



– APPLAUSE CASE STUDY –

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BRENDTEN EICKSTAEDT, VP OF INNOVATION SERVICES, PETCO

## CUSTOMER

A pet is part of the family. As such, pets deserve the best when it comes to their food, shelter, and care.

Petco has never forgotten these facts, and has succeeded in its mission to keep pets and their parents at the center of everything it does. With more than 1,500 stores across the US and Mexico, the company operates by a simple, six-word vision for “Healthier pets. Happier people. Better world.”

## CHALLENGE

With its vision in mind, the company invested in PetCoach in 2017, which provides pet parents with digitally-delivered pet health advice 24/7 via its website and apps for both iOS and Android, plus two physical retail locations in the San Diego area that serve as learning labs for the broader Petco brand and store fleet. The two PetCoach locations feature smaller footprints and services-forward design.

Following a test-and-learn approach, PetCoach operates on a much smaller scale than Petco stores and allows the company to trial

### COMPANY

Petco

### INDUSTRY

Retail

### TESTING TYPES

Functional | Omnichannel

### APP TYPES

Web | Mobile | In-Store

### CHALLENGES

- Testing products for a specific, passionate customer base
- Live, in-store testing for products and services
- Limited device and browser coverage

### RESULTS

- Caught and fixed online bugs before they reached production
- Perfected in-store experiences for a variety of customer journeys
- Discovered new products and services and readied them for rollout to larger Petco stores

new ideas before scaling them for the larger Petco environment. By highlighting in-store services and experiences, including grooming, training, day care, and veterinary care up front, and creating a seamless online and offline experience, Petco aims to reinvent pet retail. Personal service and innovative products are key parts of the store's model so providing exactly the service and experience a customer wants is paramount.

"We always need to look at how we can leverage our brand along with both our ecommerce and brick-and-mortar footprint to interact with our customers however, wherever, and whenever they want to interact with us. We need to be willing and able to engage with them anytime, anywhere," said Brendten Eickstaedt, VP of Innovation Services at Petco.

## SOLUTION

As a store concept specifically designed to test new, innovative ideas before moving them to larger Petco stores, figuring out what works quickly with measurable data is critical.

Everything from technology to products and services has to be tested on a wide range of devices and operating systems. Moreover, Petco requires testing experts who are pet parents themselves. To help them find digital experts who own pets, Petco partnered with Applause for functional and omnichannel testing services.

"Once we saw the broad range of capabilities offered, choosing Applause was an easy decision," said Eickstaedt. "And we've been very pleased with the results."

With support from Applause and its Customer Journeys solution, Petco was able to test everything from online purchases and returns to complete in-store experiences, ensuring everything worked correctly across all touchpoints before launching a new concept more broadly. By testing, learning from, and adjusting the customer journey along the way, Petco is able to consistently provide the best possible experience to pet parents across all touchpoints, both on and offline.



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## RESULTS

Applause helped Petco validate that these small-scale, digitally-enabled stores could work. Not only did Applause help confirm this strategy, but in-store tests enabled Petco to pinpoint the methods that worked best so they could effectively inform the company's larger fleet of stores.

"Applause, simply, is invaluable," said Eickstaedt. "Their testers give us the ability to test products with 'friendlies' before it ever reaches the masses – this is very difficult, if not impossible, to do with internal engineering and development resources."

As Petco continues to innovate and explore new ways to meet the modern needs of pet parents, real-world testing will remain a key part of its strategy.

"The variety of testing, the quality of people, and the intuitive Applause platform all seamlessly come together to offer valuable insights. It provides different views of issues that simply were not possible to catch on our own," said Sanjay Vidyadhar, QA and Dev Manager at Petco.

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SANJAY VIDYADHAR, QA AND  
DEV MANAGER, PETCO

## ABOUT APPLAUSE

Applause is the worldwide leader in crowd-sourced digital quality testing. Software is at the heart of how all brands engage users, and digital experiences must work flawlessly everywhere. With **highly-vetted testers available on-demand around the globe**, Applause provides brands with a full suite of testing and feedback capabilities. This approach drastically improves testing coverage, eliminates the limitations of offshoring and traditional QA labs, and speeds time-to-market for websites, mobile apps, IoT, and in-store experiences.

**Thousands of leading companies** — including Ford, Fox, Google, and Dow Jones — rely on Applause as a best practice to deliver high-quality digital experiences that customers love.

Learn more at: [www.applause.com](http://www.applause.com)