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# Arbor Day Foundation Children's Book Recommendation Report

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Arbor Day Foundation Children's Book Recommendation Report

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#### **Executive Summary**

The Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) has a mission to "inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees." This mission requires a critical underlying factor to ensure its success: education. In brainstorming ideas for a new project that ADF could undertake, our group discovered that there were a lot of gaps in our knowledge and understanding of trees, the impact that they have on the environment, and the work of ADF. Our lack of experience in these areas led us to believe that perhaps, there is an education gap that can be filled.

In pursuing the filling of this gap, we sought to think about ways that the Arbor Day Foundation could educate others about its work and the importance of trees, while still making money. Individuals need to understand *how* trees help solve global issues such as air quality, water quality, changing climate, deforestation, poverty, and hunger. Educating individuals on *why* trees are essential to our world will help inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees to fulfill the rest of the ADF's mission.

Our team recommends the Arbor Day Foundation pursue a business venture creating children's picture books to inspire both kids and the parents reading the books to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. When compared to ADF's current related business ventures, children's picture books add diversification while still furthering the mission. Additionally, we believe that offering children's books in ADF's portfolio of business ventures allows the organization the opportunity to further its vision of being a trusted leader in creating worldwide recognition and use of trees as a solution to global issues, as outlined in the organization's 2019 annual report (Arbor Day Foundation, 2019).

With 2022 being the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day and the 50th anniversary of the Arbor Day Foundation, we recommend that ADF have at least one book published and in distribution to help celebrate these milestones and promote book sales. We recommend 2022 as a launch date for additional books if ADF resources are available.

Our team recommends that ADF sell each book with a sapling for \$22-25. We estimate book sales being about 10,000 per book per year; however, as the series expands, each book promotes the others in the series, increasing sales. We estimate that to reach \$1M in revenue per year, ADF would need to publish three or four books. Each book, if selling 10,000 copies per year, should reach and impact 40,000 to 195,000 individuals (Figure 3).

In using current projects as a basis for these stories, the Arbor Day Foundation will have the opportunity to educate readers on the work that ADF has done and is currently undertaking, while simultaneously inspiring the next generation of tree planters.

#### **Customer Segments**

Our suggestion for customer segments is for the Arbor Day Foundation to pursue two niche markets: millennial parents and grade schools, especially those involved in the Tree Campus K-12 program. Based on millennials' environmental consciousness and reading habits and ADF's current plans for expanding their Tree Campus program, we believe that ADF is well-positioned to find success in these markets.

Each generation needs to do its part to help sustain the environment, but millennials, who make up approximately 30 percent of the world population, are arguably the most environmentally conscious (SUMAS Admin, 2019). They are unafraid to share their concerns on social media about any topic that moves them and want to encourage their friends, neighbors, and employers to also partake in major movements. Some of the causes forwarded by millennials include #BlackLivesMatter, #LoveWins, and #MeToo. This is a generation that cares deeply for the world as a whole and is willing to further the causes they care about. And this demographic is now reaching the age to have kids and raise families. Educating and priming an already concerned generation while simultaneously encouraging them to teach the next generation is the perfect opportunity for a profitable business venture that furthers the Arbor Day Foundation's mission.

A powerful way to educate people is through books, especially children's books. When people read children's picture books, it's not just the children who are learning but also the parent or adult who's reading it to the child. In addition to building language skills and inspiring visual thinking in children, children's books also increase engagement (EBSCO, 2017). Questions can be asked about the pictures, opening a dialogue between parent and child about potentially important issues. This engagement can spark interest in parents about planting and nurturing trees. As The New Yorker author Adam Gidwitz put it, "If you've got a kid's attention, why not put it to good use? More importantly, children want to be challenged, made to think and reconsider; they want to learn and grow and become wiser. Kids will like a book with a great story. But they will only love a book that makes them see the world in a new way" (Gidwitz, 2016, n.p.).

Research from the IBISWorld Children's Book Industry Report indicates that the market outlook for this industry is good, especially where the number of children is concerned. Industry Analysis Report, "...the number of children aged nine and younger is projected to increase at an annualized 0.4% [over the five years to 2023]. As a result, children's book publishers will have a wider audience for their products. Additionally, as disposable income improves in line with the economy and children are given more freedom to purchase books of their choice, publishers are expected to cater books more heavily toward children" (Moses, 2018, p. 9). Further research revealed that in addition to the children's book industry operating as a growing market, millennials are also avid readers themselves. Information collected by The Expert Editor from Pew Research and other sources reveals that millennials "read more than any other age group" (Brown, 2019, n.p.). In 2016, the percentage of U.S. adults between 18 and 29 who had read a book in any format in the previous year was 80%. Fifty-three percent of millennials had used a library in the last year (more than any other generation), and 92% of them read to research a specific topic. Finally, most readers between 16 and 30 purchased the books they read (56%), and they use reviews and social media to determine which purchases to make (Brown, 2019). Using this research, we assume that millennial parents will translate these habits to children's books, purchasing books for their children or checking them out from the library, and will be searching for books that include a lesson as well as a good storyline.

In regard to the Tree Campus K-12 program, we believe that the Arbor Day Foundation can use the newly launched program as a way to gauge interest in its books in providing them as resources for schools to use. Looking at the Learning Hub page in the Tree Campus K-12 part of the Arbor Day Foundation's website, we found that the "Illustrated Publications" available include only one illustrated children's book about "some of the animals that live in Oregon's forests" published by an outside company (Arbor Day Foundation, n.d., n.p.). While these resources serve as suggestions for teachers and educators, we believe that offering a book published by the Arbor Day Foundation itself would be a popular option. We believe this niche market will have very similar motivations in wanting to purchase children's books that tell great stories while providing learning opportunities for children at the same time. While the millennial market had higher profitability potential, the benefits of using designated Tree Campuses make it a perfect test market, as well as another source of revenue for a children's book series.

#### **Value Proposition**

Due to the competitive nature of the children's book market, we rated this idea low on the competition portion of ADF's Innovation Tool, but based on the market, we believe that the Arbor Day Foundation has the opportunity to make its mark in this space, which is why we rated it so highly in its ability to stack up against current offerings. There are many options to choose from when it comes to books that teach children about the environment. Standouts include Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax" and a new series written by Julian Lennon, the son of John Lennon. But besides these two offerings, there aren't any others that have been wildly popular, and not all of them deal with trees.

Brand and reputation have a lot of sway in this space, and one of Arbor Day's most valuable resources, and one that will make it competitive in this market, is its brand. A recent example of the trust in the Arbor Day brand is the organization's partnership with #TeamTrees. This movement began when Youtuber MrBeast was challenged to plant 20 million trees in honor of reaching 20 million subscribers on Youtube. On the organization's website, which has amassed donations for more than 21 million trees, one of the listed frequently-asked-questions addresses their decision to partner with ADF. The website states, "We quickly realized that to plant trees in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way we would need to partner with the professionals. After speaking with a number of people in the environmental space, the Arbor Day Foundation stood out as being the best. They are one of the largest and longest-running tree planting NGOs, with nearly 50 years of experience, and they have the same Charity Navigator rating as the American Red Cross" (#TeamTrees, 2019).

To best engage readers, our group recommends a series of children's books following the adventures of a central character. While our reasoning for a series of books is further outlined with the financial data we compiled on projected revenues and publishing costs, our rationale for creating a central character stems from the assumption that children will be able to follow this central character throughout several books, similar to the enduringly popular Fancy Nancy, Berenstain Bears, Skippyjon Jones, and Junie B. Jones children's series, to name a few. Given the research our group found on millennial reading habits and their propensity to research a particular subject, we believe that it would be worth it to include additional facts and figures at the end of each book to keep parents engaged. Parents would have the opportunity to talk about these facts and figures with their children if they would like, but we believe that this would also be an opportunity for parents to learn more about the work the Arbor Day Foundation does. Thus, each book would provide a learning opportunity for adults and children alike.

The Arbor Day Foundation has the opportunity to add even more value to children's books beyond the brand and the ability to educate: it can make its products more valuable to consumers. Given ADF's current capabilities in being able to distribute trees to Arbor Day Foundation Members, we recommend that ADF send a tree with every book purchased. This would allow the Arbor Day Foundation to charge a higher price than a typical children's book, while still providing greater value. While there are other publishers who pledge to plant a tree with every book purchased, the Arbor Day Foundation has the opportunity to set itself above the competition by giving children the chance to plant their own trees, thus furthering the Arbor Day Foundation's mission to "inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees", as well as allow it to further its goal for the Time for Trees® initiative to "plant 100 million trees and inspire five million tree planters" by 2022 (Arbor Day Foundation, 2019, p. 9).

#### Channels

Based on our recommendation for ADF to self-publish its children's books, we believe that the organization can sell them using existing channels: both via direct sales on its website, as well as connections that it has with its corporate partners and other NPOs. Using existing relationships with schools participating in the Tree Campus K-12 program, parents can be made aware of the resources used in their children's classrooms. The Arbor Day Foundation should consider using additional marketing efforts through social media to promote its books to those outside of the sphere of the K-12 Campus Program.

As the research mentioned earlier indicates, reviews and social media play a big part in millennials' decisions on which books to purchase. By partnering with a well-known influencer to review its book, the Arbor Day Foundation has the opportunity to reach even more parents who follow these influencers. For example, a quick search on Instagram of the hashtag "crunchy mom" (a term used to denote mothers who are proponents of organic food and holistic living) led us to discover a woman with over 64,000 followers. Having an influencer post pictures of the book, along with a tree that ADF sent with it, could have a significant impact on sales. We believe that social media marketing has the best potential to convey the value of ADF branded books to consumers, and the current capabilities that ADF has in distributing trees and other merchandise via its website means that book distribution could be a scalable option.

#### **Customer Relationships**

Our review of the Arbor Day Foundation's Annual Report leads us to recommend that the central character in the series participate in current programs already undertaken by ADF. For example, the first book would center around education on trees and their importance to the environment as the main character goes about planting a tree or assisting a child planting a tree in their backyard. In sending a tree with the purchase of a book, the children receiving the book would be able to mimic the actions of the character in learning how to plant their own tree. Sequels could include the central character participating in Rainforest Rescue® by helping to restore the rainforest and maybe even learning about shade-grown coffee. Another could consist of the character participating in Community Tree Recovery<sup>TM</sup> efforts in a part of the world affected by natural disasters, and finally, learning about the impact of trees on cities in a book about the Energy-Saving Trees® and Community Canopy<sup>TM</sup> projects. In including these efforts in its publications, the Arbor Day Foundation can use the knowledge it already has about its existing products to create a story that will both inspire and educate its readers: both children and adults alike. As mentioned previously, the end of each book could include a facts and figures

page for parents to learn more about the impact these projects have already had across the United States and around the world.

We believe that this focus on existing projects undertaken by the Arbor Day Foundation will allow the organization the opportunity to connect with its customers in a new way. While the children have the chance to grow attached to a central character, adults who read these books to children will be able to see and understand the real work and impact of the Arbor Day Foundation and the work that it's doing to create a better world for their children. This is why Arbor Day is so well-positioned in being able to publish a book under its brand and has the ability to create such positive relationships with its customers. While online selling is mostly self-service, ADF will be able to build relationships with customers using its social media channels, both in promoting the book but also sharing stories of children who have planted the trees they received. By engaging customers and continuing to release new books in its series, the Arbor Day Foundation will have the opportunity to hold on to customers longer.

#### **Revenue Streams**

Children's books are a profitable sector. According to IBISWorld, the children's book publishing industry in 2018 was a \$1.9 billion industry with a profit of \$101 million. One of the key success factors listed is the "establishment of brand names" (Moses, 2018). The Arbor Day Foundation is a well-known non-profit that is considered a reputable knowledge source on trees and the environment. This reputation will provide validity to any books ADF chooses to publish.

Much of the volatility in the market comes from books that became blockbusters, such as the Harry Potter, Twilight, and Hunger Games series. These books then enter boom and bust cycles that introduce a lot of volatility. However, these are young adult "coming of age" books and would not be in the subsegment of children's picture books, so this volatility would be minimized.

Revenue from this project would be solely driven by book sales, primarily from the ADF website. After research on typical children's picture book sizes, we propose a hard-cover, 10x8" book with high gloss color pages (Figure 1). Similarly formatted books on Amazon.com and at Barnes and Noble are priced at about \$18 per book. We propose a similar price for each of ADF's books if being sold independently. If each book was sold with a sapling, we suggest increasing the price to \$22-25. This would increase the value to the customer and increase profit margins for ADF.

There is a lot of variability regarding book sale estimates, but after research from numerous sites, we believe 10,000 copies sold per year per book is a conservative, but reachable, estimate (Holt, 2017). We believe this number to be conservative given the connections ADF has and the reputation it has as a reputable NGO. As mentioned before in the IBISWorld Industry Report, a key success factor in book publishing is brand recognition, which ADF enjoys. Regardless, this number would decline each year after publication, but revenue and sales of previous books would be bolstered as subsequent books in the series are published. If sold in a price range of \$22-25 at a conservative estimate of 10,000 copies per book, four or five books would need to be released to generate \$1M in revenue. However, we estimate that a series would bolster sales enough to lower this estimate to three or four books to reach \$1M in revenue.

#### **Key Resources, Activities, and Partnerships**

To effectively implement the sale of a line of children's books, Arbor Day Foundation will need to acquire: knowledgeable writers, effective illustrators, printing and publishing capabilities, and a launch team.

#### **Book Creation**

Before these books are printed, they must be created. The production of these stories is required to create value, reach markets, and earn revenues. This spawns the need for knowledgeable authors as well as effective illustrators. These creators will be the voice of ADF as they bring these tree stories alive; they are a critical human resource that ADF must acquire to implement this plan. To obtain these creators, our team recommends that ADF develop the human capital to produce these books internally; that is, find creators within the company and motivate them. ADF should capitalize on internal talent to create these books as current employees are already passionate about trees. In addition, children's books are typically less than 1,000 words (Backes, 2020), so this is not a significant time commitment. ADF will want to be intimately involved in the creation process as this product will ideally expose more people to Arbor Day's mission. Thus, ADF should help their creators as needed throughout this process.

Our team did research outsourcing writing to ghostwriters as an option for creating these books. From this research, ghostwriters would considerably reduce profits, though it would reduce time spent on writing internally (Ennis, 2016). It's also challenging to identify a children's book ghostwriter, though ADF could pursue this option (Ennis, 2016).

Like the writing partnerships, illustrating partnerships are critical to the success of this idea as it allows the books to become engaging and connects readers to the story. These partnerships enable ADF to gain access to resources that enhance the quality of their books. The team recommends either using ADF photographs as the story backgrounds with the addition of a character or hiring an illustrator for all parts of the books. Choosing to use ADF's pictures would help connect children to real-world trees and reduce the illustration costs. Illustration costs typically range from \$120-\$600 per illustration, so fewer of these would help reduce costs ("How to Find...", 2020). However, most children's books use illustrators throughout. There are many options to using an illustrator, including many freelancers, which gives ADF a lot of flexibility ("How to Find...", 2020).

#### **Publishing and Printing**

Printing and publishing capabilities are an extremely valuable resource needed to implement this idea. ADF will need to secure a means of production for the books before being able to sell them. Due to the significant capital expenditure required to create in-house publishing capabilities, the team recommends that ADF partner with a company that has these physical resources in place.

We recommend partnering with a printing company as this would be the most costefficient option and allows ADF the most control over their books and their profits ("Publishing Contracts...", 2006). We do not recommend partnering with a publisher because while a publisher may help some with advertising and distribution when publishing children's books, they take a large cut of the profit compared to self-publishing. The cost-effectiveness of using a printing company will be covered in the next section.

#### **Book Launch**

To market the launch of these books, the team has identified a need for an internal launch team. The promotion of these books is critical to their sale, and a launch team will meet this need. We recommend an evaluation of the current marketing department on their ability to handle the high-volume promotion of these books. ADF may also need to hire people knowledgeable in web design to ensure the ADF website is properly equipped for the expected volume of book sales. Securing this distribution network will be critical for the success of this business venture.

#### **Cost Structure**

Regarding the printing of each book, we reached out to a contact at Walsworth Publishing Company to obtain cost estimates for printing the picture books. Walsworth is based in Missouri and prints most of the high school yearbooks used across Nebraska. From their cost write-up, printing 10,000 copies of the proposed children's picture book would cost just under \$23,000 (Figure 1). This breaks down to an estimated cost of \$2.29 per book with additional copies to be printed at \$2.07 (Figure 2). This leaves plenty of margin for the other costs associated with publishing the book and for ADF to earn a profit.

A significant component of this venture is story ideation and writing, along with illustration. While the writing of the stories could be outsourced, keeping the stories within the company is where ADF adds value. From everything we've witnessed in working with ADF, the company is filled with people who are knowledgeable and passionate about trees. We recommend ADF harness this knowledge and passion and encourage employees to write books, as mentioned before. Employees would need to be paid for the time they put into the endeavor, but given that children's picture books are less than 1000 words and the stories would revolve around what ADF has already done, the time and money devoted to writing should be less than outsourcing. Likewise, if ADF utilizes photos from their events in the books, this will help minimize illustration costs, as mentioned before.

We saw in the organization's annual report that ADF uses soy ink and recycled paper on its printed version. Should the company desire to make its children's books more environmentally friendly, research that we found indicates that soy ink is still a cost-effective option. The website stated, "The prices of soy inks are competitive with conventional inks since most of the cost derives from the color pigments used and not the vehicle portion of the ink formulation. Because soy ink provides more intense color, printers may not use as much ink. As a result, more materials can be printed with less ink and thereby reducing their costs" (Prisma, 2010, n.p.). The website also stated that soy inks are more environmentally friendly since soybased ink can be removed from paper more easily during the recycling process. In looking into prices for recycled paper, we found that paper that is 100% post-consumer waste (PCW) recycled paper only comes uncoated, while children's books are printed with coated paper. Other options that ADF could pursue, however, include paper that is Green-e Certified, made with renewable energy, or FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) Certified, meaning that "the paper comes from responsibly managed forests" ("8 Tips...", 2017, n.p.). Working with its publisher, ADF could have the option to print in many ways that would have a smaller environmental impact.

#### **Key Performance Indicator: Impact**

One of the most significant factors ADF looks for is how many people any project will touch. Like the book sales estimate, this is a highly variable number. But if we go off the impact of a single book selling 10,000 copies, we can arrive at an estimated range of impact; however, a few assumptions need to be clarified.

#### Household Impact

We estimate each book sold to a household would impact at least four people. While children per household have been low in recent years, the majority of kids have at least one sibling that would also hear the story (Duffin, 2020). We also estimate that each book would be read to the two kids by at least two other people, whether that be parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or babysitters. We also find it highly promising that more than a million millennial women are becoming mothers each year (Livingston, 2018).

#### **Tree Campus Classroom Impact**

According to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the average class size in primary schools in the United States is about 21 students. Add in a teacher reading the book to the class, the book reaches 22 individuals when in a classroom. Some schools also have book sharing between classrooms, increasing the impact of a single book.

#### **Total Impact**

From this, we estimate that 10,000 copies of the children's picture book would reach 40,000 to 195,000 individuals, depending on how many of the books go to homes or classrooms (Figure 3), influencing thousands of potential tree-planters across the country.

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## Appendix

	Figure 1: Cost Estimate from Walsworth Publishing Company
Childre	an'a Paak

Children's Book			
10 X 8			
32 Text pages plus Endsheet and Cover			
Body - Four-color process throughout Endsheet - No printing Cover - 4-0-0-4 (four-color process) plus standard	gloss film lamination		
Body - PDF files on electronic media. Endsheet - None Cover - Application files using a recent Mac or PC	version of QuarkXPress or Adobe Ir	nDesign.	
Body - Digital Content Proofs (not color accurate) Endsheet - None Cover - Digital Contract Proof (color accurate)			
Body - 100# House Matte #3 Endsheet - 80# White Uncoated Endleaf Cover - 100# Litho Label C1S - 98 Pt Cover Board	t		
Case bound - Smyth sewn - headbands - bulk page	ck in Walsworth cartons		
1,000 copies 5,000 copies 10,000 copies	Base bid \$ 5,160.00 13,050.00 22,930.00	Additiona \$	al Copies 2.90 2.17 2.07
	10 X 8 32 Text pages plus Endsheet and Cover Body - Four-color process throughout Endsheet - No printing Cover - 4-0-0-4 (four-color process) plus standard Body - PDF files on electronic media. Endsheet - None Cover - Application files using a recent Mac or PC Body - Digital Content Proofs (not color accurate) Endsheet - None Cover - Digital Contract Proof (color accurate) Body - 100# House Matte #3 Endsheet - 80# White Uncoated Endleaf Cover - 100# Litho Label C1S - 98 Pt Cover Board Case bound - Smyth sewn - headbands - bulk pace 1,000 copies 5,000 copies	10 X 8 32 Text pages plus Endsheet and Cover Body - Four-color process throughout Endsheet - No printing Cover - 4-0-0-4 (four-color process) plus standard gloss film lamination Body - PDF files on electronic media. Endsheet - None Cover - Application files using a recent Mac or PC version of QuarkXPress or Adobe In Body - Digital Content Proofs (not color accurate) Endsheet - None Cover - Digital Contract Proof (color accurate) Body - 100# House Matte #3 Endsheet - 80# White Uncoated Endleaf Cover - 100# Litho Label C1S - 98 Pt Cover Board Case bound - Smyth sewn - headbands - bulk pack in Walsworth cartons 1,000 copies 5,000 copies 5,160.00 13,050.00	10 X 8 32 Text pages plus Endsheet and Cover Body - Four-color process throughout Endsheet - No printing Cover - 4-0-0-4 (four-color process) plus standard gloss film lamination Body - PDF files on electronic media. Endsheet - None Cover - Application files using a recent Mac or PC version of QuarkXPress or Adobe InDesign. Body - Digital Content Proofs (not color accurate) Endsheet - None Cover - Digital Contract Proof (color accurate) Endsheet - None Cover - Digital Contract Proof (color accurate) Body - 100# House Matte #3 Endsheet - 80# White Uncoated Endleaf Cover - 100# Litho Label C1S - 98 Pt Cover Board Case bound - Smyth sewn - headbands - bulk pack in Walsworth cartons 1,000 copies 5,000 copies 5,000 copies

		-		
Trim size	10x8			
Page count	32			
Bind type	Casebound			
Page material	Coated paper (100#Gloss)			
Cover material	Hardcover			
Total quantity	1000	5000	10000	
Base bid	\$5,160	\$13,050	\$22,930	
Cost per book	\$5.16	\$2.61	\$2.29	
Additional copies	\$2.90	\$2.17	\$2.07	

### Figure 2: Cost Breakdown by Book

## Figure 3: Impact of Single Book

Number of Book Copies	10,000
Household Impact	4
Classroom Impact	22
Classroom Sharing - 2	44
Classroom Sharing - 3	66

Only Households	40,000
90% Homes & 10% Classrooms	58,000
Sharing Between 2 Classes	80,000
Sharing Between 3 Classes	102,000
75% Homes & 25% Classrooms	85,000
Sharing Between 2 Classes	140,000
Sharing Between 3 Classes	195,000

Figure 4: ADF Innovation Assessment Tool			
	Wt.		

	Wt.		
Model	20	Score	
1 People	5	7	35
2 Test	7	6.5	45.5
3 Leverage	4	10	40
4 Existing models	4	10	40
Financial	20		
5 Revenue potential	7	6	42
6 Capital required	5	7	35
7 Return delay	- 3	8	24
8 Diversification	5	10	50
Market			
9 Amount of Competition	4	2	8
10 In comparison to Competition	8	9	72
11 Longevity/durability	- 3	10	30
Mission	45		
12 Mission fit	10	9	90
13 Breadth (people touched)	9	5	45
14 Quality of experience	9	9	81
15 Depth (importance of issue)	9	10	90
16 Compell to action	8	10	80
Total	100	128.5	80.75