

# Auto Detailing Service

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Auto detailing (automotive detailing) is the art of making cars look better than new, far from a simple car wash auto detailing involves washing, drying, waxing, touch ups and much more. If you already have a passion for detailing then making the move from hobbyist to professional detailer will be a rewarding one. This home business is extremely affordable to start-up and can produce an excellent annual income in a short amount of time.

## Before The Start-Up, Let's Not Get Ahead Of Ourselves

The best candidates for starting an auto detailing service are hobbyists, however if you are keen to learn and think this is a job you, ll enjoy, there is no reason why you can, t learn the necessary skills. This job is hard work, you'll be using plenty of elbow grease and mostly working outdoors - if you enjoy a physically challenging day at the "office" then this is for you.

## The Start-Up

Depending on where you live you might be facing pretty tough competition. Starting out with a mobile service will be the most cost effective option and allow you to travel away from competition and establish your own area of business. To start you'll need a reliable and good looking truck. Clients will be looking at your own vehicle as a model of your skills so it important it's in good condition. Consider buying a classic truck, this will add character to your business and make it easier to stand out from the crowd when doing your daily rounds. Rising fuel prices will constantly eat into your profit margin so consider buying a diesel model that can be converted to run off used cooking oil or purchase a hybrid if you are in the new car market.

The move from hobbyist to professional detailer is a big one, the tools and supplies that lasted forever on your own vehicle won't do the same when used commercially. You'll need to outfit your truck with all the necessary cleaning equipment and supplies such as buffers, a water compressor, a vacuum cleaner, rags, cotton swabs and other interior cleaning items. If you plan to offer paint touch ups you'll also need to carry common colours and brushes for application.

It's important to buy good quality machinery that will last, don't be afraid to look for great bargains in the second hand market. It's equally important to locate the cheapest suppliers of consumables such as wax and shampoo, shop around and try to avoid purchasing from middle men if possible.

Finally you'll need a few general business items; a cell phone is essential as you will be mobile for most of your work day. You'll also need business cards and an invoice and receipt book. Getting an all in one business stationary package from a company like Elance.com can greatly increase the professional image of your business (The Work Pad's article on [business stationary](#) has more information). As your vehicle will be the most visible asset you own, you might also consider getting it branded with your logo and other signage.

## Making It Work

In any industry with heavy competition it's essential to create sustainable differentiators, something

that sets you apart from the competition and can't be easily copied. Build your service around impeccable attention to detail, value for money and convenience.

Regular work is the key to success in this business. Offer a range of packages in your price structure; offer both low priced options as well as "everything included" deals. Don't forget to also offer long term contracts, these ensure regular business no matter what the season or weather.

## **Marketing**

Market your service in the usual ways; post flyers in the vicinity you plan to work in, take ads out in the local classifieds and consider a placement in the Yellow Pages. Branding your vehicle (mentioned earlier) is an important part of getting your name out in the community. Finally, consider getting a simple business website built and listing it with niche directories and services such as Google Local if you live in the U.S.

## **Don't Forget**

Finding a reliable water supply can sometimes prove difficult; some detailers carry their own water supply, check out the water situation of your clients before making a decision.