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Angela Critchley
International Marketing Manager

THE BIG INTERVIEW – Pet Product Marketing

Tell us something about the history of PetSafe®.

Twenty years ago the privately owned US company, Radio Systems® Corporation, launched the PetSafe® brand. Today the company operates globally with some 650 employees including in-house engineers and specialists who research and develop new products for the pet market. The company is an industry leader in pet training, containment and safety and lifestyle product solutions. Its product line up includes: kennels and electronic underground fences; bark control systems; remote training products; pet doors; pet feeders, pet fountains, treat dispensing toys and a growing line of lifestyle products.

Is it a company full of pet lovers?

Absolutely, the PetSafe motto is 'protect. teach. **love**' pets and a genuine passion for their care and protection is central to everything we do. As you'd expect a lot of PetSafe employees have pets and wherever possible and, if the building is suitable, they bring their dogs to work every day. Not so practical for cats! In the US we even have a dog park.

Where is the main focus of your product line?

Bringing choice to consumers is key in everything we do - our training aids which include Containment Systems, Training Systems and Bark Control categories have always been key products for PetSafe. In recent years though we've expanded our lines to include products such as pet doors and water fountains and these have become strong products for us. This year we also added *Play & Challenge* and *Health & Wellness* to the core categories so the company continues to evolve and respond to customer demand.

Which is your most popular product?

In the UK it has to be the Microchip petporte smart flap® which has become very popular since it was launched.

How important is the UK market to the parent company?

Extremely important. A significant part of PetSafe business comes from Europe and the UK plays an important role in this. I'm based in the UK but as International Marketing Manager my remit includes China, Japan, Australia and Canada as well as Europe. So our North West base in the UK is a real hub of global activity you could say.



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Does the UK arm have much say in product development?

Yes, part of my role is new product development and I work closely with the strategic business unit in the US to develop products that are suitable for our various international markets. We also work closely with animal behaviourists, veterinary consultants and trainers. Customer feedback is very important to us too and in a typical year I'll go to a number of trade shows in various countries and meet customers.

Are American pet owners very different to those in the UK?

I'd say that the common theme is that they generally all love their pets. One of the main differences in the US – and Japan as well - is that pet owners like to accessorise their pets and dress them up. This hasn't really caught on to the same degree here but fashion for pets is huge in some countries. Another main difference between the US and the UK is that dogs are by far the most popular pets and cats are mainly kept indoors in the US.

What's the biggest challenge facing the company?

Being global it's the international scale of our activity. Marketing strategy is driven from the UK and I need to ensure that there is continuity across all our international marketing material. Ultimately, brand responsibility lies with our office.

What plans have the company got for the future?

We are working hard to continue our growth and focus on becoming the most trusted brand in the pet ownership experience.

How much time do you spend in the States?

I spend about 1 month in the States every year but I also go to Australia, China and Japan on a quarterly basis. Trips to Europe are also fairly frequent.

Describe a typical working day.

There's no such thing really. There's a lot of juggling going on between any of the 15 or so projects I may have on during any particular day. Working across different time zones also keeps me on my toes!

How many people do you manage?

A global team of 12.

Describe your management style

Lead by example, with a 'can-do' approach.

How would you like to be remembered?

As being supportive to my team and being consistent.

What makes you tick?

My working day and the buzz from succeeding at juggling all my projects.



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What makes you happy?

Balancing family life with a rewarding career.

...and angry?

Bureaucracy for the sake of it.

In Brief

Name – Angela Critchley

Age - 46

Job title – International Marketing Manager for PetSafe

Home – Chorley, Lancashire

Family – married with a daughter

Education – left school at 16 with GCSE's and went straight to work

Career – worked my way up the career ladder from junior to senior management.

Lived overseas for a period then went to work for Staywell in 2003 and the company was acquired in 2005 by Radio Systems Corp (owner of Petsafe).

Pets

Lots of fish and guinea pigs! I'd love a chocolate Labrador but my husband has an allergy to pets. My daughter would love two!