

Maggie Cammack

ISM 1

Mr. Speice

14 January 2019

Looking Over Work

Assessment 12- Mentor Visit

**Mentor:** Maureen Bennett

**Profession:** President of IDEA Service Dogs

**Location:** 11909 Cinnamon Drive

**Date:** January 10, 2019

**Time:** 2:45 pm- 4:00 pm

**Assessment:**

Maureen Bennett started her own service dog training non-profit in 2008. Her knowledge in choosing business structures as well as what is needed to start a company was crucial in forming a business plan in the most effective manner. Bennett gave insight on the importance of having low starting costs; because it allows the company to start making a profit as soon as possible. She also mentioned how every company, no matter the business structure, should have business insurance to protect both gains and losses of the company.

The information learned through the process has allowed me to further discover my passions for both business and dog training. The struggle of creating a business plan was that is challenging and delved beyond the training aspect of service dog training. Bennetts knowledge surrounding business structure in why she chose to do a nonprofit corporation Having

information about the differences between nonprofit and for-profit organizations allowed me to map out which one would benefit me in the particular job chosen. If I started veterinary practice it would be crucial to make a profit off of the services being provided. Bennett, who did not study dog training previous to volunteering with a service dog organization, explained how her former work experience aided her greatly when she was outlining her nonprofit. To be better prepared to have the challenge of starting a business, taking business and working with other small business owners will improve chances of early success because there will be a deeper understanding of each step of business creation. After speaking with Bennett regarding research on the cognitive function of dogs' brains, the branch of vet-med that is of interest in has changed. Instead of pursuing veterinary surgery, interested in studying veterinary behaviorology. Doing this in tandem with service dog training would allow me to be able to be to help live independent lives, as well as help animals, live happy lives.

Having the ability to understand each individual process that goes into a business ensures that each part is working in the best most efficient way possible. One of the main focuses of my project was to start a business for the least number of added expenses. When a business is being created this will be an important factor because funds will be limited in the beginning before there are any clients. This was also something that became a challenge as class materials for service dog training are expensive, but looking at finding discount websites as well as buying products in bulk can reduce cost overall. It was important to find an inexpensive way to start a business because the cost of the overall course should be low. This is the main goal because the people who are searching for services such as services dogs need help, so having it be a low cost can make it easier to get the help they need. Bennett explained that having to keep her non-profit

business funded she charges her clients a small starting fee that pays for products they will use throughout the program as well as has them purchase some class materials that they would need for their individual dog. After seeing how this benefits each of the students in the class, a similar method was used in the business plan because then the owner would be able to work on the skills with the dog in between classes. This could also keep course cost low because fewer products would need to be purchased out of pocket and or from overall class costs.

Overall, the information learned thus far regarding owning a business has inspired me to continue my original work into my final product, but instead of focusing on the business aspect of the company the focus will be about the promotional aspect that was a touch on in my business plan. The goal is to write out my training manual, format a website, and create a promotional video that showcases the end goals of the entire program. This would help in the future once the business is created after college graduation because interested clients will be able to see the experience I have in training dogs as well as have a baseline for what the business will become.