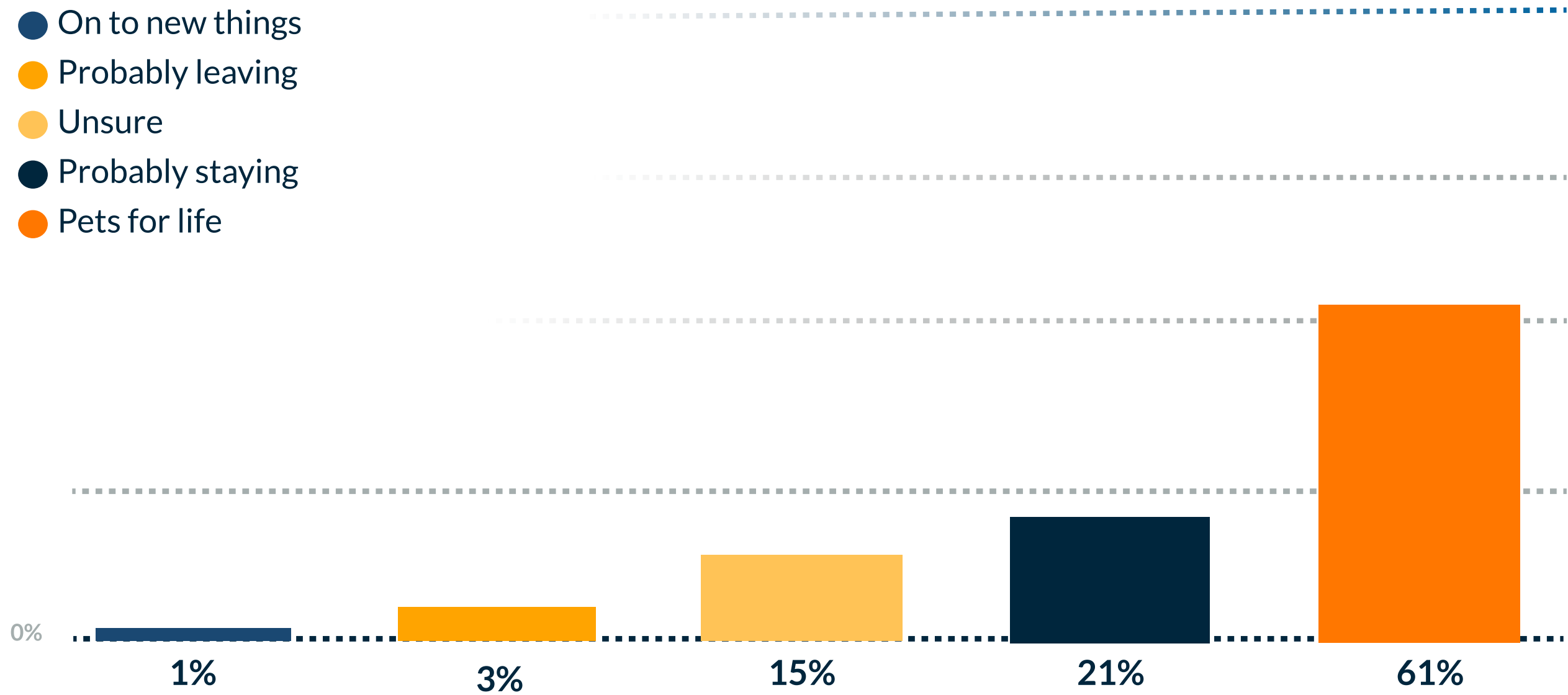
## The ~~Doggy~~ Cat's Bag: Takeaways for Pet Pros

Ready to get trendy? You might give your services a rewilding slant, like [Wild Pack](#), offer online consultations, or sell [pet bakery](#) treats. You could even bundle your services with subscription pricing for a monthly pet care payment. (Just make sure your new service is covered by insurance before adding it to your menu!)



# Are You & Pet Care Still BFFs?

How Likely Are You to Remain in Pet Care for the Next 5 Years?



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

Is pet care demand really growing at a rate to support more full-time pet professionals?

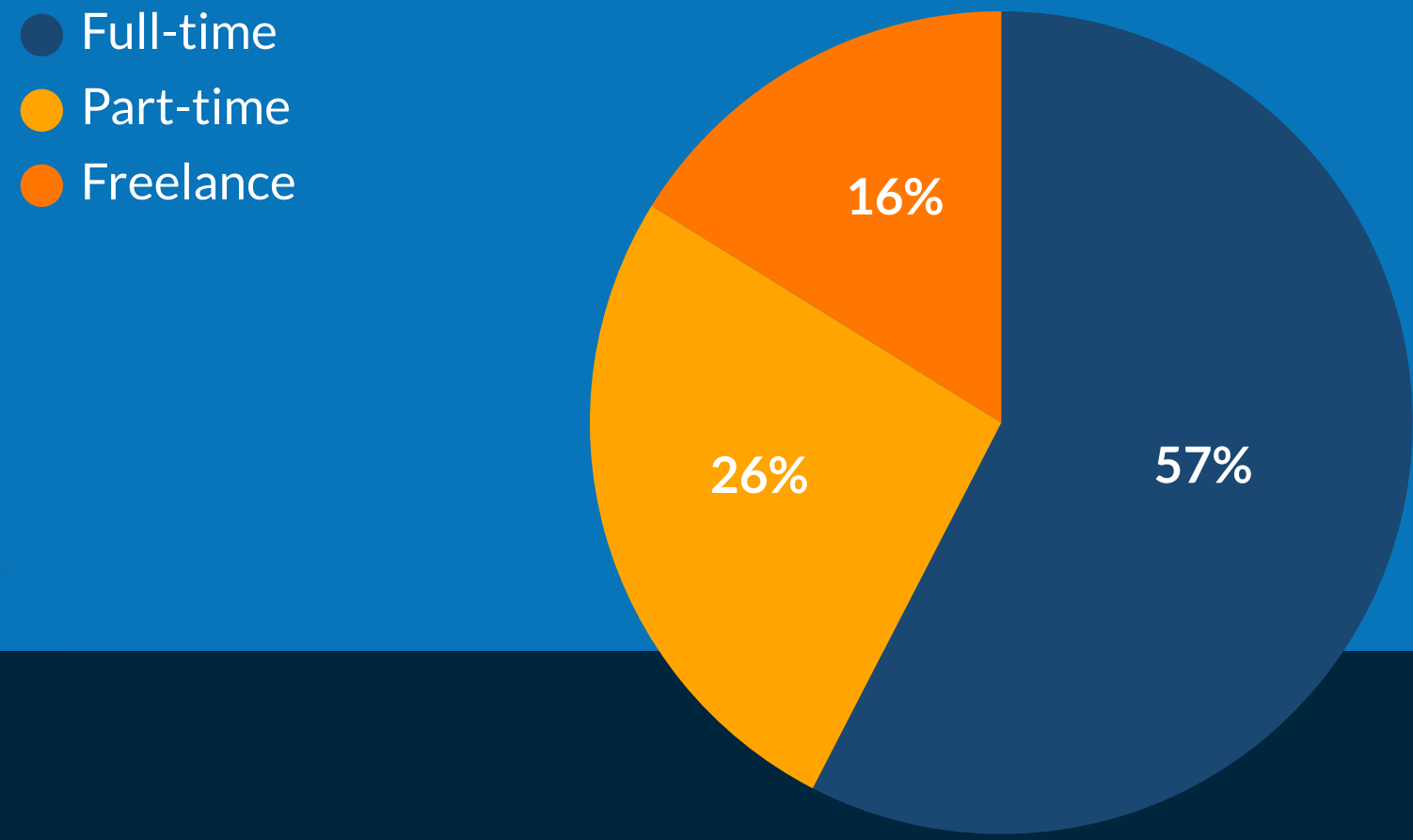
While the market is more crowded in some specialties, national projections show 6% as right on the money for pet care overall. Financial groups like [Morgan Stanley](#) and [Grand View Research](#) place the compound annual growth rate of the pet services industry at between 5% and 7% through 2030.



## Digging Deeper

63% of pros are “likely” or “very likely” to do pet care full-time in 2025.

As trendy specialties come and go, most (82%) of the pet pros we surveyed will stick around and ride the wave of new trends. Not only that, but 63% will be working in pet care full-time. That’s a 6% boost from the 57% of our surveyed pet pros who work full-time in pet care now.

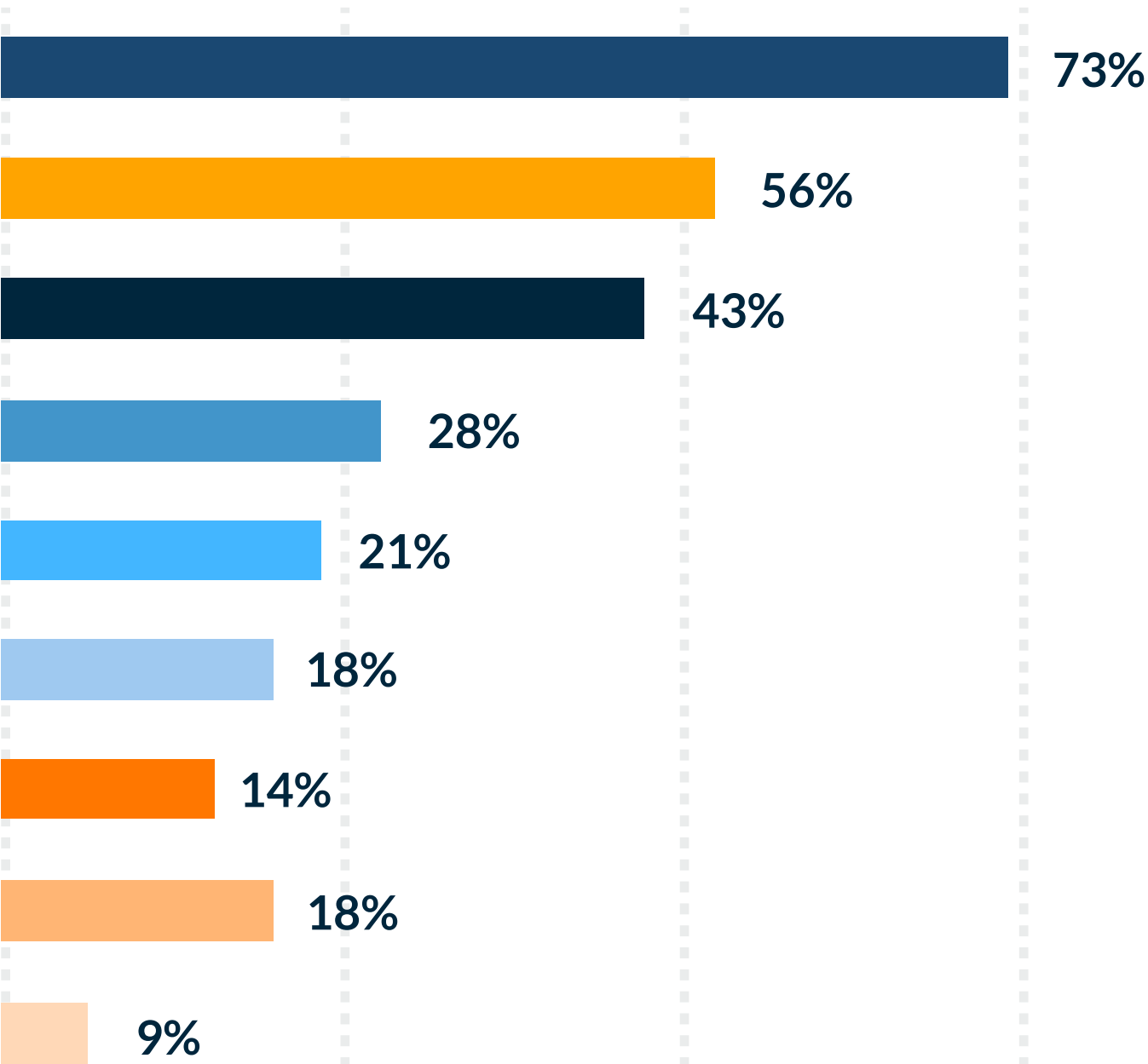


# Pet Care Worries & Wins

## Pet Parents: What Are Your Biggest Challenges With Finding a Pet Care Professional?

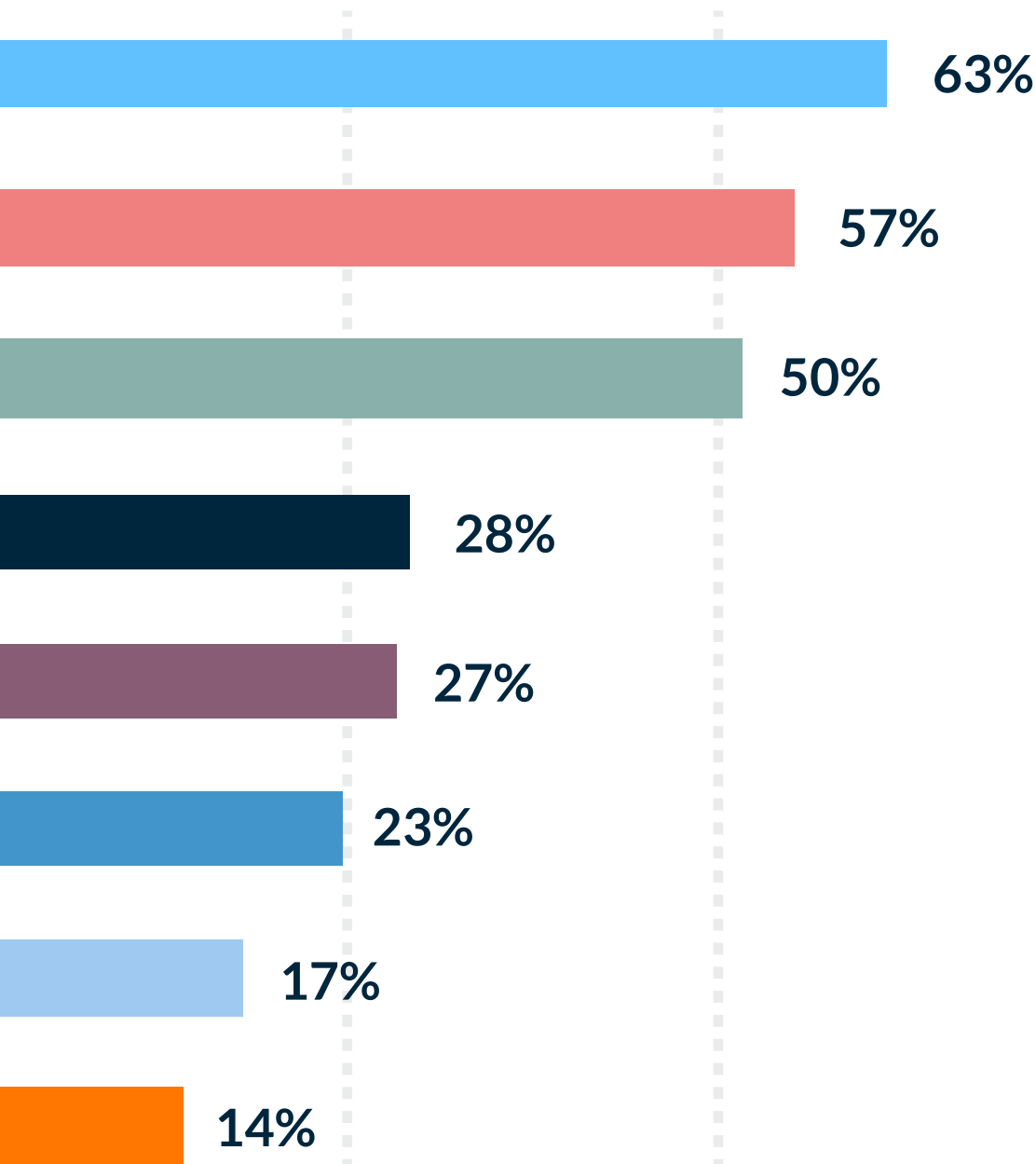
Finding someone who...

- You can trust
- Has all the right services
- Communicates well & often
- Gives high-quality care
- Has enough availability
- Prices right, no unexpected fees
- Has the right experience or insurance
- Is compatible with you & your pet
- Understands pet special needs



## Pet Pros: What Industry Challenges Do You Expect to Face in 2025?

- Inconsistent demand
- Inflation
- Competition / market saturation
- Health and safety risks for me
- Liability risks
- Client retention
- Health and safety risks for pets
- Regulatory changes and requirements



## Industry Trends & Challenges



### Digging Deeper

#### A Tail-Wagging Thought

As pet care gets more expensive, surveys say most pet parents still care more about your quality than your cost.

Pet pros worry about whether pet parents can afford services, whether they get the care you pour into your job, and whether they'll go to a cheaper competitor in 2025. The good news is that those concerns about pet parents don't match their concerns about you.

Pet parents consistently said they were more interested in 1) trustworthiness, 2) diverse skills, 3) good communication, 4) professional care, and 5) availability than price. Even if they don't always communicate it to you, most clients do realize that your job takes character, dedication, and expertise that are worth paying for.





# Pet Care Worries & Wins



## The Doggy Bag: Takeaways for Your Biz

### *In the End, It's All About Pets*

Is it really surprising that every pet professional we asked said **pets are the best thing about their job**? You might also like the freedom of setting your own hours, staying active, or meeting new people. (And, let's face it, you might also worry about your business and your income this year.) But it always comes back to how much you love your extended family of furballs.

Thank you for all the unsung scooping, snuggling, and safeguarding you do to make happy pets happen. Let's make this the most pet-friendly year yet.

### What's Your Favorite Thing About What You Do?

“Getting to know people and their pets on a personal level”

Lauren Boston  
Pet Sitter & Dog Walker  
[Round of Appaws Pet Sitting LLC](#)

“We help people live happier lives with their dogs by helping dog owners overcome behavioral issues they face. Our mission is to help save dogs' lives, and every time we help save a dog's life, it is rewarding and fulfilling!”

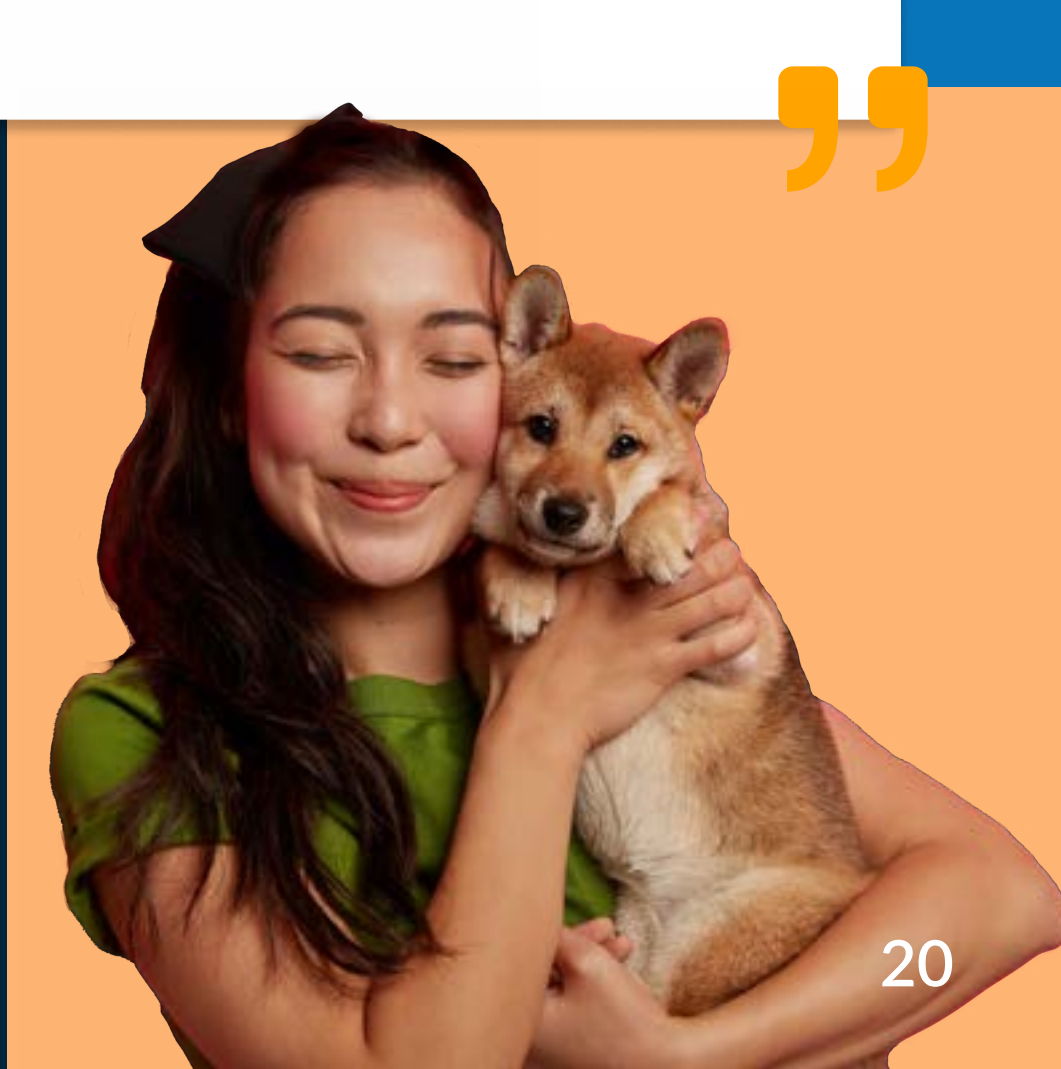
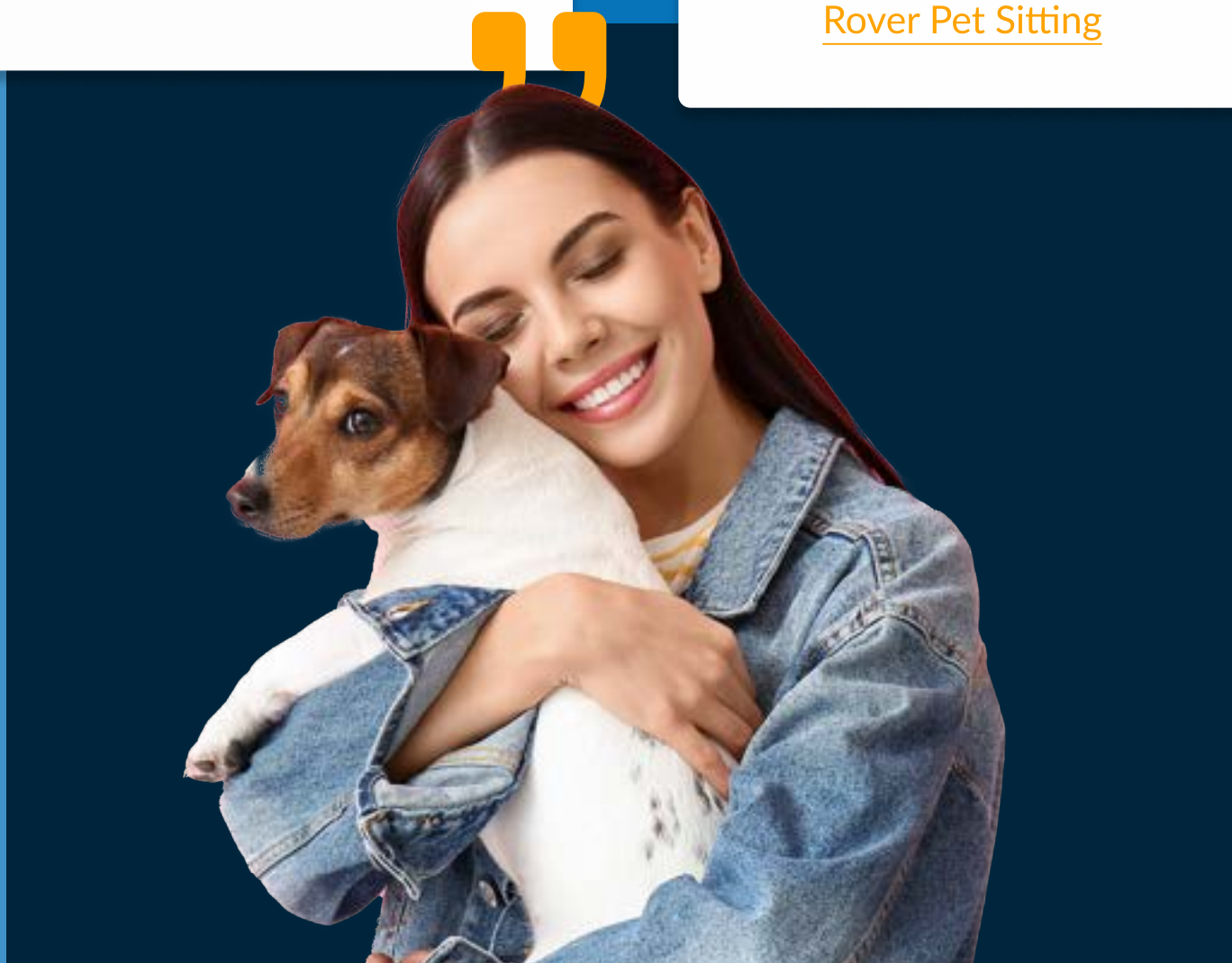
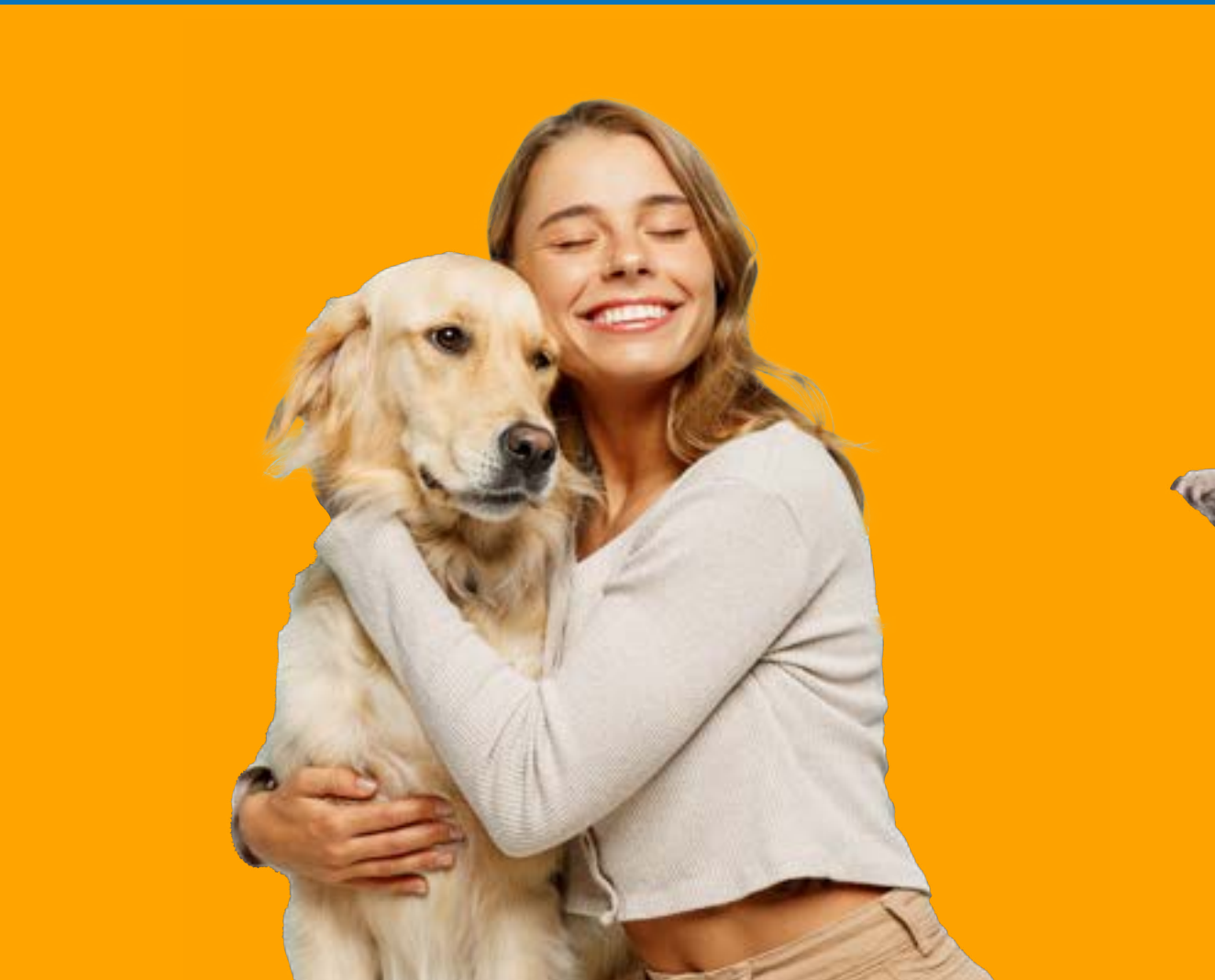
Carl Peterson  
CEO  
[Bark Busters Home Dog Training](#)

“Love working with dogs and making breakthroughs with them that their owners struggle with.”

Wade Lindsey  
Dog Walker, Dog Boarder, Pet/House Sitter, and Pet Taxi  
[Dallas Dog Den LLC](#)

“Being my own boss by taking care of and hanging out with dogs”

Margaret Torsell  
Small Dog Boarding  
[Rover Pet Sitting](#)





# About PCI

For more than a decade, [Pet Care Insurance \(PCI\)](#) has been helping pet professionals get affordable nose-to-tail business coverage that fits them perfectly. Over 15,000 pet care providers trust PCI for peace of mind with fast, easy, and howl-free coverage designed just for pet businesses.

## Pets of PCI and so many more!



# Methodology

To provide pet pros with **reliable industry insights** and **data-driven strategies** for business growth, PCI conducted a comprehensive analysis using three internal surveys of **pet care professionals**, one external survey of **pet owners**, and **real-world insurance data** from PCI's pet business policyholder database.



**PCI Internal Pet Care Provider Survey #1**  
(546 respondents, conducted by PCI)

**Topics:** Business growth trends, pricing strategies, marketing effectiveness, common challenges, and risk management.

**PCI Internal Pet Care Provider Survey #2**  
(47 respondents, conducted by PCI)

**Topics:** Collecting personal quotes, reactions, and concerns from pet professionals about their industry.

**PCI Internal Pet Care Provider Survey #3**  
(166 respondents, conducted by PCI)

**Topics:** insurance-related concerns, liability experiences, and risk perceptions among pet care providers.

**External Pet Parent Survey**  
(491 respondents, conducted by Virgo PR for PCI)

**Topics:** consumer expectations, service preferences, pricing tolerance, and decision-making factors when hiring pet care professionals.

**PCI Internal Policyholder Database Analysis (15,460 insured pet professionals, conducted by PCI)**

Analyzed policy trends, business demographics, and coverage selections to identify industry patterns and emerging needs.

All surveys were conducted between August 2024 and January 2025. Participants were recruited via email invitations and targeted outreach to pet care pros and pet owners. The surveys included multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions to gather quantitative data and qualitative insights. Responses were reviewed for accuracy and completeness, with incomplete responses removed from the final analysis.





# Fetch More Knowledge

Chew on This: [The Pet Biz Newsletter from PCI](#)

Sign up for new pet industry stats and data-driven strategies every other month

## Dog-Ear These Resources for Later

[Dog Groomer Information for all 50 States](#)

[A Guide to Setting Pet Sitting Rates](#)

[Rover.com Review: Is It a Game Changer for Pet Professionals?](#)

[How to Become a Flight Nanny](#)

[Dog Training Marketing Ideas to Stand Out from the Pack](#)

[6 Design Tips from the Best Pet Grooming Websites](#)

