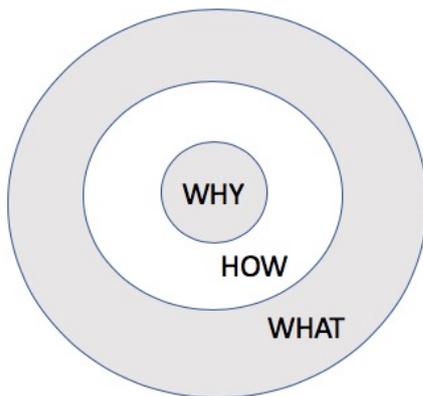




The WHY of my dog grooming business

A consultant in Silicon Valley by the name of Simon Sinek gave a TED Talk in 2009 – which he later followed up with his book [Start With Why](#).

During the TED Talk, he drew three circles. Each circle around the previous circle, as per the diagram.



The outer circle is the WHAT of your business. This represents your goods or services.

The circle inside that is your HOW.

The smaller circle inside that, at the centre, is your WHY.

Let's look at an example.

Simon compared Apple to Dell. Both companies make great computers. That is their WHAT.

Each company employs clever engineers. That is their HOW.

But, as Simon explains, you can't really imagine people queuing for hours outside a Dell store to get their hands on the latest Dell product. Yet this happens all the time when it comes to Apple.

Why?

Because Apple inspires.

Apple has defined the WHY of their business and it positively impacts their How and their What.



Their WHY is to challenge the status quo and constantly to innovate. The result is beautiful, elegant, user-friendly technology that excites and inspires (you might not be a fan of Apple's manufacturing practices, but that is a separate point).

Can we take this lesson from Silicon Valley and apply it to our dog grooming business?

Our WHAT, in the main, is an expertly groomed pet dog and a happy customer experience.

Our HOW is the bath, brush, blow-dry, clipping, styling and scissoring. But also the training and studying and experience that we bring to pet grooming.

What about OUR Why?

As Simon says, it's not about 'the money'. Money, he says, is an 'outcome'.

Instead, our WHY should be the thing that gives us purpose. It's what gets us out of bed in the morning. It enables us to achieve and maintain high standards. It compels us, every day, to provide the best we can for the dogs in our care. And it should inspire our customers, the owners and guardians of the dogs we serve.

But it should also be morally correct.

What happens when it's not morally correct?

Sectors within the dog show world have been scandalised in recent years by the development, over several generations, of ridiculous and morally indefensible breed standards.

What person is not moved or outraged by the videos and images of a German Shepherd with crippling hip dysplasia, or of a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel suffering from Syringomyelia (where the skull is too small for the dog's brain)?

Today, the Kennel Club embraces 'healthy, happy dogs' as a slogan and mantra. Sure, it's almost cliché. An over-used marketing strapline that now sounds almost meaningless. But, it is progress.

Dog Grooming for Healthy, Happy Dogs

Dog groomers are in the front line among animal care professionals.

For years, pet groomers have been trying to raise awareness that regular grooming is beneficial to a dog's health and wellbeing.

It is, however, worth reminding ourselves of this, and making our voice heard more forcefully.



When we embrace 'healthy, happy dogs' as the WHY of our business, if everything flows from this defining moral centre, it will impact the HOW and the WHAT of our business in positive, inspiring ways.

Our HOW is enriched because it means making the right choices. Instead of opting for cheaper shampoos full of nasty chemicals, we select something all-natural, free of alcohol and parabens. Our approach becomes 'holistic', which means that we take an overall and long-term interest in the dog's health and wellbeing.

We 'partner' with our customers in their dog's care, and ask meaningful questions during the pre-grooming consultation and health check. We have a dialogue with the owner, who hears our expertise, knowledge and experience.

All this leads to greater awareness that regular grooming is preventative care. It inspires us to behave responsibly. BUT it also gets the dog owners behaving responsibly: booking regularly, in advance, and becoming evangelists and ambassadors for us, sending us referrals.

Our WHAT will still be a high standard of grooming and a professional customer experience. But it goes beyond that to be defined by our WHY: a 'healthy, happy dog'.

And the customers who don't get it? The ones who tell us to de-matt their Cockapoo or they will go elsewhere? Tell them to go elsewhere. Stick to your guns, YOUR Why. Hopefully, 'elsewhere' operates from the same WHY. And the same with the next elsewhere.

Let each of us earn a reputation of putting the dog's health and welfare first.

When those pet owners hear this again and again from us damned annoying self-righteous groomers, they might actually get inspired – or normalised - to behave responsibly and understand that this really is about their dog's health, welfare and happiness.

We might not change the world. But with every victory we change that dog's world. That's WHY.