



Association of Professional Dog Trainers Strategic Long-Range Plan

June 5, 2015

IDEAS  FOR ACTION

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OVERVIEW

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) has developed the following strategic long-range plan. It describes a desired vision and what will be essential to achieving that vision. It is grounded in *core ideology* and driven by an *envisioned future* that realizes the full potential of APDT’s ability to support its members. APDT’s commitments are articulated in *goals* that declare the outcomes or attributes the organization intends to achieve. *Objectives* represent key metrics affecting APDT’s ability to achieve the goal and articulate the direction in which these issues must be moved.

In the future, the APDT will not be able to be all things to all people, but it must be different things to different people as the plan evolves to meet the needs of a constantly changing professional community. Therefore, underlying this plan is the adoption of an ongoing process of planning and thinking strategically, designed to ensure relevance of direction and action over time.

In developing this strategic plan, a framework for planning was utilized, based on a model that organizes conversations about the future into four distinct planning “horizons.” Ideas for Action, LLC has found the use of this framework to be a powerful tool. It helps organizations in prioritizing and executing outcomes as well as in ensuring relevance of long-range direction over time.



Envisioned future. The “four planning horizons” framework consists of crafting a comprehensive strategic direction based on the balance between what doesn’t change--the timeless principles of the organization’s core purpose and core values (core ideology) -- and what the organization seeks to become within a 10- to 30-year horizon--what would be possible beyond the restraints of the current environment. The 10- to 30-year horizon is characterized by the articulation of an envisioned future--a BAG (big audacious goal)--and a vivid description--what it will be like to achieve the goal.

Critical factors. The articulation of the envisioned future guides the organization as it considers the factors that will affect its ability to achieve its goals. Building foresight about the 5- to 10-year horizon--assumptions, opportunities, and critical uncertainties in the likely relevant future as well as emerging strategic mega-issues--suggests critical choices about the potential barriers the organization will face. This foresight also suggests the responses the organization will need to consider in navigating its way toward achievement of its 10- to 30-year goal, or BAG.

Strategic plan and operational planning. The linkage continues into the 3- to 5-year horizon through the development of a formal long-range strategic plan, in which the organization articulates the outcomes it seeks to achieve for its members. How will the world be different as a result of what the organization does? Who will benefit and what will the likely results be? Further, the articulation of strategies will bring focus to the organization's annual operational allocation of discretionary resources. Action plans, checkpoints, and milestones will be developed through a process of operational planning, indicating progress toward each goal in every planning year.

A strategic long-range plan is not intended as a substitute for an annual operating plan. It does not detail all the initiatives, programs, and activities the organization will undertake in the course of serving its membership and the industry, nor can it foresee changes to the underlying assumptions on which key strategic choices were based. Instead, the strategic plan identifies what APDT is not doing today, but must be doing in the future to be successful. Consequently, the strategic plan implies change--doing new things or doing more or less of current activities to ensure successful outcomes.

Ongoing Reevaluation. Strategic planning for APDT should become the methodology for the organization's operations. If it is successful, this process will not have yielded a plan to be placed on the shelf, but will have served as a catalyst for the "process of planning strategically," at all times and at all levels throughout the organization. In order to achieve its vision, APDT must not look at strategic long-range planning as a one-time project that produces a milestone document of its best thinking at the moment. Instead, APDT must adopt strategic planning as an operational philosophy of ongoing reevaluation of the critical knowledge bases that form the framework of its world, including:

- Sensitivity to member needs, insight into the future environment
- Understanding of the capacity and strategic position of the organization
- Effective analysis of the ethical implications of policy, program and service choices.

The APDT's strategic long-range plan represents a compass the organization will use to guide its work over the next five years. Each year of its life, the plan will be updated based on experience or new circumstances or as new opportunities or challenges emerge. In 2022, APDT should author a new strategic long-range plan based upon the new environment expected to exist in a rapidly evolving world.

10-30 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

~ CORE IDEOLOGY & ENVISIONED FUTURE ~

*Core ideology describes an organization's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. Core ideology consists of two notions: **core purpose** – the organization's reason for being – and **core values** – essential and enduring principles that guide an organization.*

*Envisioned future conveys a concrete, but yet unrealized, vision for the organization. It consists of a **big audacious goal** – a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort – and a **vivid description** – vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.*

CORE IDEOLOGY

Core Purpose:

To educate, develop and support the professional dog trainer.

To advance excellence in the profession of dog training and behavior consulting.

Core Values:

- Professionalism – acting respectfully and responsibly to dogs, people and colleagues.
- Excellence – lifelong learning, continuing education, pursuit of knowledge.
- Integrity – honesty and integrity; conduct business with professional ethics and respect.
- Inclusiveness – members working in diverse environments.
- Collaboration – working collaboratively with colleagues and allied animal professions.
- Service – belief in the value of our members' contribution to our association, and to the clients and communities they serve.

Core Beliefs:

- We believe in the fundamental value to society of the profession of dog behavior consulting and training.
- We believe in treating our human clients and their dogs with honesty and respect.
- We believe that dog training and behavior modification should be based on critical thinking, open inquiry, shared knowledge, and standards of practice.
- We believe that reward-based training enhances the human-animal bond.

- LIMA paradigm

ENVISIONED FUTURE

Big Audacious Goal:

- Dog training and behavior consulting will become a well established profession.

Vivid Descriptions

- It will hold a body of common knowledge embrace universal ethical standards and maintain professionally accepted self regulatory mechanisms. APDT will have defined the BOK and path for anyone wanting to become a trainer.
- APDT will be essential to success as a dog trainer. Membership will be considered a must if you are a trainer. Dog training will be a successful and lucrative profession. It will be common for dog trainers to make a full time living. APDT will be the go to resource for dog behavior and training. The APDT will be the first place members go to for their professional needs; the leading/ edge provider (or facilitator) of education, knowledge and professional competency.
- APDT will be the recognized voice of the dog training profession. We will have the clout to defend threats to our profession from legislative and scope of practice issue.
- *Members will be recognized as the premier experts in the field of dog training;* legislators, media, trainers, community and allied pet professionals will all value our expertise. Dog training will be seen as essential to responsible pet ownership. The public will see the value and benefit of APDT and dog training. The general knowledge base of dog owners about their pets.
- *Every dog owner will want to put their dog through the APDT CLASS program which will help increase public access for dogs, and promote dog ownership as an integral part of society that enhances the quality of life.*
- APDT will become a place for collaboration and respect within and among training professionals and allied professionals. Being an APDT member will reflect the highest standards of ethical behavior.
- TAKE UPDATED FROM SURVEY

5-10 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

~ ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE RELEVANT FUTURE ~

Assumption statements developed by the group will help APDT purposefully update its strategic plan on an annual basis. Since the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on the vision of the future that appears in this section, an annual review of this vision will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the goals.

DEMOGRAPHIC

1. The population of the US will continue to become more diverse, and pet ownership will follow that trend.
2. Substantial part of the population is aging, going to smaller dogs, doing different things with those dogs – more active pet owners despite their aging. Baby boomers who have a lot of extra money are doing more with their dogs.
3. More people are adopting shelter dogs, more pet owners adopting dogs with behavior problems.
4. Greater move toward small dog ownership over large dogs.
5. More people are electing not to have children, and they may choose to have dogs instead. Dogs are becoming family members.
6. Busy working professionals will continue to own dogs and are likely to put them in daycare and changing the landscape of services that the industry needs to offer.
7. Increase in the number of rescue dogs.
8. Increased transfer of dog through regions and countries will result in cross contamination and spread of new diseases.

SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND CONSUMER

1. There will be less public tolerance of undesirable dog behavior and higher expectations for dog behavior in general. But the culture of dog people may not necessarily be aligned with these expectations.
2. There will be greater consumer expectations that dogs will be able to go anywhere, and there may be challenges in terms of societal acceptance and public safety. At the same time, there are more and more restrictions on where people can take their dogs.
3. There may be more awareness of/pressure on for ethical training practice.
4. People will turn to the internet as their first and possibly only source for dog training information.
5. We may continue to see more people wanting immediate fixes to their problems and less of an interest in science.

6. Millennials are and will continue to be motivated by social, cultural and mission-driven change.

ECONOMIC

1. People will be working longer/harder, have less time and may have less disposable resources in some regions. There may be a widening of the wage gap/income disparity. The haves will have more, the have-nots will have less, the middle is being squeezed, and this may narrow the clientele base and the types of clients that dog trainers will have.
2. Consumer confidence is still relatively low, but some dog training-related activities are on the rise as new options for available disposable income become available.
3. Local businesses will struggle to compete with big box/franchise corporations and emerging online providers.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY

1. In the future, there may be the potential for regulation of the profession at local, state and national levels.
2. There will be a continued focus on the state and local level on the marginalization of dog ownership (BSL, limit laws, mandatory spay/neuter, etc.)
3. Regional trends in zoning laws may impact where trainers can operate.
4. There is a possibility of the banning or restriction of certain tools in some local communities.
5. AVMA and veterinary behaviorists may push for behavior work to be restricted to veterinarians.
6. There is no regulation in how service dogs are trained, used, or designated.

NATURE OF THE PROFESSION

1. Sheltering and rescuing do not always follow best practices, and that results in increased behavioral challenges for adoptors.
2. The profession will continue to be transitory, with people coming and going due to changing economic conditions.
3. The industry is still volatile as it relates to training philosophies and tools.
4. There may be an increase in the number of other pet service providers looking to add training to their services.

5. There may be an increase in the number of other types of allied professionals moving into the “pet dog training” world.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Young families will become more tech-savvy and will increasingly look for tech-savvy trainers.
2. There will be growth in the use of the internet and social media by dog owners wanting to get advice for free and not wanting to see a professional.
3. There may be growth in the number of behaviorists or behavior consultants doing online consulting, and there may be new opportunities for trainers in working full-time as employees for other trainers.
4. There may be continued interest and an increased understanding of ongoing scientific research into canine behavior, cognition and brain physiology.
5. Technology will continue to make the business side of a trainer’s work easier with smart phones, web based applications, social media, webcams, etc.
6. The internet will continue to make it easier for businesses to share information without “gatekeepers” or intermediaries.

3-5 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

~ OUTCOME-ORIENTED GOALS ~

Goals are outcome-oriented statements that represent what will constitute the organization's future success. The achievement of each goal will move APDT towards the realization of its vision. The goals are not in any order of priority. Every goal will need to be accomplished if the organization is to fully achieve its vision.

*On the next pages, each goal is accompanied by a set of **objectives**, which represent key issues affecting APDT's ability to achieve the goal and articulate milestones against which to measure progress. Objectives which have been selected for prioritization for 2012 are **bolded** and underlined on the following pages.*

GOAL 1 – PUBLIC AWARENESS

There will be increased public awareness of dog training and behavior and of the APDT.

GOAL 2 – BUSINESS TOOLS

More dog trainers will see dog training as a viable full-time career option because of the APDT's business services.

GOAL 3 – MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

APDT members will benefit from learning in a respectful and collaborative atmosphere in all aspects of the organization.

GOAL 4 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION

APDT members will have reasonably priced access to a variety of educational materials and resources covering the complete BOK.

GOAL 5 – KNOWLEDGE

APDT will have established a standardized body of knowledge that covers core areas of competency, including: Learning (human and animal), Behavior, Legislation, Health and Nutrition, and Business.

GOAL 6 – STANDARDS

APDT members will demonstrate proficiency in core areas of competency that make of the body of knowledge.

GOAL 1: PUBLIC AWARENESS

Goal:

There will be increased public awareness THE VALUE OF PFOESSIONAL DOG TRAINERS AND APDT MEMBERS.

Objectives:

- 1. Increase number of media requests and media coverage.**
 - 2. Increase awareness among veterinarians and allied animal professions.**
 3. Increase use of APDT materials by the public.
 4. Increase ease of access to APDT materials.
 5. Continue expansion of use of social media.
 - 6. Increase member participation in the promotion of APDT.**
 7. Increase AWARENESS OF APDT among non-members who are dog trainers.
- SOCIAL MEDIA, RANGLER, SEAL OF APPROVAL, WEBSITE, CONSUMERS

GOAL 2: BUSINESS TOOLS

Goal:

More dog trainers will see dog training as a viable full-time career option because of the APDT's business services.

Objectives

1. Increase attractiveness of business education content.
2. **Enhance menu of business benefits and services for members.**
3. Increase accessibility to business tools and services.
4. Increase the amount of people who use the business tools and are successful and can tell their stories.
5. Interface with other individuals and organizations that provide business services.

WEBSITE DESIGN, AWARENESS OF WHAT WE ALREADY OFFER, BETTER
SOCIAL MEDIA OF WHAT WE OFFER, FOCUS GROUPS (CASEY)

CLASS?

GOAL 3: MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

Goal:

APDT members will benefit from learning AND SUPPORTING EACH OTHER in a respectful and collaborative atmosphere *in all aspects of the organization.*

Objectives:

1. Increase education for committee VOLUTEERS and chairs.
2. Improve our utilization of volunteer resources in the association.
3. Increase number of members on interactive forums.
4. Increase formation and participation in regional networks.
5. *Increase awareness and support for APDT's commitment to openness.*
6. Increase member opportunities to collaborate with each other.

CONFERENCE, SOME SIGS, OTHER COMMUNITIES, BOARD COACH,
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNTIES, (TRAINING WILL BE IMPORTANT) REGIONS
SUCCESSION PLANNING, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT/NOMINATIONS
COMM , LEADERSHIP PIPELINE, PUBLIC MEMBER/ ADHOC, ETC BOARD
SEAT POTENTIALLY?

GOAL 4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION

Goal:

APDT members will have reasonably priced access to a variety of educational materials and resources covering the complete Body of Knowledge.

Objectives:

1. **Increase and improve access to quality educational materials.**
2. Increase member awareness of APDT educational offerings.
3. Increase perceived value of APDT educational offerings.

GOAL 5: KNOWLEDGE

Goal:

APDT will have established a standardized Body of Knowledge that covers core areas of competency, including: Learning (human and animal), Behavior, Legislation, Health and Nutrition, and Business.

Objectives:

- 1. Establish a body of knowledge identifying competencies and standards for the profession.**
- 2. Increase organizational awareness of any existing scientific research.*
- 3. Increase collaboration with outside providers of quality educational resources.*

BOK, PRODUCTS ARE ALIGNING WITH IT

GOAL 6: STANDARDS

Goal:

APDT members will demonstrate proficiency in core areas of competency that make of the Body of Knowledge.

Objectives:

- 1. Increase collaboration with like-minded organizations.**
- 2. Increase promotion of members who buy into program.*
- 3. Increase resources to staff and Education Committee.*

SELF ASSESSMENT TOO, CERTIFICATION, CREDENTIALING ,ACCREDITATION?