



Steven Appelbaum, President Director of Animal Behavior College, Inc. (ABC)



Steven Appelbaum is the President and Director of Animal Behavior College (ABC). In creating ABC, Appelbaum utilized his 30 years of dog training/pet industry experience and vast business knowledge to create one of the most successful pet business vocational colleges in North America. ABC currently offers a Certified Dog Trainer Instructor program and Certified Veterinary Assistant program available nationwide and in Canada.

As President, Appelbaum is responsible for overseeing all school operations. He is ultimately responsible for ABC's long-term growth strategy as well as deciding what additional programs will be offered in the future. Appelbaum is instrumental in forging new strategic relationships between ABC and major pet product vendors, manufacturers, and pet organizations.

Appelbaum maintains a unique reputation in the animal training and pet business. If you are one of the 250,000 people who took a dog obedience class at Petco between 1994 and January 31, 2004, you're one of Appelbaum's clients. If you've hired an ABC Certified Trainer anywhere in North America, you're working with one of Appelbaum's students.

Appelbaum always knew that dogs were his passion in life and that someday he would devote his career to working with them. In 1977, Appelbaum enlisted in the United States Air Force where he worked as a Security Specialist and Patrol Dog Handler and trainer. Upon leaving the Air Force, Appelbaum began his journey towards becoming a seasoned expert in dog behavior and training. Appelbaum went on to attend numerous conferences, seminars and educational programs to further build on the dog training education he received in the military.

In 1981, Appelbaum enrolled at the Animal Trainers Career Academy where he learned to train dogs for motion pictures. The school also taught trick training, obedience, problem solving and included hands-on experience training exotic animals. He was proud to graduate at the top of his class. Bold and eager to work, Appelbaum took the next step and formed his first company, Animal Behavior and Training Associates (ABTA) that same year.

ABTA provided dog training services to dog owners and soon branched out to major pet stores. ABTA made it possible for pet store chains to offer basic obedience dog training to their already-existing clientele. This created a 'win win' situation for the stores and was unique at that time. This concept resulted in Appelbaum's connecting with Petco in 1986 which led to Petco naming ABTA as the exclusive provider of dog obedience classes for the entire chain of Petco stores. In 1998, ABTA became the exclusive provider for all of the

Petcetera stores in Canada, making ABTA's success span internationally. By this time, ABTA had become the largest dog training company in North America with over 550 trainers in 44 U.S. states and in Canada.

Building ABTA required Appelbaum and his staff to locate and hire trainers all over the North America. Of course, the trainer's quality was the most important thing to Appelbaum as he realized that a startling amount of "professional trainers," seventy percent in fact, were failing ABTA's basic training exams.

It was then that Appelbaum became aware that a real gap existed in trainer education. He understood that there was a great demand for more trainers and that existing trainers were in need of a structured education. These revelations were what led Appelbaum to create Animal Behavior College. Much of ABC's success is due to its unique program design which was developed by Appelbaum. The ABC program consists of an in-home study program with hands-on training. This means that students can attend the school while not having to sacrifice the time they have devoted to their current careers or families. This model has proven to be so successful that ABC has used it for their Certified Veterinary Assistant program and will continue to use it for future programs.

Appelbaum has managed to turn his love of dog training into a thriving career. Aside from being a prominent dog trainer, his writing has also brought him great success. He is the author of the book ABC Practical Guide to Dog Training. Appelbaum is the editor for Off Lead Magazine, the largest independent dog trainer magazine in North America. In addition, he has had numerous of his training and business articles published in a variety of publications.

Appelbaum has also acted as an expert witness on a number of dog bite cases and is often consulted as an expert on the topic. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Canine Professionals (IACP) and was also featured as one of the top 25 most influential people in the pet business by Pet Product News in 2005.

Appelbaum remains intensely involved in educating fellow dog trainers. He has been a featured speaker at the American Boarding Kennel Association's (ABKA) annual conference, Barkleigh's Animal Behavior West Conference, Hershey's Groom and Kennel Expo, and the IACP Conference.

Appelbaum lives in Pasadena with his Basset hound, Buford. He enjoys flying and has recently received his private pilot's license. He is also currently working on another book, outside of the dog training realm. Appelbaum is proud of his many accomplishments in the dog training industry and is excited to see what the future holds for both him and ABC. ■