

DOG GENIE
GENIE TUTTLE

Company Spotlight: Dog Genie

Name of owner: Genie Tuttle

Product or service: Professional dog training services.

Address: Based in Camarillo.

Date established: January 2003

Hours open: Mondays through Sundays with various hours to accommodate client schedules.

Telephone: 479-8900

Email: genie@doggenie.com

Website: <http://www.doggenie.com>

Number of employees: Just me — one.

What prompted you to start your own business?

I have loved dogs since childhood, and it has always been my goal to work as a full-time professional dog trainer to help dogs stay in homes and out of shelters. I love wearing many hats from a business standpoint, so teaching classes, working with clients, blogging, marketing and generally running the business with all that entails is a perfect fit with my passion and skill set.

What is your educational and career background?

I am a Certified Professional Dog Trainer-Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA) and a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). I have a bachelor's degree in communication from California State University, Northridge and have been training dogs of all breeds for more than 25 years. I've worked as a dog trainer for private training companies, parks and recreation departments and a big box pet supply chain before launching Dog Genie in 2003. My career background includes corporate communications, public relations, marketing operations, fundraising and event planning with a company formerly known as The Affinity Group Inc. in Ventura. I am also a blogger for positive dog trainer Dr. Ian Dunbar's website Dog Star Daily at <http://dogstardaily.com> and the first Certified Doggnition Evaluator in California, joining Dr. Brian Hare's team of citizen researchers for <http://www.dognition.com>.

How much research did you do before starting your business? I networked



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Genie Tuttle is the owner of Dog Genie, a Camarillo-based company offering professional dog training services.

with like-minded small business owners, peers and colleagues over a span of years before starting my own business in conjunction with continuing education, research and memberships in various professional societies.

What were the most helpful sources, including websites? The most helpful sources were the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) at <http://www.ccpdt.org>; the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) at <http://apdt.com>; Dog*tec at <http://dogtec.org>; Dog Star Daily at <http://dogstardaily.com>; Constant Contact at <http://constantcontact.com>; and mentoring from SCORE at <http://score.org>.

When were you the most discouraged? There were a few slow months during the recession the last couple of years, but overall my motto is to, "Tend my own fire and keep doing the work" and business will come.

What company or individual do you admire? There are many educated, positive dog trainers both here and abroad

who are working to teach dog owners about effective humane dog training techniques. If I have to pick one, I admire Dr. Ian Dunbar for the community he created with Dog Star Daily and the tireless work, travel, writing and speaking he does on behalf of positive dog training techniques.

What will make your business stand out from competitors? My experience and education combined with my passion for keeping dogs in homes distinguishes me from others. My approach with dog owners and clients is friendly, yet professional. Currently, dog training is an unregulated industry so anyone can watch a TV show, read a book or print up business cards and say that they are a "dog trainer," which is dangerous for both dogs and owners. To combat this, leaders in the field of positive, science-based dog training (APDT) created an independent credential system overseen by an independent certification council (CCPDT) that administers testing and issues credentials

as earned. The CPDT-KA credential I have is one of those. To maintain it you must study with leaders in the field and obtain CEUs (continuing education units) to renew the credential. Ongoing education and staying current with humane best practices is critical.

Who is your target client base? Dog owners in and around Ventura County who want to improve their relationship with their dog(s), teach them important skills and manners to live together successfully and solve behavioral issues. I believe in keeping dogs in living rooms and out of shelters.

Businesses less than one year old can be profiled in Who's New in Business. Businesses older than one year can be profiled in Company Spotlight. Those owning franchises in the region can be profiled in Franchise Focus. Only businesses that have never been profiled in The Star may participate. For more details or the questionnaire, email freelancer Maria Saint at mcsaint73@yahoo.com. Please put the word "Questionnaire" in the subject header.