

Pet Grooming

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With pet ownership on the rise there is no shortage of demand for pet products and services. One service in demand is pet grooming. Owners increasingly rely on pet parlors to keep their pets clean, groomed and free of fleas. If you absolutely adore animals this could be your next home business. The start-up costs are a little steep and the work is certainly tough but the potential rewards at the end of each day make it a work at home business worth investigating.

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

You don't need a qualification to start a pet grooming business. You will however need a love of animals, patience and an in-depth knowledge of animal behavior and grooming standards for all breeds.

The Start-Up

You'll need more than a desk and a converted bathroom; to make sure your business runs effectively you might have to spend up to \$10,000 on start-up. You'll need a fairly large room, preferably with outside access, grooming table, brushes, combs, clippers, wash tub with hose and fittings, shampoos, dryer and finishing accessories such as hair bows and ribbons.

Branding is an important part of all start-ups. Make sure your business is well branded right from the start by getting a professional logo, letterhead and business card designed. Depending on where you live you might also be permitted to hang a small sign outside your house.

With a full work schedule it's possible to earn back your initial investment in a year. Do research on the Internet and at local pet grooming parlors to determine the best price structure for your business. On average parlors charge between \$30 and \$60 per pet, depending on the treatments.

Finally consider offering your clients a few essential items to purchase. These might include pet grooming products, pet food and pet accessories such as collars, tags and dog baskets. Don't rush into this side of your business; start small and listen to your customers. If you're missing something essential they will most likely let you know.

Making It Work

It's possible to make a success of your parlor regardless of what the local competition has to offer. Differentiate your business by offering a well-branded and unique experience for both pets and their owners. How you differentiate your business is entirely up to you; pick-up and delivery, specialized services for popular breeds and free pet treats are all good places to start.

Make sure you provide a loving and fun experience for pets during grooming. Owners will readily re-use your service if their pets look happy and content when they pick them up, simply returning pets clean and sweet smelling isn't enough.

Once your pet grooming business is a success you might consider branching out into other related services such as pet walking, pet minding (babysitting) and breeding.

Marketing

Advertise in local newspaper classifieds, the Yellow Pages, direct mailers, flyers and on bulletin boards. Build business relationships by networking with vets, dog walking services, dog minding services, pet stores and anyone else in the pet industry.

Don't Forget

Keep a close eye on your use of supplies. The management of supplies and their cost can impact heavily on the profitability of your business. Always be on the look out for cheaper suppliers and perhaps even look at the cost of importing directly from the supplier. Any supply savings will go straight to your bottom line.