



How to Get Started as a Dog Trainer

There are three great reasons to consider adding dog-training revenue to your business:

1. Dog training can generate more revenue from your existing clients and bring in revenue from new clients
2. Dog training is a fun field and there are lots of opportunities depending on where you want to focus (family pet dogs, obedience, sports, therapy, etc.) so there is a wide range of options on how to use training in your center.
3. Dog training allows you to offer your staff an additional income source and opportunity to learn more. Helping to train a staff member as a dog trainer can allow you to provide career progression to keep your employees engaged and gives them an opportunity to take on more responsibilities.

But how do you get started? First, I would recommend the resources, organizations and books listed below. All of these will provide general information on becoming a dog trainer and would be good for the potential staff member to review.

- The Association of Professional Dog Trainers
<https://apdt.com/trainers/career/> The Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT) is a professional organization of individual trainers who are committed to becoming better trainers through education **This link is all about getting started in this field and includes a FREE webinar on becoming a dog trainer.**
- *So You Want to Be A Dog Trainer*, by Nicole Wilde This is a good book on getting started in the field of dog training.

There are many schools (both online and in person), that teach fundamentals of dog training and animal learning theory. In addition, there are some good books that can help a new trainer get started. Here are a few of my favorite in person courses that can help you become a dog trainer:

- Pat Miller's Peaceable Academy - she has dog training intern programs in Maryland and NC <http://www.peaceablepaws.com>
- Gail Fisher's all Dogs Gym - she has a training academy in New Hampshire <http://www.alldogsgym.com>

You can also get online dog training classes at

- Canine Trainer's Academy <http://catchdogtrainers.com>
- The Animal Behavior College at <http://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com>

What does a dog trainer need to know? In addition to understanding dog-learning theory, a good instructor will know the history of dog training, the science behind learning, dog body language, and canine development. They should also have excellent social skills to work with a wide range of personalities and temperament types (of the people). It's not enough to be good with dogs and be able to train the four-legged friend. A good trainer needs to be able to instruct the pet parent on proper training techniques so that the dog will respond for the owner too. The Association of Professional Dog Trainers has put together a "Body of Knowledge" document that can help you assess a potential dog trainer.

What about certification? Dog training certification is an interesting topic. There are some schools that will certify people but that just means the trainers are certified BY that school and not by an independent body or certifying agency. It's not a bad thing because there is value in the schools, but there is a difference between that and national certification. National certification only exists through the Certification Council of Professional Dog Trainers <http://www.ccpdt.org>. In order to get that certification you have to have at least 300 training hours so that isn't really even anything to consider until a trainer has gained some experience.

Are there dog training associations? Yes! There are several and they offer valuable educational information. It's always worth joining at least one. Robin had been a member of APDT for 18 years and is currently on their Board of Trustees as well.

- Association of Professional Dog Trainers www.apdt.com
- Certification Council of Professional Dog Trainers www.ccpdt.org
- International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants www.iaabc.org
- Pet Professional Guild www.petprofessionalguild.com
- International Association of Canine Professionals www.canineprofessionals.com
- National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors www.nadoi.org

What other books should I read or have my potential trainer read? To gauge a staff member's interest in learning how to become a trainer, you might purchase any of the following books for them. This will give them a better idea about dog behavior, being an instructor, and working with people and their dogs. In fact, these books would also be good for any of your staff members to become better with dogs! They are easy to read books that have great information.

- *[Culture Clash](#)* by Jean Donaldson
- *[Don't Shoot the Dog](#)* by Karen Pryor
- *[The Thinking Dog](#)* by Gail Fisher
- *[Coaching People to Train their Dogs](#)* by Terry Ryan

Where can I find a dog trainer? Want to hire a trainer rather than training someone on your own staff? Check out FetchFind to find great pet professionals for your business. www.fetchfind.com