

A Pre-Game Playbook for the Holiday Rush

How proper planning and efficient scheduling can ensure yuletide joy for your grooming salon.

BY MELISSA VERPLANK & LORRI KELLER



It's time to staff up, stock up, and speed up your grooming operation for a successful holiday season! Here are some tips on logistics, speed, and efficiency.

LOGISTICS

Former Paragon VP, Lorri Keller is an MVP in calling the plays for grooming operations. Her favorite move for smooth sailing through the holiday rush is to take a three-prong approach to grooming slots.

Start booking for the holidays NOW at checkout or by call/email/text to regular clients.

Book the "full groom" one to two weeks prior to the desired holiday appointment.

Book the "holiday touch up" service (a half hour) during the desired day near the holiday. The touch up appointment would only include fluff, light trimming, touch up and a fresh bow or bandana.

This reduces the bottle-neck of holiday haircuts and facilitates a more balanced schedule, keeping both groomers and clients happy.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING TIPS

- Prepare! Make sure your supplies are ordered, blades and shears are sharpened, and bows and bandanas are ready!
- Do a walk-through and equipment check. You can't afford surprises.
- Hire someone to help with the dogs to check in and check out. (This is a wonderful time to be training a Groom Tech apprentice.)
- Leverage grooming software with automated appointment reminders (or task someone with calls) because holiday appointment slots are precious!

- Ensure your team is up to speed on the check in, check out and work ow plan for peak times.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

In the 30+ years since founding The Paragon School of Pet Grooming, Melissa Verplank has both learned and taught every trick in the book to improve speed and efficiency—safely!

Always start with the end in mind. The better you know where you are headed the easier it will be to get there. Know what a high-quality trim looks like. Know what balance and style is.

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Let products and tools do the work first. There have been great developments in products and tools. Explore your options, and find out what the top pros use at their grooming tables.

If water can penetrate the coat, wash the pet first. Don't waste time pre-clipping a dog. If the water can penetrate the coat, get them right into the tub. A majority of mats and tangles are held together by dirt. Remove the dirt and the job just got easier.

A powerful high velocity dryer is the professional stylist's greatest asset in time management. If used correctly, this tool produces the fastest results with the highest quality on any given coat type.

Towel dry, towel dry, towel dry. Incomplete towel drying costs precious minutes in the drying process. Multiply that by six or eight dogs and you've lost 30 to 60 minutes out of your day.

Three clipper passes or less! If your dog is bathed and blown out properly, the goal is to make three clipper passes—or less—to get it absolutely smooth. The first pass knocks out the longest coat. The second pass smooths it out. The third pass eliminates high spots that have been missed.

Cheat like crazy with guard combs. If there was ever a cheat tool in your toolbox, this is it! They let you establish a depth of coat just by following the dog's body. They allow you to mold and sculpt the fur quickly and efficiently. With knowledge of proper canine structure and creative use of your guard combs, you can create a highly stylized trim in no time.

If you plan ahead, your holiday rush can be both high-spirited and highly productive. But don't forget to rebook at check-out to avoid the January and February lulls!

Melissa Verplank, CMG, is CEO of Paragon School of Pet Grooming. Lorri Keller, CMG, is past vice president of Paragon Groomer Education & Training.

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