

“Seven Essential Qualities of a Champion Rabbit Showman”

By Ellyn Eddy

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Seven Essential Qualities of a Champion Rabbit Showman

1) Experience. Experience doesn't have to mean that you've been doing 4-H for years. In fact, many kids have won contests like rabbit showmanship, breed ID, or even ARBA royalty the very first time they entered. Why? Because they practiced, practiced, practiced! A few months of determined drilling will beat years of half-hearted effort in real competitions. When you do get a chance to compete, always look for at least three things you learned from the experience and can improve on for next time.

2) Carefulness. It was the Louisville convention, 2008. Feeling sure of myself, and enjoying some rivalry with my teammates, I got careless during the Breed ID competition. I made a couple stupid mistakes—like writing “solid” when the French Lop was obviously a broken. Well, when the awards night came, I was 2nd runner up in the royalty contest, never to be Queen. I'm not trying to make you feel sorry for me, but I just want to illustrate the importance of carefulness when you are competing. That year, the scores of the top 5 Queen contestants were less than 30 points out of 1000 apart. That's how close the competition is; that's how vital it is to proofread every application, and double-check every answer! It's fairly common for the seasoned competitor to get careless and be beat by a newcomer that really wants to win.

3. Cheerfulness. Do you enjoy doing these contests? The judges can tell! They usually know when an exhibitor is doing the contest because they care and when they are just doing it because their parents expect them to. Showmanship judges consider it refreshing to see a contestant with a relaxed, cheerful smile and a real interest in what they are doing. I know that nervousness can often crowd out the cheerfulness, but practice reminding yourself that you know what you are doing, and that you are doing something you really really enjoy! This may sound silly, but you can practice being cheerful at home. It will make your whole family cheerful—including you. This will give you confidence. The same thing happens on show day! Happy competitors make for happy judges!

4. Professionalism. Politeness and Professionalism are essential qualities for a Champion rabbit showman to possess. Their appearance is clean and tidy. Their hair is not getting in their face and they are not wearing distracting jewelry. They are wearing a white show coat or long sleeve shirt, and a black skirt or pants. They always wait till the judge finishes the question before they answer, even if they know what he or she is going to say. They speak loudly and clearly enough for the judge to

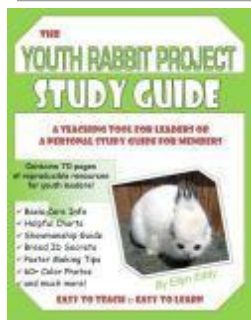


hear them, and they look the judge in the eye when they answer. They answer in plain words, expressing interest but not giggling. They aren't afraid to ask the judge to repeat the question or give them a minute to think if they need it. Don't forget that speaking clearly and looking people in the eye can be practiced at home!

5. Knowledge. Any successful showmanship participant has spent many hours studying rabbits. They are well versed in basic rabbit care, feeding, disease, body types, fur types, showroom terminology, and the breed standard for the type of rabbit that they show.

6. Confidence. Most winning contestants believe in themselves. This doesn't have to mean that they are conceited, but that they know they have worked hard and are giving it their best shot, no matter how the results turn out. Almost everyone feels nervous when they are competing, but before the butterflies get the best of you, remind yourself that you worked really hard and all you have to do is your best.

7. Determination. One of the most marked qualities of a successful individual is a dedication to their goals and a determined effort to see them through. People that want to win work to win, and often better themselves in the process!



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