

APDT 2016 Nominations Questionnaire

To be returned to david.feldner@apdt.com by May 24, 2017

1. Describe why you want to be a candidate for the APDT Board of Directors and strengths and assets you can provide the Board and organization.

Having been in the pet industry for 25 years, I've witnessed dog training from various perspectives. As a dog trainer and current business owner, I understand everyday challenges from both viewpoints. In the past, working for a large pet store box chain with over 2,000 dog trainers and numerous field leaders, I understand our dog training industry from a much larger perspective, one that impacts thousands. Working with APDT provides numerous opportunities to advance our dog training profession to new levels while providing a knowledge organization for our industry.

2. The ADPT core purpose is to advance excellence in the profession of dog training and behavior consulting. Please write in your own words what this statement means to you.

This core purpose means taking something to the next level, which means continuous development and improvement for our industry and members. Every industry needs a guiding light to point newer members towards their chosen profession and reaffirm our seasoned professionals choices.

Experience, Professionalism, Governance & Leadership (Understand the basics of board governance, strategic planning and finance, understand the importance of confidentially)

3. If you have experience with previous governing Boards, please provide the following information:

- a. Approximate annual budget of organizations
- b. Number of members if a 501(c)6 in organization
- c. Number of members on Board
- d. Number of paid professional staff
- e. Dates served
- f. Weekly time commitment for Board service and a short summary of your duties and responsibilities as a Board member (including any leadership roles).

4. If you have previous board experience please describe in detail that Board's process for developing, implementing and reviewing a Strategic Plan for the organization, indicating the roles played by the Board, staff and other stakeholders.

No previous board experience

5. As you may know, there are many different types of Boards, the two most common being “working” Boards and “strategic/policy” Boards. The APDT Board is a strategic/policy board whose primary focus is on setting the strategic plan for an association while the operations are handled by a professional staff. Does this fit with your understanding of Board service, and do you have any questions about your role, should you be elected to the Board?

No questions.

6. Please explain your understanding of the Board’s role in relation to the Executive Director and staff of APDT.

As a board member, our goal is to plan for the future while ensuring what’s best for APDT. Our staff members are partners that help facilitate growth. We work together as a team, however Board members should not interfere with staff member duties.

7. Please describe your efforts to recruit new members (or donors/supporters) to any of the above organizations as well as to APDT.

When recruiting, it’s important to explain the benefits of becoming a member. While APDT is a great organization for new dog trainers, it’s important to explain the value to seasoned dog professionals as well. Annual conferences and online CEUs are extremely valuable, along with business advice, but being part of a large organization that empowers learning and changes the industry for the better is a valuable recruitment tool in itself.

8. Please describe a situation where as a Board member or business professional, you had to communicate with a stakeholder who was unhappy with a decision made either by the organization or the business. How did you resolve the matter?

Listening to the unhappy person is key; he or she must feel heard first. Then take a moment and explain why this decision was made and how it will positively impact everyone. When Petco’s dog training program launched new training curricula, many traditional dog trainers were upset and forcefully voiced their opinions to their field leaders and myself. After listening to why these dog trainers were so upset, I addressed the core concern of change. Everyone should continue learning, and this was an excellent opportunity to broaden his or her training toolbox and knowledge. Additionally, we offered everyone paid on the job training, to learn more about our new curricula. Soon, these outspoken individuals became passionate positive dog trainers. Not everyone decided to stay, and a few decided to leave to pursue their own interests elsewhere. At least every person was heard, treated professionally and given an opportunity to learn.

9. A Board is comprised of different personalities that must all learn how to work together in order to serve the overall goals and best interests of the Association. There will be times when decisions are unanimous, and times when they are not. Please give one specific example of how you disagreed with a majority decision while serving on a Board, volunteering or as a business professional and how you handled the situation after the decision was made and implemented.

When rolling out a new positive reinforcement dog training program, our department was pressured to ban shock collars from Petco. While I completely agreed with the ban of this product, I knew it would be an uphill battle. After discussing with my supervisor and our VP, we addressed the concern with our buyer (purchaser of e-collars). After learning this product generated millions of dollars in sales annually, with double digit comps each year, my proposal was overturned quickly. While this decision stung (and still stings), I understand why this decision was made. At least my voice was heard and hopefully I planted a seed about positive dog training with our buyer.

10. There may be times when a Board decision or you yourself are under attack by angry members, others involved in the profession or even the public. At times, this may feel very personal. Please give one specific example of a time you felt under personal attack and how you handled it and what you would do in the future if the situation arose again.

Building upon the unanimous decision in question 9, I was bombarded by a handful of anti-shock dog trainers about an e-collar ban from Petco stores. After listening to their concerns, I explained that these collars generate millions annually, with huge gains each year, because pet parents are turning to these products to solve an issue. While we don't agree with this solution, as dog trainers, we should show pet parents how to solve these issues without shock. Interestingly, this became a personal challenge for many, while others left Petco for ethical issues. While I understand those that left, I admired those staying to make a difference.

11. Describe what value board confidentiality brings to ADPT and why it is key to the success of the organization.

Confidentiality is extremely important, it provides a safe environment for others to speak without judgment. Additionally, many decisions must be kept confident until launched to prevent confusion. A united front provides confidence within its members, and this would not happen without board confidentiality.

12. How do you view your strengths in a group setting? i.e. idea generation, analysis, mediation, facilitation, etc. How do you utilized those strengths best?

Over the years, I've had plenty of practice strengthening my skills when working within small and large groups of passionate people. I'm pretty creative however understand time and financial implications. It's important to listen to everyone's ideas, as combining these ideas to fit the criteria usually develops the best resolutions. When working within a group, timelines are considered "hard stops", so facilitation of time is key.

13. How do you view your weaknesses in a group setting? i.e. finance, event planning, organization, etc. How do you accommodate for those weaknesses?

Finance, event planning and organization skills are not necessarily challenges; but many times I'm faced with new challenges. Board service is brand new to me, so it's important I understand these aspects from many different viewpoints. Of course, I'll ask questions while absorbing all the details and nuances. Being prepared before calls and meetings are vital, this will soften my learning curve.

14. Please review the list below and indicate the areas where you believe you have strong skills and experience. Provide a descriptive example of how you have successfully used your skills.

- a. Financial Statements
- b. Education

By far, this is my strongest area. About 6 years ago, I developed new curricula, which included training of 2,000 dog trainers and 500 mentors. Also, this included retraining 100,000 staff members on our new program. Additionally, I developed a new program training program for on boarding dog trainers. This resulted in double-digit sales increases for the first year, and continued with double digit increases for the next 6 years. Once this program launched successfully, I partnered with AKC CGC program, relaunched and created online training visuals and programs to further train our dog trainers and staff members. Petco still uses these programs four years later, after I left the company declined to relocate to their corporate offices in San Antonio TX.

- c. Event Planning
- d. Fundraising
- e. Governance
- f. Investments
- g. Law
- h. Marketing and Public Relations
- j. Strategic Planning

APDT Participation, Leadership, and Mission (*Committed to and fully understand our mission, strategic plan and value within the market place*)

15. Please tell us what your participation has been with ADPT webinars, the CLASS program and the ADPT community. If you are not participating, please describe why.

So far, I've not participated in APDT webinars, CLASS or APDT community. I offer CGC certification; it's what I'm most familiar with. Many years ago, I participated within the APDT email community but slowly stopped engaging due to time. As for webinars, most of my CEUs are earned during conferences. With that said, it's time to start participating again!

16. Please list any committees, task forces or volunteer work within the APDT and outside of APDT you are involved with or have been involved in within the last 3 years.

In 2016, I participated in the Nomination committee. As for volunteering, I was an Adoption Coordinator for Southern States Rottweiler Rescue and currently active in Bull Terrier rescue. Additionally, I offer free services for several rescue organizations on reactivity and resource guarding. Currently, I'm partnering with our veterinary behaviorist to offer group classes for homeless individuals that share their lives with dogs. Additionally, we're partnering with a homeless shelter to build kennels and offer veterinary care so these folks have a safe place to stay, while keeping their dog.

17. Please read the APDT Strategic Plan. In four sentences or less, please summarize the APDT strategic plan.

While continuing with education as a pillar, APDT strives to build partnerships and develop communities of respect within the industry. Plus bring awareness to professional standards and career opportunities with continued support to achieve goals.

18. Choose one element of the APDT strategic plan and describe how your skills, knowledge and experience could help the organization achieve that element of the plan.

Knowledge (Goal 5): Knowledge is mandatory for our profession, and it goes deeper than choosing treat rewards and equipment.

Science is catching up with dog training and newer discoveries are happening everyday. Dog trainers need access to this knowledge, yet it should be assimilated at multiple experience levels. Knowledge allows our industry to see things from different perspectives, which fosters respectful communities and discussion. Knowledge encompasses everything; it's a dog trainer's foundation.

19. Education is a major focus of the APDT. Describe what role education has played in your role as a dog training professional and how you have encouraged employees, co-workers, and colleagues to continue their education.

Education is my foundation; it's how I've developed into a dog trainer. I strive to understand things from different perspectives. So much so that my employer (vet behaviorist) says "Fanna has a high seeking brain, which is a good thing". While that

made me laugh a bit, it's true. Everyone should continue to learn, and I often invite co-workers and colleagues to conferences. Also, I'm a huge supporter of certifications too, which require yearly continuing education.

Personal and Professional (*understanding of basic finance, business and growth strategy, personal accountability, ability to work with others in a team setting, practice active listening, respond with the organization's best interest*)

20. Describe your current dog training business and mission statement.

Currently, my dog training business focuses on private lessons and groups classes for reactive/ fearful/ anxious dogs. While many dog trainers shy away from such hard cases, I thoroughly enjoy watching pet parents and dogs learn new skills. My mission statement focuses on building relationships (or rebuilding at times) through trust, which means rewarding good choices.

21. Describe three of your financial metrics of success for your business (you need not disclose financial information here on your business, simply what financial indicators you monitor for success).

Because I offer private lessons in home, profit margins are not a concern as my overhead consists of my time and vehicle expenses. For my business, key financial metrics of success are referrals, weekly attendance in enrolled class and future enrollment into advance classes. Each metric ensures customer service expectations have been fully met, which ensures I'm maximizing each client for future profits.

22. Describe how you have worked with other allied pet care professionals (Boarding Kennel, Daycare Operator, Dog Walker, Groomer, Pet Sitter, and Veterinarian) in your business.

Partnership is so important. Thankfully, I've met some incredible pet professionals to refer for pet sitting and veterinarians. One referral went so well, that I'm currently teaching Reactive Dog group classes at her facility, as she's our veterinary behaviorist. My recommended groomer and pet sitter offer force free methods for reactive dogs, which makes learning so much easier for everyone. Thankfully, they've referred to me, and together we're able to build our businesses.

23. Do you hold any certifications in our profession? If so, describe those certifications and what valued caused you to pursue them. If you are not certified, indicate why you have chosen not to pursue certification.

I'm a continuing education junky. I earned my CPDT-KA back in 2003 (when answers were on scantron), pursued KPA-CTP about 5 years ago and ABCDT-L2 a couple of years ago. Certification provides proof of a person's standard skill level, which is important in our profession.

24. Describe a scenario within the last 3 years where your role was crucial to the success of a group and how you contributed to that success. How would another team member describe your contribution and style of communication.

About three years ago, I took a part time job as lead writer for Dog Training Nation. This was a brand new project with a strong focus on search engine optimization pertaining to dog training. As lead writer, I focused on writing articles for every day pet parents. For the first year, we gained a bit of ground but nothing really blossomed. After our first year, when searching for “dog training” on Google, we were on page 15 (pretty much non-existent). After three years, we are on page one for several dog training topics- this is huge! When discussing our successes in 2017, our group felt my article content was key to our success. That comment made me chuckle, as I struggled writing for everyday pet parents instead of dog trainers, it’s certainly a different audience. Honestly, I feel our success is due to our partnership.

As for my communication style, I think Rachel (my editor) would say my communication style is passionate, positive and I adore lots of exclamation points! Also, I’m “to the point” yet offer solution oriented. Complaining uses up valuable time, it’s important to provide solutions to problems.

25. Describe a scenario where you have dealt with a challenging role as a leader and your strategies for success within that role.

Easily, event planning was one of the most challenging roles as a leader. When launching a 3-day conference in a different state, staying on task was extremely difficult. There were so many tiny details that started falling through the cracks; it was scary. Because event planning was challenging, I reached out to a project manager for advice. Then and there, I was introduced to a project plan and it changed my life! After strategically laying out each task with timelines and point persons, event planning became much easier and dare I say, fun. Each conference was held with minimal issues, and I learned a totally new skill. In short, reaching out for help and learning new skills is key to success.