

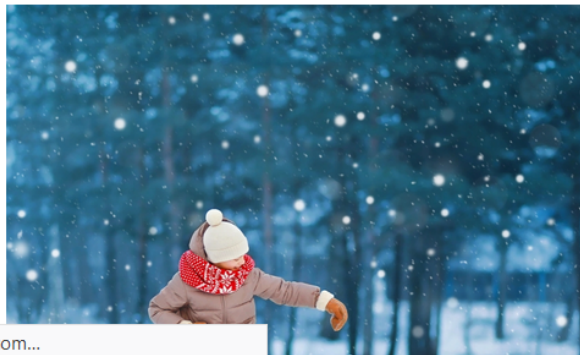
## Gear Gains Ground

Collars, leashes and harnesses that marry fashion and technology, in addition to improving pets' lives, are a hit with dog owners.

BY SANDY CHEBAT



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Though collars, leashes and harnesses are not a consumable product poised for repeat purchases, pet specialty retailers and manufacturers report steady, if not rising, sales in this category.

"We see the sales of these products growing," said Billy Davison, national sales manager for Unleashed Life in Springfield, Mo.

Mary Morgan, branding, marketing and communications representative for Allure Pet Products, maker of HuggleHounds, in Denville, N.J., agreed.

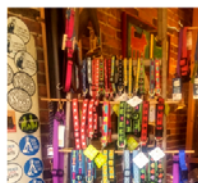
"Consumers are demanding the marriage of design, durability and functionality that deliver products that serve their needs while wrapped in the design distinction that's driven consumer categories from fashion to home style," she said.

A move that was a year in the making, [HuggleHounds](#), a division of Denville, N.J.-based Allure Pet Products, collaborated with Cortina Pet Soul in Italy to exclusively bring its products to the U.S. Designed in Italy and manufactured in the EU with flexible, durable material that is easy to clean, Cortina harnesses feature the custom Fit & Go locking system to provide quick, simple, secure adjustments and harness closure for dogs of all body types, according to the manufacturer.

Other features include seamless construction to eliminate rubbing or irritation and a reflective finish to improve nighttime visibility. Users can choose from four colors and six sizes to fit dogs from 9 to 65 pounds.

### Four Tips for Making Displays Pop

Though collars, leashes and harnesses are not everyday purchases, like consumable pet products, pet specialty retailers can still pique a shopper's interest with the right merchandising strategies. Here are four ways retailers can visually boost interest in these products through displays:



#### 2. Work with the colors

"Think 'fashion' [and] display color groupings and like-designed material to prevent a jumble of harnesses and leashes all clumped together on a display wall," said Mary Morgan, branding, marketing and communications representative for Allure Pet Products, maker of HuggleHounds, in Denville, N.J.