

The State of Pets

Unpacking America's Pet Preferences

October 2024 • The Harris Poll Thought Leadership Practice





Methodology

This report is based on a custom survey that was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll between May 24 to 26, among 2,125 adults aged 18 and over.

This research comprises of 321 Gen Z (ages 18-27), 662 Millennials (ages 28-43), 537 Gen X (ages 44-59), and 605 Boomers (ages 60 and older). This research is also broken down by pet owners, comprising of 1,594 pet owners, 1,218 dog owners and 934 cat owners, 139 rabbit owners, 194 bird owners, 307 fish owners, and 531 who are not pet owners. Additionally, this research comprises of 738 “All-in Pawrents,” who are pet owners that responded “Strongly Agree” when asked to respond to the statement “My pet(s) is/are like my own child.”





Executive Summary: Part I

Modern Pawternity: The Life of a Pet Parent in 2024

- To pet parents, there is no difference in their eyes: 82% of pet owners say, “My pet(s) is/are like my own child.”
- Pet owners hope to feel validation and understanding from others, with almost three in four (72%) saying, “I talk to other people about my pet(s) as if it were my own child.”
- Pet parenthood is acknowledged as legitimate parenting: Over half of Americans (52%) say pet owners should get just as much recognition as parents of children and foster parents.
- Gen Z takes the lead in heavy spending on pets, with over \$6k in annual expenses, with three in 10 reporting pet-related debt.

The Younger the Parent, the More Spoiled the Pet

- Two-thirds of pet owners (66%) have or have considered getting their pets a GPS tracker, or even have or have considered designing a separate part of their house specifically for their pets (63%), the latter being done or considered by three in four of Gen Z+Millennial pet parents (74%).
- The younger pet parents are willing to tip the scales to their pets, as six in 10 (60%) of Gen Z/Millennial pet owners say “I prioritize spending on my pets over myself,” and seven in 10 (70%) have a separate part of their budget just for their pets.
- Pet parents are willing to go far and wide for their pets, with two-thirds (67%) saying they would give up alcohol for a year to have another year with their pets — jumping up to 80% of Gen Z pet owners.
- A third of Gen Z and a third of Millennial pet owners would go as far as to give up \$100,000 for another year with their pets, with over half of Gen Z owners (51%) saying they would even give up a year of their life if they could.



Executive Summary: Part II

One Paw at a Time: Pets are Stepping out into Society

- Pet owners want to see the societal acceptance of pets match their level, with 80% saying “Pets should have access to pet-friendly shops and establishments,” including 90% of All-in Pawrents.
- Three-quarters of pet owners (75%) are equally ready for the spaces to exist, saying “I wish there were more pet-friendly places to take my pet with me.”
- Almost six in 10 (58%) of pet owners want the option to travel with their pets, stating “I would love it if I could take my pet on more plane rides.”
- Pet owners also see the value in their pets spending time in nature, with similar amounts saying their pets should be allowed in more public parks and green spaces (79%) and that they would take their pet outside more if they could (76%).

All-in Pawrents: When Your Pet is Your Primary Focus

- Over one-third of All-in Pawrents (38%) say that they would give up \$100,000 for another year of their pet's life, and almost two-thirds (65%) said they would give up three years of vacations instead.
- All-in Pawrents are not going to leave any stone unturned or any call unanswered for their pets, with 77% being interested in 24/7 on-call veterinary services, and seven in 10 (70%) finding interest in a medical drug that makes their pet live longer.
- Creating spaces for their pets is what All-in Pawrents will do. Almost nine in 10 (87%) want more pet-first spaces to exist in their community, and over eight in 10 (82%) say, “There should be more events in my area that are centered around pets.”

The Rise of Pawrents: Fur Centric Families



Fur babies are family in America, and pet parents are seeking equal recognition for their responsibilities

82%

Pet Owners

“My pet is like my own child.”



72%

Pet Owners

“I talk to other people about my pet(s) as if it were my own child.”

93% All-in Pawrents
80% Millennials
78% Urban

55%

Pet Owners

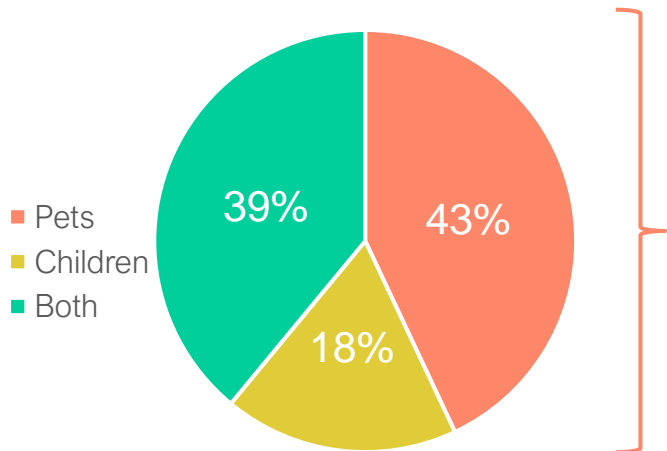
“Pet owners should get as much **recognition** as parents of children, foster parents, etc.”

74% All-in Pawrents
64% Hispanic
62% Millennials
57% Gen X



'Fur Families' are the preferred lifestyle choice over having children in 2024, with pet parenthood having a strong foundation in American livelihoods

If you had to choose, which would you prefer in the future?



Why would you prefer having pets over children?

[Gen Z/Millennials]

1.	Pets are easier to take care of than children	43%
2.	Pets are less of a financial strain than children	42%
3.	Pets are less of a responsibility than children	39%
4.	I am not in the right part of my life to take care of a child	35%
5.	I prefer to choose to be child-free	32%
6.	Raising a pet gives me more fulfillment than raising a child	22%
7.	Pets are not a lifelong commitment	13%
8.	Other reason	7%



'Pawrents' seek community and understanding in each other

69%

Pet Owners

"I seek out others who view their pet(s) the same way that I do."

82% All-in Pawrents
79% Millennials
77% Urban
76% Hispanic

61%

Pet Owners

"I don't have time for people who don't understand my love for my pet(s)."

77% All-in Pawrents
67% Millennials
66% Hispanic
66% LGBTQIA+



Despite pets being in pet owners' lives for finite amounts of time, the actions that they would be willing to take for them are vast

63%

Pet Owners

"I would **give years of my life** to my pet(s) if they could live longer."

82% All-in Pawrents
72% Gen Z
70% Hispanic
69% Millennials

47%

Pet Owners

"I would **give my pet(s) my inheritance** if I could."

64% All-in Pawrents
60% Hispanic
55% Millennials
52% Gen Z



Rodent owners are the most willing to sacrifice themselves for their pets among all owner types.

71% "I would give years of my life to my pet(s) if they could live longer."

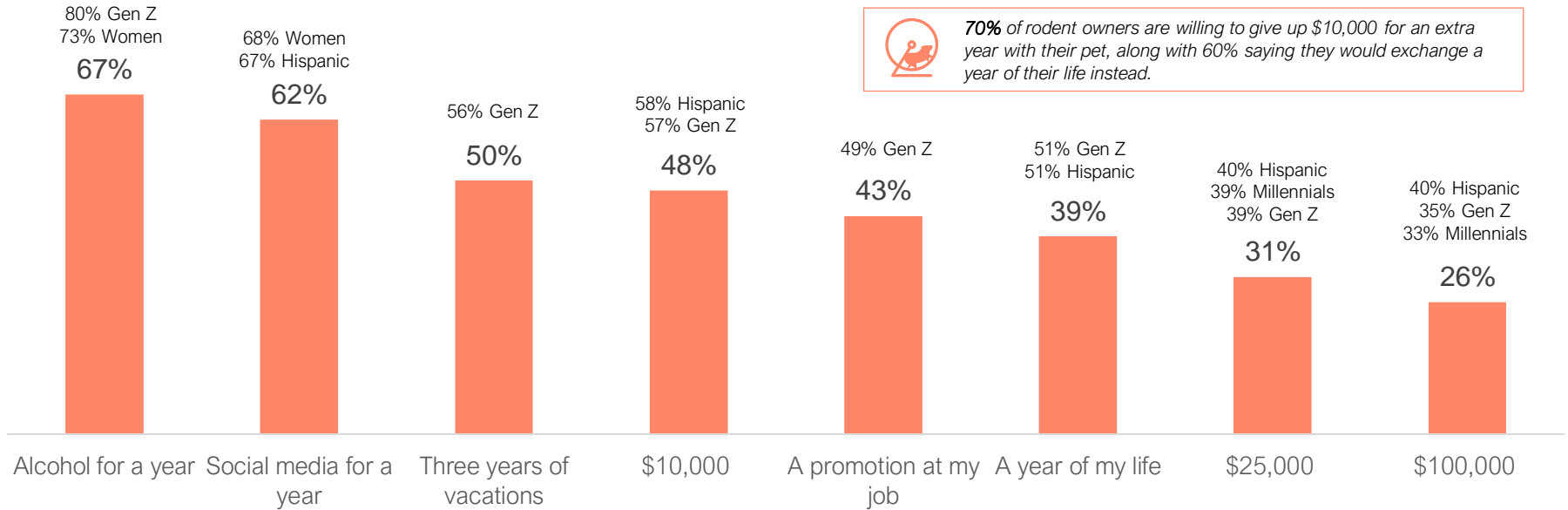
69% "I would give my pet(s) my inheritance if I could."

The Younger the Parent,
the More Spoiled the Pet



Gen Z and Hispanic pet owners outclass all other groups of pet owners in how far they would go to have one more year with their pets

I would give up ___ for my pet(s) to have another year of life.





'Pawrents' find themselves more willing to budget, spend, and splurge on their pets versus themselves — especially Millennial and urban pet owners

64%

Pet Owners

"I have a **separate part of my budget** just for my pet(s)."

76% All-in Pawrents
73% Urban
72% Millennials
71% People of color

54%

Pet Owners

"I **prioritize spending on my pets over myself.**"

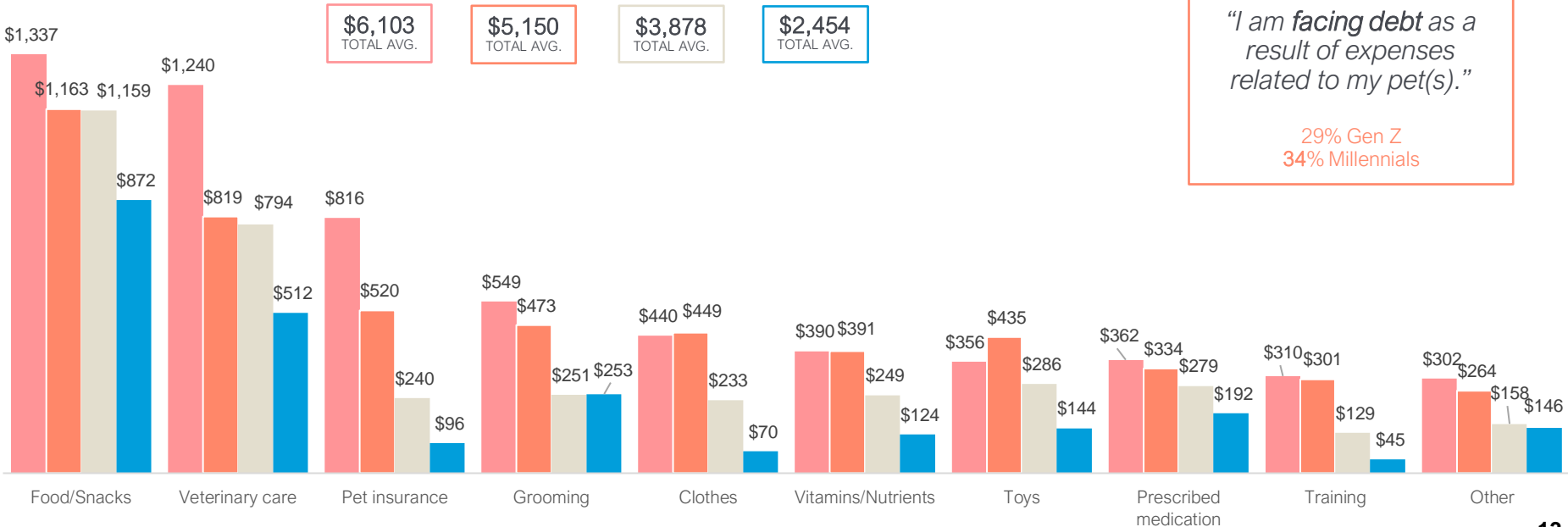
72% All-in pawrents
63% Millennials
62% Urban



Gen Z takes the lead in heavy spending on pets, with over \$6k in annual expenses, with three in 10 reporting pet-related debt

Average annual spend among pet owners

■ Gen Z ■ Millennials ■ Gen X ■ Boomers



\$6,103 TOTAL AVG.
\$5,150 TOTAL AVG.
\$3,878 TOTAL AVG.
\$2,454 TOTAL AVG.

24%
 Pet owners

"I am facing debt as a result of expenses related to my pet(s)."

29% Gen Z
 34% Millennials

PET5 For each of the following categories, how much do you approximately spend on your pet(s) on an average month? (Pet owner n=1,594) | To ensure accuracy and better reflect typical spending patterns, only values between \$0 and \$1,000 per spend item were included in the calculation.



Pet owners are splurging for their pets' quality of life; GPS collars, pet-focused home interiors, and monthly pet subscription boxes

Which of the following things have you spent or considered spending on your pet(s)?

(Summary of Have done + Have not done, but would be open to)



Purchased a pet tracker or GPS collar for safety



Designed a specific part of my home for my pet(s)



Subscribed to a monthly pet subscription box for toys and treats



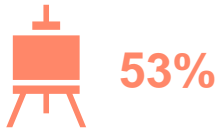
Bought a specialized pet camera or monitoring system



Gone to a bar or café specifically catered to pets



Organized a birthday party/celebration for my pet(s)



Commissioned a custom portrait or artwork of my pet



Moved to a more expensive place that allowed pets



Purchased a pet stroller or carrier for transportation



Booked my pet(s) into a pet hotel



Enrolled my pet(s) in activities



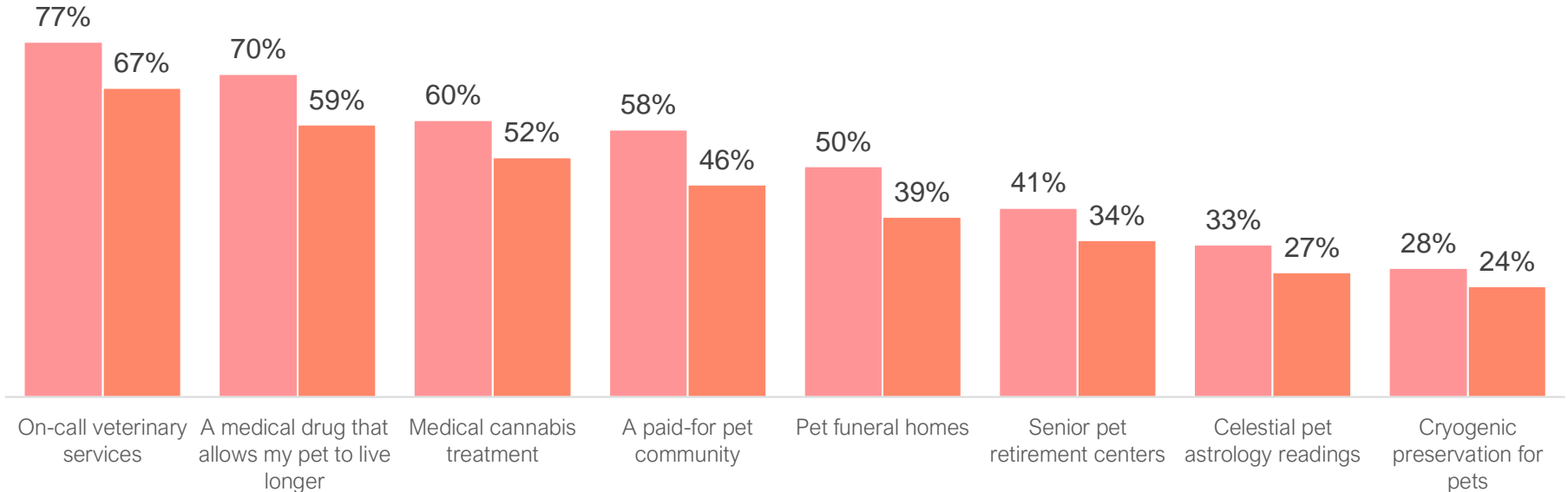
Dressed my pet(s) in designer clothing



All-in Pawrents are more interested more across the board in a variety of pet treatments compared to everyday pet owners

Which of the following pet treatments interest you?

■ Pet Owners ■ All-in Pawrents



PET9 Which of the following pet treatments interest you? (Pet owner n=1,594)

PET9 Which of the following pet treatments interest you? (All-in Pawrent n=738)

One Paw at a Time:
Pets are Stepping out into Society



Pet centricity is an emerging desire for pet owners from spaces to events

72%

Pet Owners

“I want **more pet-first spaces** to exist in my community.”

79% Millennials
77% Dog owners
73% Cat owners
69% Gen Z, Gen X

69%

Pet Owners

“There should be **more events** in my area that are **centered around pets.**”

76% Millennials
72% LGBTQIA+
69% Urban



Pet-friendly locations are what pet owners are asking for, with roughly eight in 10 wanting more places to accept their pets as valued visitors

80%

Pet Owners

“Pets should have access to
pet-friendly shops and
establishments.”

90% All-in Pawrents

75%

Pet Owners

“I wish there were
more pet-friendly places
to take my pet with me.”

85% Millennials
82% Urban
80% Dog owners



Over one-third of Gen Z/Millennial pet owners have taken their pets to retail stores or to the grocery store with them, and a quarter have flown with their pets

58%

Pet Owners

“I would love it if I could take my pet on more plane rides.”

70% Millennials
64% Gen Z
63% Dog owners

Which of the following places have you taken your pet(s) if you were allowed?

[Gen Z/Millennial pet owners]





Seeing the benefits of nature, pet owners want dedicated spaces to take their pets and give them their time in the great outdoors; all-in pawrents especially so

79%

Pet Owners

“Pets should be **allowed** in more public parks and green spaces.”

90% All-in Pawrents

76%

Pet Owners

“I would take my pet **outside** with me more often if I could.”

89% All-in Pawrents
82% Millennials
81% Dog owner

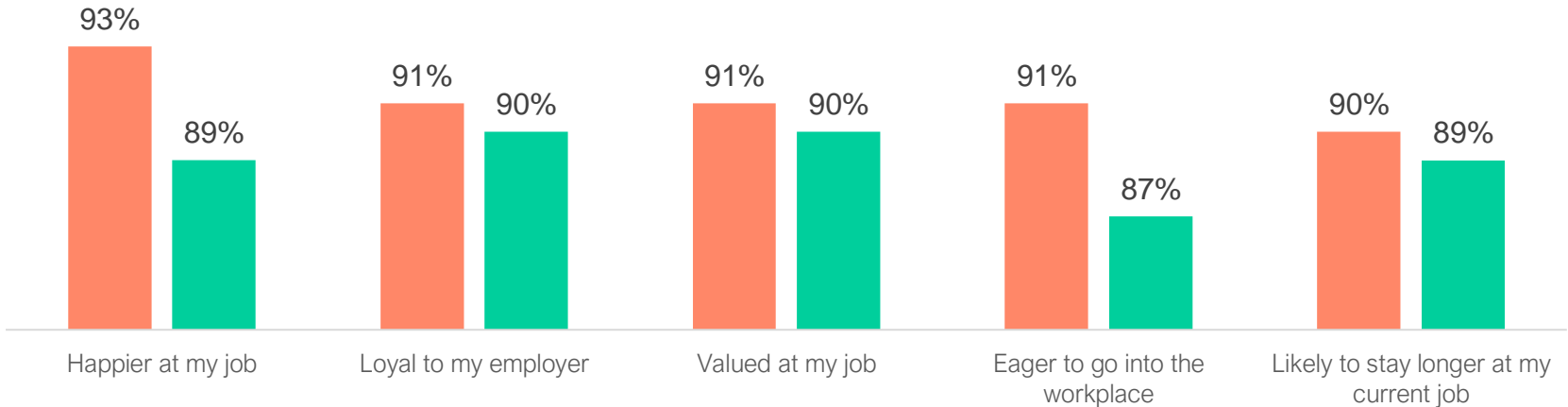


Pet owners are overwhelmingly open towards their employer allowing pets in the workplace — even if they aren't their own pets

How would you feel if your employer allowed you to bring your pet(s)/a colleague's pet(s) to work?

Top 2 Box (More/Neutral)

■ My colleague's pet(s) ■ My own pet(s)





Younger and Hispanic pet owners call for greater support from employers in balancing pet parenthood

58%

Pet Owners

“Workplaces should normalize **allowing their employees to bring pets to work.**”

72% All-in Pawrents
66% Millennials
66% Hispanic

49%

Pet Owners

“Workplaces should provide an **additional stipend in my paycheck for my pets.**”

64% Millennials
64% Hispanic
63% All-in Pawrents
56% Gen Z

46%

Pet Owners

“Workplaces should **give leave** for getting new pets.”

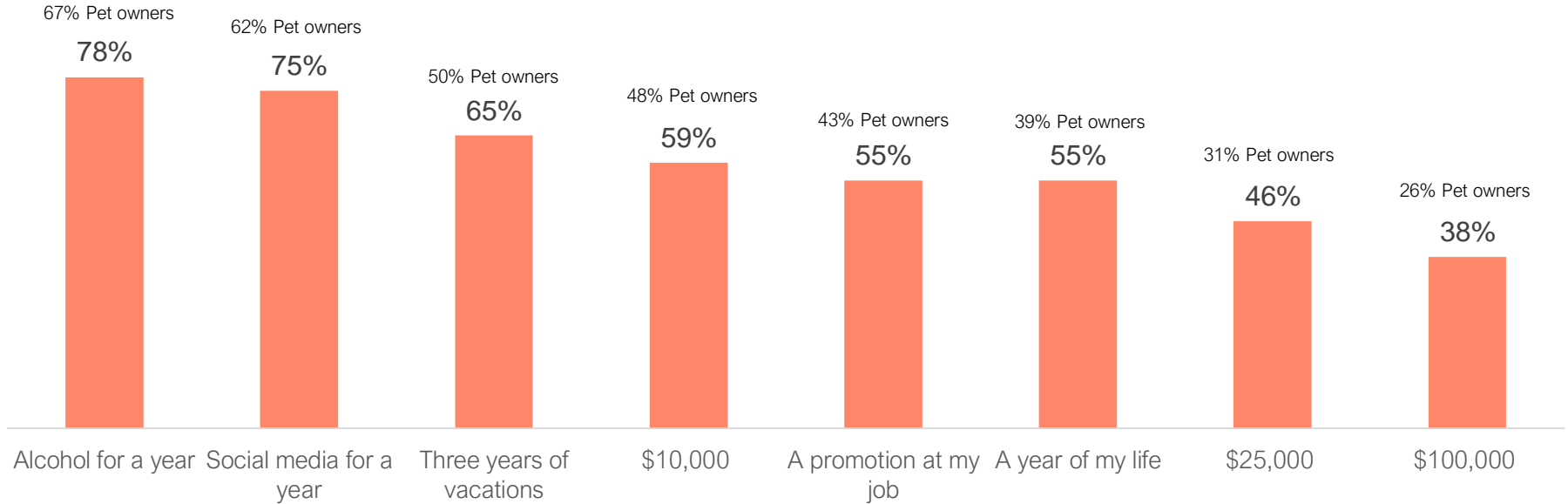
58% Millennials
57% All-in Pawrents
56% Hispanic

All-in Pawrents: When Your Pet is Your Primary Focus



All-in Pawrents are ready to give up big to get another year with their pets, with over one-third willing to give up \$100k and two-thirds okay with losing vacations

I would give up ___ for my pet(s) to have another year of life.





All-in Pawrents are slightly more likely to have taken their pets to a number of places, with over one-third having taken them to retail and grocery stores

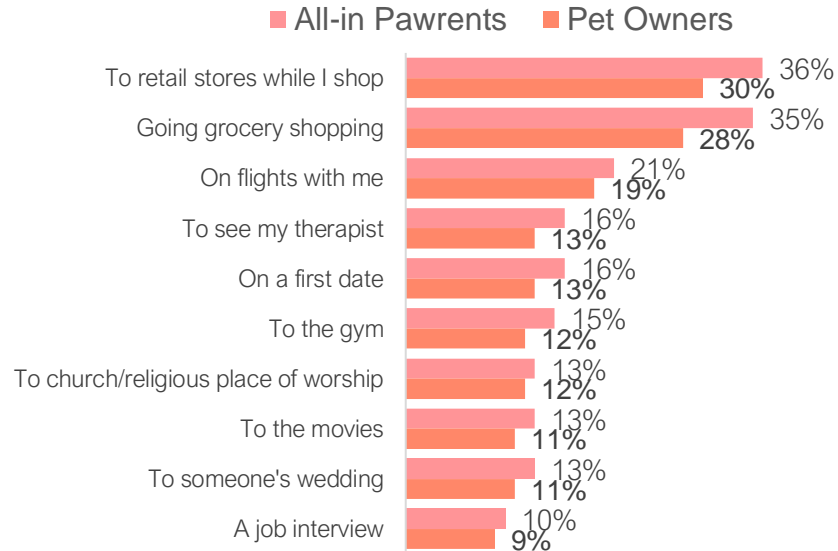
70%

All-in Pawrents

“I would love it if I could take my pet on more plane rides.”



Which of the following places have you taken your pet(s) if you were allowed?





When it comes to a pet-first focus, all-in pawrents are united in wanting to see it happen in and around their communities

87%

All-in Pawrents

“I want **more pet-first spaces** to exist in my community.”

82%

All-in Pawrents

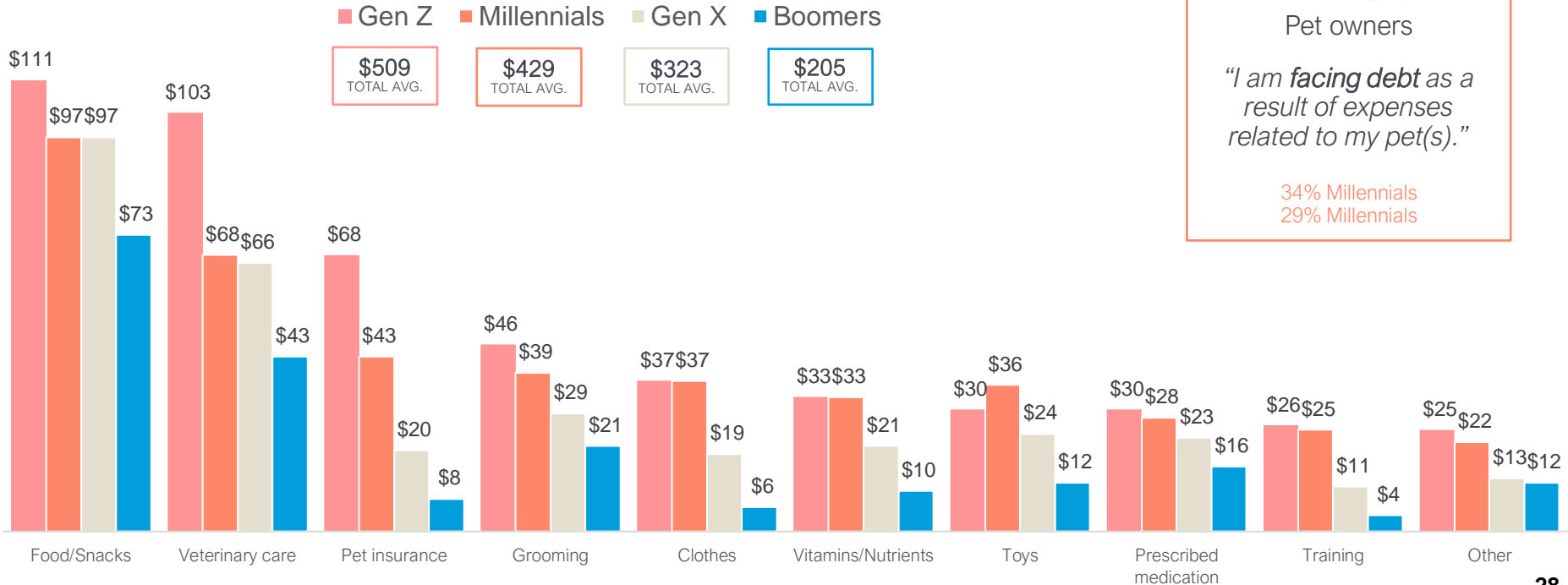
“There should be **more events** in my area that are **centered around pets.**”

Appendix



Food, vet care, and pet insurance are the biggest worries to Gen Z — the biggest pet owner spenders and even too high of spenders at times

Average monthly spend among pet owners



24%

Pet owners

"I am facing debt as a result of expenses related to my pet(s)."

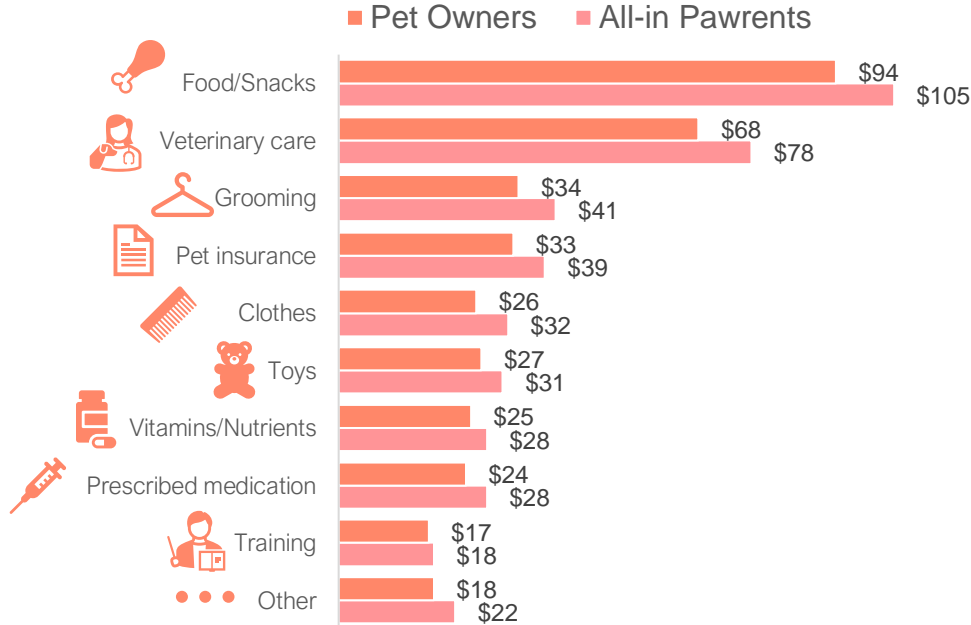
34% Millennials
29% Millennials

PET5 For each of the following categories, how much do you approximately spend on your pet(s) on an average month? (Pet owner n=1,594) | To ensure accuracy and better reflect typical spending patterns, only values between \$0 and \$1,000 per spend item were included in the calculation.



All-in Pawrents outspend other pet owners monthly, allocating more across a wide range of categories

For each of the following categories, how much do you approximately spend on your pet(s) on an average month?
(\$ spent monthly)



\$421
All-in Pawrents
(avg. monthly spend)

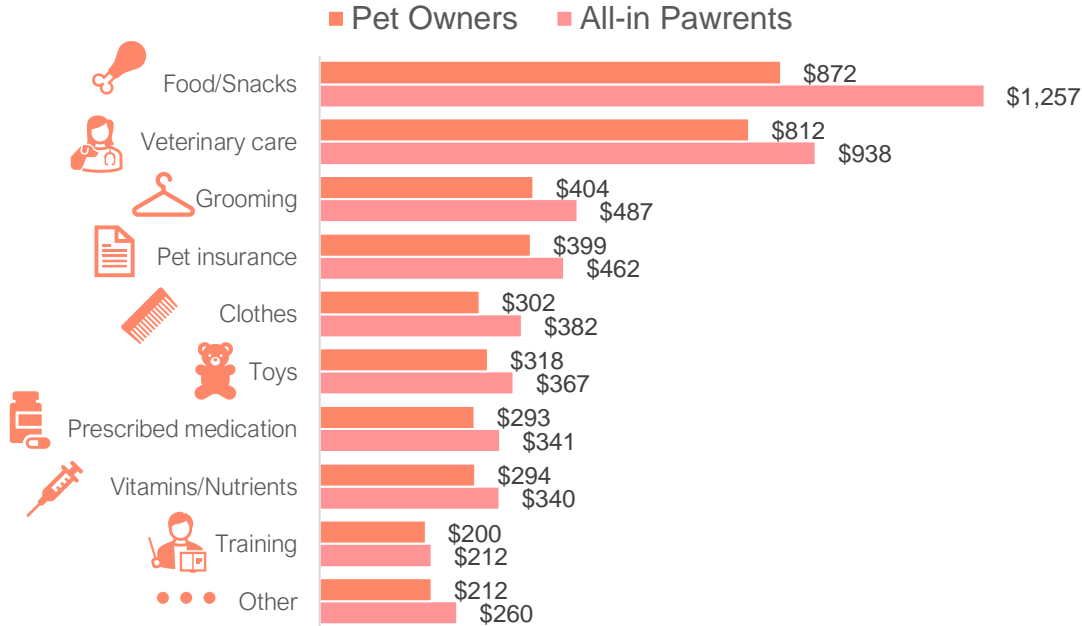
VS.

\$364
Pet Owners
(avg. monthly spend)



All-in Pawrents spend over \$5,000 annually on their pets, surpassing the average pet owner's spending by \$680 per year

For each of the following categories, how much do you approximately spend on your pet(s) on an average month?
(\$ spent annually)



\$5,046
All-in Pawrents
(avg. annual spend)

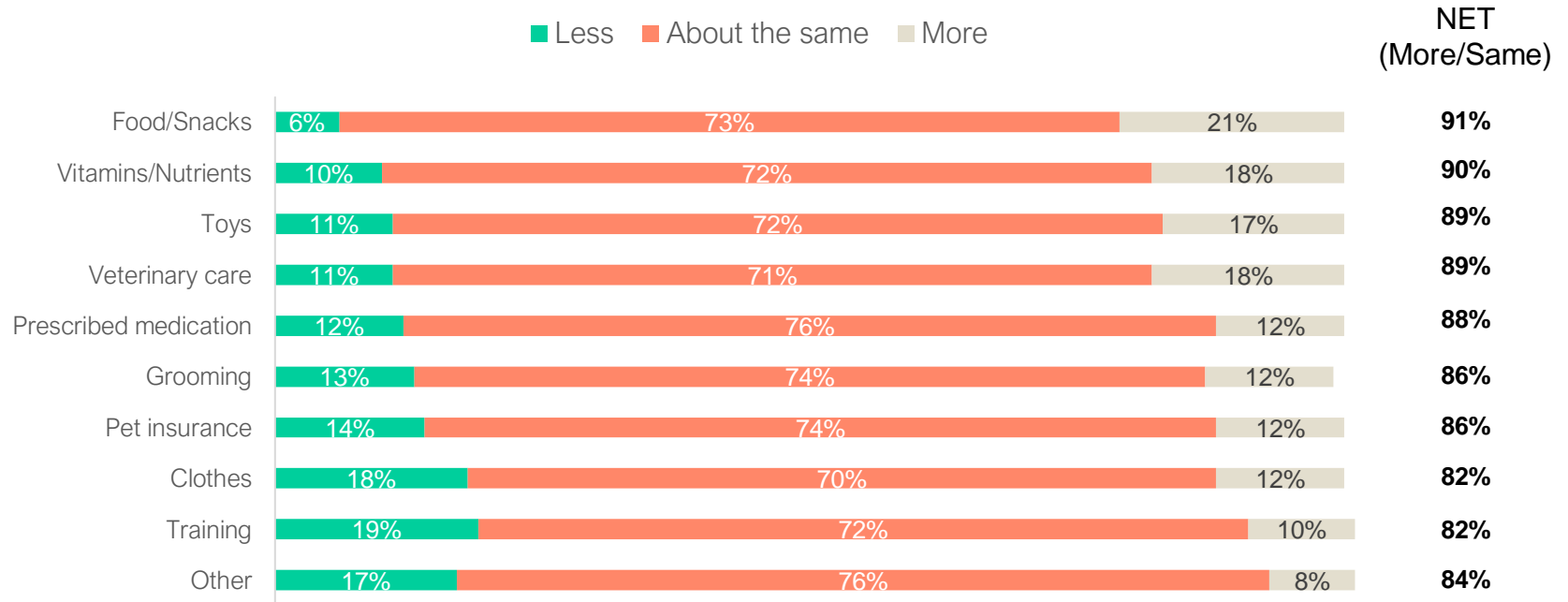
VS.

\$4,366
Pet Owners
(avg. annual spend)



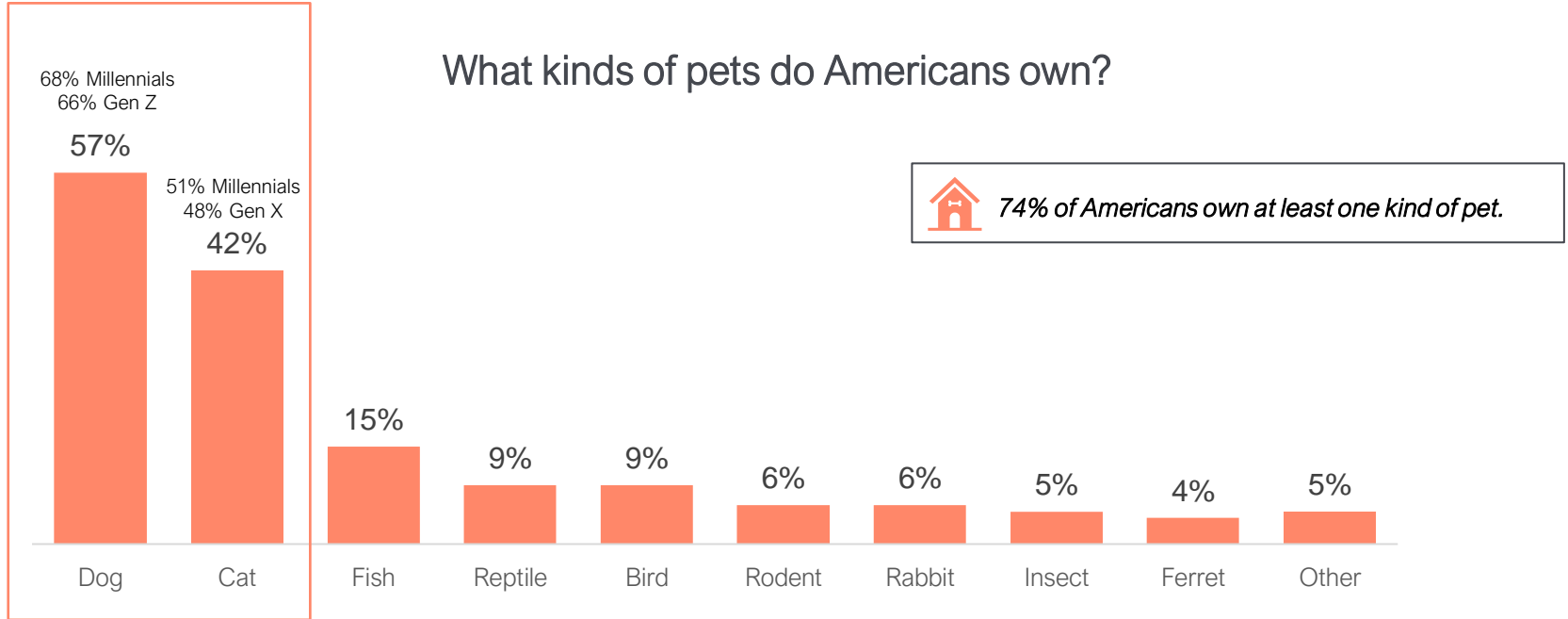
Food, vitamins, vets, and toys are what pet owners are focusing their budgets on the most

Are you planning to spend more, less, or about the same on ___ for your pet(s) over the next 12 months?





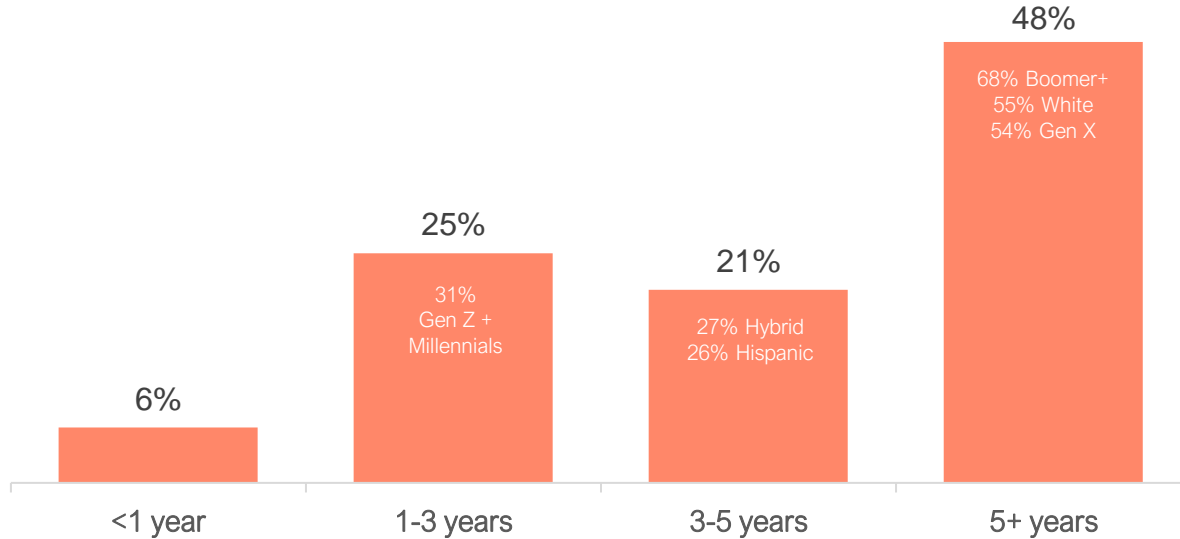
Dogs and cats are the clear crowd favorites when it comes to pet ownership





The older the generation, the longer the current pet owners

How long have you had your longest pet(s)?

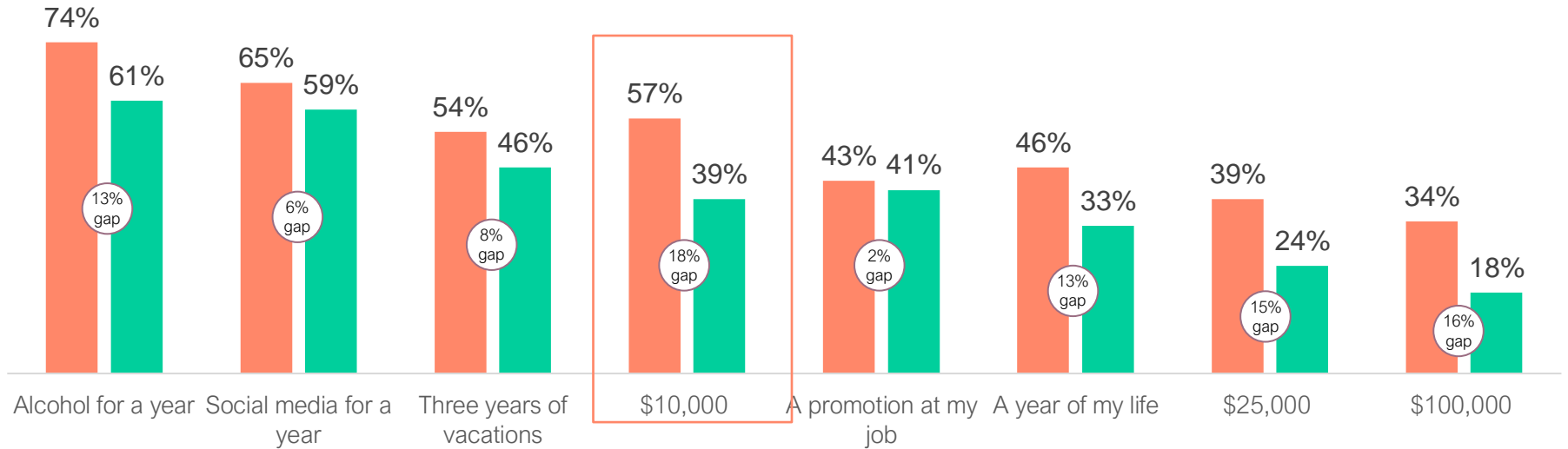




When compared, the younger generations are the more willing to sacrifice anything for their pets than their older counterparts

I would give up ___ for my pet(s) to have another year of life.

■ Gen Z+Millennials ■ Gen X+Boomers

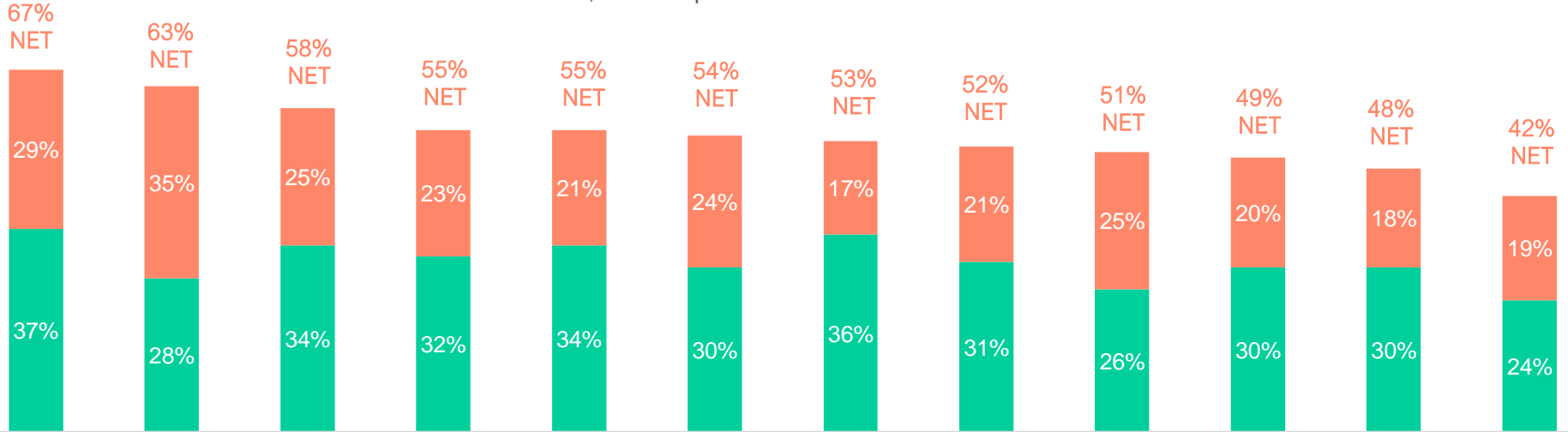




Pet owners are splurging for their pets' quality of life; GPS collars, pet-focused home interiors, and monthly pet subscription boxes

Which of the following things have you spent or considered spending on your pet(s)?

■ I have not done this, but am open to ■ I have done this



Purchased a pet tracker or GPS collar for safety Designed a specific part of my home for my pet(s) Subscribed to a monthly pet subscription box for toys and treats Bought a specialized pet camera or monitoring system Gone to a bar or cafe specifically catered to pets Organized a birthday party/celebration for my pet(s) Commissioned a custom portrait or artwork of my pet Moved to a more expensive place that allowed pets Purchased a pet stroller or carrier for transportation Booked my pet(s) into a pet hotel Enrolled my pet(s) in activities Dressed my pet(s) in designer clothing

PET8 Which of the following things have you spent or considered spending on your pet(s)? (Pet owner n=1,594)

PET14 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Pet owner n=1,594)

To learn more about this research, please reach out to...



Tim Osiecki
Director

tim.osiecki@harrispoll.com



Libby Rodney
Chief Strategy Officer

lrodney@harrispoll.com



Abbey Lunney
Managing Director

abbey.lunney@harrispoll.com

Special thanks for contributing to the research development:



Ethan Hermann



Esther Kwon

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