



## Animal Behavior College ~ Company Background ~



Animal Behavior College (ABC), based in Northridge, CA, was formed in 1999 with the vision of becoming the largest and most unique animal-related vocational college in the country.

As an expert dog trainer, Steven Appelbaum proved to also be a gifted entrepreneur as he turned his modest company, with less than ten employees, into a nationwide career-training college in just a few years.

Prior to founding ABC, Appelbaum was the president of Animal Behavior and Training Associates (ABTA). He and his staff were responsible for contracting with and hiring dog trainers for pet stores throughout the United States. At the time, ABTA was providing dog trainers to Petco in the U.S. and Petcetera stores throughout 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.

Appelbaum came to the realization that many trainers were not adequately qualified to work as professional dog trainers. Appelbaum's company was faced with a challenge – they needed hundreds of professional dog trainers in order to staff pet stores but were unable to find qualified ones. It was then that Appelbaum recognized the need for a formal education program for dog trainers. This led him to the creation of Animal Behavior College.

This idea also proved to be problematic as starting a school for professional dog trainers was structurally difficult to create. Appelbaum had two types of models that he could follow; one was traditional school where students could attend and learn on-site. This option proved to be to be impossible as it required too much capital to set up dozens of schools across the country. The second option was to develop a correspondence course that offered hands-on training. Neither of these options were able to provide students with a solid education coupled with convenience. The solution was Animal Behavior College, a hybrid program, one that offered the practicality of in-home study with the learning experience of a hands-on training course.

Much of ABC's success is due to its unique program design that allows students to learn in over 600 locations nationwide. The ABC program consists of an in-home study program with hands-on training that is local to students. This means that students can attend the school while not having to leave the state or sacrifice the time they have devoted to their current careers and families. In fact, 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.

ABC soon went from being a small company with fantastic potential into an internationally-recognized vocational college. With the pet business thriving as a 40 billion dollar plus industry, ABC has tapped into the market by creating a niche for itself through helping pet lovers pursue careers in the animal field.

ABC continues its growth as an industry leader of animal-related career training with the introduction of its Certified Veterinary Assistant program in 2008. This program was so successful that enrollments in the first year exceeded expectations by 141 percent. A Certified Grooming program, set to launch in 2010, is already in development while future programs are also being examined.

In an effort to ensure that students continue to grow professionally, ABC has introduced two continuing education programs available to graduates. The first program, Training Shelter Dogs, was created due to an overwhelming number of alumni expressing the need for more training targeted towards dogs living in shelters. This training helps make these dogs more adoptable while teaching trainers to deal with behavior problems specific to homeless dogs. Training Shelter Dogs is another way that ABC can help give back to the animals and help to save lives through training.

The second continuing education program is a more business-minded course titled Teaching Private Lessons which further elaborates on how to teach, market and be successful when offering private lessons. Private lessons are ideal for unruly dogs who may be too disruptive to attend group classes. This program was created to fulfill the needs of dog owners whose dogs have more acute behavior problems and that are in need for more one-on-one attention.

All ABC courses offer a well-balanced and convenient education to students throughout North America. The innovative curriculum has reached students ranging anywhere from recent high school graduates, to educators, to veterinarians who wish to enhance their knowledge of animals.

Since its conception nearly ten years ago, ABC has harmoniously evolved alongside the ever-growing animal industry, meeting the needs of its enthusiasts. To date, the school has enrolled over eight thousand students and continues to draw in more each month, ensuring a brighter future for the college, its students, and the lives of animals they touch. ■

*More information can be found at  
[www.AnimalBehaviorCollege.com](http://www.AnimalBehaviorCollege.com)*

**Media Inquires: Shelly Levin  
[Shelly@dawgbiz.net](mailto:Shelly@dawgbiz.net) • 818-709-7683**