

# Meet Fetch Club Shop for trainer-approved products adored by dogs!

*As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Caroline Stronkhorst, founder of Fetch Club Shop about making dog trainer-recommended products accessible to all owners, getting your hands dirty and empowering people to do the best by the their dogs.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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12 October 2023

## What was the catalyst for launching Fetch Club Shop?

A little rescue dog called Monty! We welcomed him into our family 4 years ago and after some time to settle in, we embarked on a training journey with him. Working with a company called Fetch Club, he grew in confidence (as did we!) and we forged a relationship with the owner, Jen.

Jen runs a busy boarding, training and walking business with a handful of colleagues. One recurring question that clients ask is: “Where can I buy that lead/collar/toy/training treat that you use?”.

I have a background in retail and my partner worked in marketing so we felt it was a problem we could solve. *Fetch Club Shop* was born!

Tell me about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

Fetch Club Shop is predominantly an ecommerce business (with a small physical space) that sells dog supplies.

“Use what the trainers use” has been our approach since day one and every product we make, stock and sell goes through this filter. If it’s not something that a professional dog trainer would use and recommend, you won’t find it at Fetch Club Shop.

Our headline launch products were Biothane (“vegan leather”) leads and long lines. We now have 100+ SKU’s across leads, collars, toys, treats, grooming and essentials.

Customers typically discover us through search engines and recommendations. Our main paid ad channel is with Google and that supports the organic search traffic. We did have a TikTok that received 500k+ views and drove a good number of sales for a particular product. Something we have tried to replicate with varied success!

## How has the business evolved since its launch?

It’s fair to say that the business today is not how we thought it would look when we sat in a pub, clicked “Publish” on Shopify and cheers’d in March 2022.

The plan was to serve the clients of the sister training business (hence the less than imaginative name!), see what sells and start to sell further afield through Instagram content and the like.

Now, it is 95% non-local clients with parcels being opened from Aberdeen to Truro and a growing international demand.

## How are you funded?

We are self-funded by a Directors Loan to the company. Shopify makes the barrier to entry incredibly low for ecommerce brands but investing in stock, ads, retention marketing automations (think email flows based on buying behaviour) and more can quickly add up!

## What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

A new team member joined us in January 2023 that changed everything! Giving birth in month 10 of a new business was always going to present its own challenges.

Ability to focus time, effort and energy on the business largely disappeared for many months. Communicating clearly and setting expectations with those involved in the business has kept the wheels turning without (too much) frustration!

Having to prioritise what's really important for the business this year and communicating that effectively has been the solution to a lovely "problem".

Communication and prioritisation are probably relevant themes for most challenges that SME's face!

## How does Fetch Club Shop answer an unmet

## need?

There are some amazing independent dog businesses in the UK and it's an ecosystem we're proud to be a part of. Our role in this market is to guide dog owners to products that are recommended by qualified trainers.

Too many products stocked in your big box pet stores are not good for your dog. Rawhide is a prime example of this! I truly believe that most people want what is best for their dog. Best doesn't need to be more expensive but guidance is so important.

That's where we come in. Whether it be a new lead, natural treats or a training toy, buying from Fetch Club Shop gives customers the peace of mind that they are doing the best by their dog.

## What's in store for the future?

We're on a mission to make dog trainer-recommended products accessible to all. Growing our physical retail and wholesale side of the business is a top priority in the next 12 months as we continue to push ahead with our online expansion. There are an estimated 11 million dogs in the UK alone so we have some work to do!

## What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Firstly, just start! There will never be the perfect time to "launch" so just get on with it! Version 1 doesn't need to, and won't, be perfect. Customers will forgive you and you will improve quickly.

Get your hands dirty with every marketing channel, supplier relationships, customer service and product development. There is no quicker way to

learn about what is and isn't working than that!

## And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

A young baby means that mornings are early and nights are often late! I've learnt to not be too harsh on myself when it comes to when I'm working and focus on output instead. That's a rule that can be quite hard to stick to but is fundamental.

7am-9am has turned out to be a very good time to handle some of the business admin. Getting ahead on supplier emails, email content planning and planning sets the day up for me. This is the time to get the top priorities ticked off as days can often be unpredictable!

The rest of the day is taken up with actions relating to marketing (new creative, live campaign optimisation etc), customer experience and fulfilment. Royal Mail has a 5pm parcel deadline so we do too!

Caroline Stronkhorst is the founder of *Fetch Club Shop*.

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