



Who We Serve Best

The clients we serve best are like Courtney & Dan Smith. The Smiths have three kids and a golden retriever named Shadow, and they live about 15 minutes from BARK. Shadow is a best friend to the three youngsters. Courtney will never forget how patient Shadow was when her youngest was learning to walk; Shadow let the baby pull on his coat without protest. Because Shadow means so much, Courtney & Dan are picky on who they allow to care for him.

Our best clients, like Courtney & Dan, want one main thing from us: high-quality service for Shadow.

What We Serve Them

This level of service means two things: 1) Courtney & Dan never worry when Shadow is at BARK, and 2) when the Smiths ask themselves if they are providing the quality-of-life Shadow deserves, their answer is an emphatic *Yes!*

Everyone has heard about a friend or relative who once lodged their pet at “Such and Such” facility, only to find out their pet was neglected or mistreated. Our clients never worry when their pets are with us. They know from experience that our facility always is clean and safe. They know our team members are well-trained and professional. And they know we truly care.

Our clients are confident that they are providing the life their pet deserves because we educate them on their pets’ needs and how our services help them meet those needs. When a client arrives to pick up their dog and his tongue is hanging out of that doggy grin, they know he’s fulfilled.

How We Serve Them

We conduct ourselves with integrity. We are transparent in our treatment of the pets in our care, we are fair in our pricing, and we are honest when a mistake has been made. When we tell a client, a teammate, or a manager we will do something, we do it. We are not afraid to ask or to be asked “why?”. When Dan asks why we charge for enhancements, Sarah knows the answer, but what is more, she believes in the value BARK provides.

At BARK, excellent customer service is a state of mind. We treat every client (and team member) as a human being with tremendous intrinsic value. This means we are kind and respectful. Always. We may not be able to give the client what they want, but we treat them courteously. We greet our regular pets and clients by name and with a smile.

The Client Experience

Every day, as Courtney rushes out the door, Shadow looks up at her with those big, brown eyes as if to say, “can I go with you, Mom?” And Courtney can’t bear it anymore.

Courtney asks some of her friends and coworkers who have dogs what they have done. They recommend BARK! Gretchen pulls up the BARK Instagram and shows Courtney some of the photos of cute puppies playing. The glowing recommendations from her friends - especially Gretchen - make Courtney feel like she can trust us, too.

When she visits our website, she learns that our daycare program involves enrichment activities to ensure that dogs get mental exercise as well as physical. She knows that Shadow is a smart and energetic dog, so she’s excited for him to have that stimulation. She learns that the daycare schedule is crafted intentionally to meet the dogs’ needs, including scheduled rest periods. The schedule reassures her that we are committed to the dogs’ well-being.

On the website, she requests a tour. She sees from the leadership team biographies that we are well-qualified professionals who love animals, which helps her to feel like she knows us a little bit better, and she can trust us a little bit more. And she finds a base price, so she has a feeling for how much it will cost. She feels a little bit of tension about the cost, but when she returns to the home page, she sees a dog having a great time, chasing a ball with his tongue hanging out, and her heart melts.

After applying for Shadow online, Courtney receives a call from our Canine Concierge, Sarah. Sarah makes friendly conversation about Shadow, which helps Courtney feel like Sarah actually cares about her dog and is not simply trying to fill up the facility. Sarah gives Courtney a brief overview of the evaluation, and it makes Courtney feel a lot more comfortable knowing that all dogs are evaluated before they are admitted. Courtney’s sister had a precious little Cocker Spaniel that was injured in an incident at a dog park, so the evaluations are non-negotiable for her. Courtney also schedules a tour during Shadow’s evaluation. Shortly after they finished their phone call, Courtney

receives a link to complete the new family paperwork, which she does, and she appreciates the convenience of filling the paperwork on her own schedule.

When they arrive, Courtney and Shadow find the parking lot clean and well-kept. When she enters, a client relationship advocate, Dave, in the lobby makes eye contact, smiles, and welcomes her to BARK. It makes her feel like a friend, and not simply another dollar. The lobby is quiet, but not awkwardly silent. She notices that the lobby has a pleasant smell, not overpowering like it is masking something, but slight and pleasant. It makes her feel comfortable and at ease.

As she and Dave approach each other, Dave asks, “are you Mrs. Smith and Shadow?” Courtney could hardly believe he knew who they were. Dave’s preparation, attention to detail, and caring make her feel important and demonstrate to her that we go the extra mile.

When the manager, Anna, arrives to take Shadow for his evaluation, she explains to Courtney why we do the evaluation, how we do it, and what we observe. Courtney always hated taking tests, and she feels a little anxious about this evaluation. She’s afraid to ask, but needs to know: “what happens if Shadow fails his evaluation?” It’s a fear that many new clients have – the fear that their fur baby is not “good enough” for daycare. “Oh, no no no!” Anna explains, “it’s not a pass/fail test. It’s an evaluation to determine what is the best way forward for Shadow. And I’m sure that he’ll do great!” It was like someone pumped the oxygen back into the room as Courtney felt her anxiety fade away.

Seeing Anna take Shadow, a BARK Ranger, Nestor, approaches Courtney, introduces himself, and asks if she is ready for her tour. During the tour, Nestor takes care to ask Courtney about her pets and her family. In this way, Nestor continues to nurture the budding relationship Courtney has with BARK.

During their tour, Courtney sees several options for suites and a variety of enhancements. She begins to think we’ve thought of everything. She particularly likes how clean the entire facility is; even the laundry room is neater than hers at home! Still, Nestor does not hide the occasional mess that exists in a pet care facility, which helps Courtney to know that she is not being shown the gilded façade, but we actually maintain an exceptionally clean and neat facility. She has no doubt that we can and will take excellent care of Shadow.

As they pass through the Hub, Courtney sees a couple of Rangers, Bree and Taylor, chatting and laughing as they were cleaning up from breakfast. Courtney wonders if the team members truly like working here as much as it appears. She asks Nestor, “How do you like working here?” “Oh, I love it. What’s not to love about getting to work with dogs every day?” Courtney wasn’t

satisfied, “Well, sure, but it’s not all fun and games, right? Don’t you have to pick up the poop, too? And do you ever have a problem with your coworkers or your boss?” Nestor laughs, “Yes, there definitely are dirty and difficult parts of the job, but our leadership team does a really good job of balancing our work so nobody gets stuck doing the crappy work all the time – pardon the pun!” Courtney laughs, and she grows more comfortable as she feels how relaxed and honest Nestor is. He continues, “And no group of people is without conflict, but we all love and believe in what we do. So, when we do have a problem, we make sure to fix it ASAP so that it doesn’t impact our guests or our clients.” Courtney finds herself thinking that this is the kind of place she would love to work. “Forget Shadow, can I come hang out with y’all?!” They both laugh.

When they went outside to see the yards, Courtney loved seeing all of the dogs running around and having a great time. She could imagine Shadow running around right along with them. She knows that Shadow will love it, and as she departs, she knows that this is the place for Shadow.

When Courtney returns at the end of the day to pick up Shadow, she observes the team interacting with other clients. They are greeted with eye-contact and a smile; many are greeted by name. While Courtney is waiting, a gentle lady with white hair parks in the handicapped spot by the door. As soon as he sees her, Dave comes to meet this woman at the door. “Mrs. Tillson,” he says, “every week you inspire me, and I can only hope that at your age I’m still driving my dog to the groomer like you do Pumpkin!” Courtney is moved to see that the team truly treats all of our clients as valued friends and was not turning on the charm for her only because she was a prospective customer.

Anna comes out to talk to Courtney about Shadow’s evaluation. She explains to Courtney what she saw during the evaluation, and then recommends him for the high energy, large dog play group. Courtney can’t help but smile because she is proud of Shadow for such a good report.

Several weeks after Shadow starts daycare, Courtney and her family are traveling out of town to visit family for a long weekend, so Shadow needs a place to stay. When Courtney drops off Shadow at daycare, Dave helps her to make a lodging reservation. She also asks if Shadow could get a bath, brush out, and nail trim while he is staying with us. Dave informs her that with her membership discount, she saves money on the spa package. It makes her feel that her membership was a good investment.

One day, Dan brought in Shadow for the first time. Courtney had told him all about BARK, and he had seen how much Shadow seems to love going, so he already held us in high regard. However, he was a bit skeptical that we could be as wonderful as Courtney and Shadow seemed to think.

When Dan comes in, Dave looks up, makes eye contact, and welcomes him to BARK. Then he looks at the dog and asks, "Is that Shadow?" Dan is impressed that they know his dog well enough to recognize him even without Courtney; recognition makes Dan feel like his family are valued clients. Shadow is excited to see the daycare Ranger, Mike, and Mike responds with affection toward Shadow. Dan further realizes that Dave is not trained to pretend to love his dog, but that the team at BARK truly love Shadow.

Dan leaves impressed with BARK and convinced of what Courtney and Shadow have been telling him for weeks: BARK is a wonderful place for Shadow.

That summer, Courtney and Dan are taking the kids on a cross-country vacation. They are going to be out of town for two weeks, so they need lodging for Shadow and Snowball. Courtney knows that Shadow loves BARK, so she's not worried about him. But she is a bit apprehensive about leaving Snowball. In the past, they simply asked a friend to come check on Snowball every other day or so. That way Snowball got to stay at home. But Courtney has been so impressed with BARK that she wants to give us a try.

When Courtney drops off Shadow at daycare, she asks Dave to book lodging for both pets for two weeks next month. Dave chats with Courtney about their vacation, then he shares how excited he is to meet Snowball for the first time. Dave explains our long-term stay policy, and Courtney is glad that we are thinking about how to keep Shadow from getting lonely and antsy.

Dave can sense how worried Courtney is about Snowball and suggests one of our communication enhancements to give Courtney more updates. "That would be great! I totally forgot that you have those options!" Courtney adds the photo update package for the first few days of Snowball's stay, and she feels so much better knowing she'll be able to see how Snowball is doing.

Later, while loading up the car, Courtney starts to wonder if the photo updates of Snowball might have been a bad idea. "Dan, what if I can tell that she's scared? It's only going to make me feel worse for leaving her like this..." "Sweetheart, you know that the folks at BARK would never let that happen. Snowball is going to have a better time than we are! You'll see."

On the first day of their trip, Courtney receives a photo update from Snowball. She can see how relaxed Snowball is, and the note tells her that Snowball comes to the front of her condo any time a team member walks by. Looking at those photos, Courtney could feel the stress in her shoulders melt away. Courtney is able to relax – really relax – and enjoy her vacation with her family (the human members, that is).

Our Team

Our team members enjoy working at BARK for more than cute puppies. Our team members embrace the opportunities to grow and learn, not only how to do their current job, but how to succeed at their next job (at BARK or elsewhere). Our team members appreciate the positive atmosphere and recognize that BARK is a positive place because we choose to make it so. Our team members are recognized for their hard work and diligence.

Our team is made up of members who are eager to learn, bring a positive attitude to BARK every day, do not fear hard work, and take their responsibilities seriously. Our culture is one of continuous improvement. We do this by measuring our performance, training continuously, and welcoming all feedback. We are able to provide top-notch service and maintain a neat and clean facility because we are not afraid to work hard. We are able to do our jobs well because we know the other members of our team are doing their jobs well. And we compensate our team members according to their growth, hard work, and performance.

Why We Do What We Do

BARK exists because people love their pets and want their pets to have fulfilling lives. But pets need more than food, water, and the occasional belly rub to thrive. Dogs need social interaction with other dogs, they need exercise – both physical and mental – and sometimes they need a little extra attention. Pet parents want all of these things for their pets, but the reality is that they cannot always provide them due to other demands on their life. No pet parent should feel guilt or shame for working hard to provide for their family – two-legged and four-legged. No pet parent should question if they are failing their pet because they travel most weekends for their daughter’s horse shows, or for their son’s travel ball tournaments. Pet parents should have a support system that enables them to provide to their pet the fulfilling life that their pet deserves. BARK exists to provide that support.

Personally, I love the challenge of building and growing a business that has a positive impact on the community. Customer service, as discussed above, is a big part of that impact. The other - and arguably more important - aspect of having a positive impact on the community is the opportunity to be a part of the growth and development of our team members. There are few things more rewarding than helping a team member to exceed their own expectations.

I've had a strong connection to God's creatures my entire life. My father is a veterinarian and my parents have run an animal hospital in the Bradfordville community for more than 30 years! It's safe to say it's in my blood.



The first dog that was really mine was a little stray that we found when I was about 8 years old. He was hiding under a trailer, and he was in rough shape. I begged my parents to let me keep him, we nursed him back to health, and he became my best friend. I named him Scruffy because that's exactly what he

was. And he was the best friend a little boy could want. He shared the bed with me until I went off to college. And when my parents called to say that it was time to let him go, I booked a flight home right away to say 'goodbye.'



Now I have little ones of my own, and we have a black lab named Bo who is so patient and so sweet with them. He truly is a big teddy bear. When they were infants, he'd get down on the floor with them for tummy time. When they started crawling, he'd lay there and let them use him as a jungle gym. And as toddlers, he endured the ear-pulling, tail-tugging, and paw-stomping with barely a whimper.

It is for the Scruffy's and Bo's of our community that I want BARK to be a special place. Every little boy's and girl's best friend should have a life as fulfilling as Scruffy and Bo have made mine.

This is the BARK Vision, and I'm excited for you to find your place in it!