

Non-Owners

Marketing

Marketing is an essential part of any business and advertisements take your business to the public. Those involved with the hands-on end of the alpaca business, namely breeding, often don't have the time or the expertise to effectively market their philosophies.

Since everyone has different talents, it is wisest to recognize your strengths and then hire trusted colleagues to handle the areas in which you are less experienced.

Clearly, a symbiotic relationship between an advertising agency and the client is essential. After all, the business must be able to communicate its goals so the marketer can understand and capitalize on them.

Selle Design Group, for instance, provides breeders and others with design and marketing assistance. *Alpaca Culture*, owned and published by Selle Design Group, serves the alpaca industry by both reporting on news within the alpaca community *and* marketing alpacas to the general public.

Aspirational Owners

Many people are highly interested in alpacas but find themselves living in situations where they cannot raise them. Because now the majority of humans officially live in cities rather than rural areas, this usually means individuals are not large landholders. While living in an apartment makes keeping alpacas an impossibility, alpacas can still be avidly pursued. Some of the individuals who follow *Alpaca Culture* on Facebook and Twitter are aspirational owners; especially those located in far-flung nations where alpacas are not normally kept. Maybe they are just curious, maybe they will soon join the ranks of the owners. In any case, interest in alpacas is a positive thing.



Patio surrounded by countryside vistas at High View Farmhouse in North Devon, United Kingdom.

Employment

The alpaca industry provides many positions for a wide range of people in an economy that needs all the employment opportunities it can get. Farm hands, shearers, veterinarians, magazine editors, breeders, fiber lab testing technicians, show organizers and scores of other jobs owe their existence to alpacas.

Some models are traditional, such as a salaried position as a ranch manager. Other common jobs include farmers who cut hay for alpacas, drivers who transport alpacas and even paid positions in alpaca organizations. However, the reach extends beyond regular roles.

Special Needs Vocational Training

Kimberly Buechner Fouse and sister Julie Bodette Verhelst, through their company, All Things Alpaca, LLC, provide employment to individuals with developmental disabilities who might otherwise have a difficult time finding a job. All Things Alpaca, LLC works with clients of the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Epilepsy Center of Northwest Ohio in their therapeutic day programs.

Their signature product, the Alpaca Fleece-filled Bird Nesting Ball™ provides the clients with a vocational activity that fosters fine motor skill development, focus and attention, and creativity. Kimberly notes, "The clients work at a pace that is appropriate for their abilities. Staff provide supervision and assistance to ensure quality. All of our artisans are paid [per completed ball] as contractors. They are retired teachers and nurses, single women seeking extra income, high school students needing a summer job, and adults with special needs."

"The ball is interactive – the birds play with the fiber before flying off to build their nests. It is also a functional gift, and an exceptional nesting material for wild birds due to its natural properties."

Alpaca Bed and Breakfasts, Inns and Working Farms

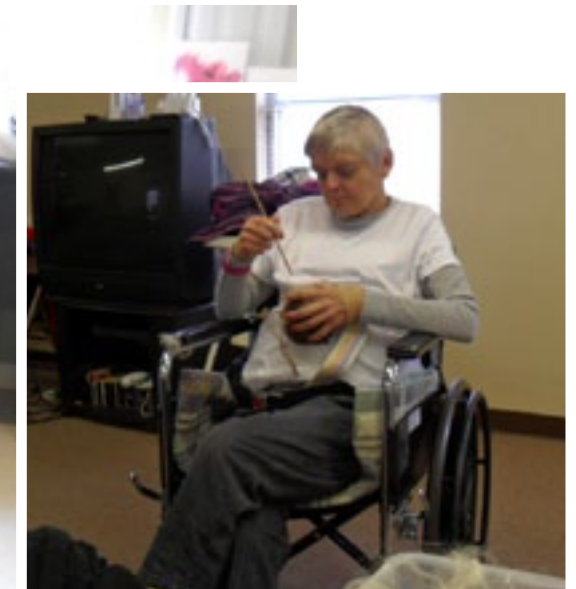
Many breeders cross-market their ranches as a place for people to get acquainted with alpacas, often through a bed and breakfast or eco-tourism model.



The Alpaca Fleece-filled Bird Nesting Ball™ (trademarked and patent pending) is handcrafted and distributed by All Things Alpaca, LLC. Creators craft each bird ball by hand, one at a time.

Kate Brookes owns a large farmhouse in the North Devon countryside in England that she describes as "an unspoiled part of the South West of England."

She explains how she and her husband ended up where they are. "My husband Simon and I have had alpacas since 1997. Once our 'herd' reached five alpacas, we realised we would need a place with more land (we only had 1.5 acres at the previous house) so we searched and found a derelict farm with 110 acres in North Devon, England in 2002. Since then we have fully renovated the farmhouse and also restored many of the stone walls and reinstated gates between fields."



"The alpaca herd is now approximately 40 alpacas strong. We have five stud males and about 25 females. I aim to have 10-12 cria each year. All our adult alpacas are really pets. We know all their characters and they are all familiar with being hand fed. By only having this number of cria it means we can get to know them all, get them used to people and match young alpacas to new owners when people want to buy them. I usually sell all my young males, and just keep one or two young females, to keep my number of future breeding females up. (Several of my females are now over 15