

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN ARMADILLO TRAINING

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In assessing the potential viability of any future endeavor, we must, of course, look to the past for any previous attempts of the endeavor. If someone has tried it before, then what was the situation in which they tried, and did it succeed or fail? If no one has tried it before, then we must consider ourselves pioneers charting new ground in the vast universe of profit and loss. So, this will be the basis for our discussions this term, as we delve into a series of such investigations. Our first endeavor that we will examine is that of the economic opportunities in armadillo training.

In researching the subject of armadillos, I discovered an attempt in 1982 in the border town of Laredo, Texas to train the animals as seeing eye guides. The endeavor ended rather quickly when 80% of the trainees died in accidents when they mistook a chicken for the trainer, and they subsequently followed the chicken trying to cross the road. We do not know why the chicken crossed the

road. Despite documented evidence of a mouse, a frog, a bear, and several dogs having achieved Hollywood star status, there is nothing to show that an armadillo has ever been considered anything close to even a backup stunt double. So, it is evident that we have a considerable amount of open road ahead of us.

First, we must establish what the armadillo has to offer in the way of skills and screen presence, so to speak. Armadillos are prolific diggers with sharp claws. Their diet usually consists of insects and grubs. They have large eyes, but very poor vision. The armor plates that protect them from predators are not a match for vehicles, though. When startled, as by an oncoming car, they will jump straight up into the air, which puts them in direct line with fenders, bumpers, and grills. So, we would have a few obstacles to overcome, but if a gecko can sell car insurance, then we can surely think of something the armadillo can market. Nevertheless, a wise businessman does not focus on too narrow a market. I believe we should look at the more mundane applications in the middle-class consumer market for the most advantageous edge.

The average homeowner in the suburban or semi-rural neighborhood has not had a pleasant

experience in their dealings with the armadillo. What if we could, through proper training, get the armadillo to stay on one side of the street, dig only in designated areas, and through genetic manipulation, pass these learning capabilities on to succeeding generations? Can you not see the possibilities here? Armadillo training franchises and brand name partnerships for a host of products, including eyeglasses, armadillo scented hand salve for gardeners that have their hands in dirt all day long, and patented tire technology based on the armor plate composition of the armadillo. Training that adequately domesticated our subject could produce possible inroads into the pet market as well.

Undoubtedly, the key to all this is marketing, marketing, marketing. We must engage those in the advertising field to design attention-grabbing media that would show the consumer all the advantages of owning a trained armadillo. The cost conscious and environmentally aware homeowner must want the armadillo so badly that he would stand in line overnight just to have one of the first market offerings.

In that regard, I believe the emphasis in any marketing campaign should rely on several key promotional points:

1) Lower taxes—the county would be able to reduce the number of workers it has to send around to clean up roadkill.

2) Environmentally friendly—a trained armadillo would keep soil insects controlled in an orderly manner without the need for hazardous, expensive chemical lawn and garden treatments.

3) Energy efficient—a trained armadillo would dig only in designated areas. Those areas would be sections of the yard that the owner is going to redo anyway. If it is the turfgrass area, then the owner could save considerable personal energy by being able to just drop a plug of grass in the hole that the armadillo has dug. The owner doesn't have to expend energy digging a hole. We could apply the same principle with plants in non-grassy areas of the landscape.

4) Lower medical costs—by having the armadillo dig only in designated areas, it greatly reduces the exposure to sprained or broken ankles caused by stepping into a hole dug by the armadillo. Plus, with the added advantage of not having to dig holes for grass plugs and other plants, you lower the possibilities of back injuries and heat stress.

5) Savings in grocery and vet bills—a domesticated and trained armadillo can find his own food, greatly lowering the owner's grocery bill when compared to other pets. The armadillo also has a much lower need for veterinary services.

By developing a well thought out business plan, integrating an exciting marketing strategy, pursuing aggressive action towards federal grant money, and by greasing plenty of hands to get special tax credits, you could at least become a regional economic powerhouse in the armadillo training field.

Regarding the seeking of federal grants, I suggest you make initial contact at the following address:

United States Government, Department of the Interior, Division of Animal Affairs, Bureau of Domestic Species Indigenous to the Lower States, Department of National Resources, Office of the Interdepartmental Cooperative Studies, Section 43 of the Federal Grant Initial Application Process, Bureau of Private and/or State Government Utilities and Resource Conservation Office, Subsection of Congressional Budgeting Committee, Oversight Board of Duplicate Applications, Clearance Officer for Legislative Inaction, Room 341 of the

House Financial Obligations Act Fiduciary, Cubicle 61 in the Processing Room, Attention: Joe

Another important part of any capitalistic endeavor is the proper enforcement of the Privacy Act. To fulfill your obligations under this law, you can either take the advanced path, which requires anywhere from \$3,000.00 to \$50,000.00 to implement depending on the legal firm and the number of clients you might have, or you can use the basic form from Bruno's Law Simplified website, which essentially states that "We don't tell nobody nothing".

So, in conclusion, I believe there is merit for an enterprising young person to consider this as a future livelihood. If I have whetted your appetite for this endeavor, please feel free to conduct further research on your own time.