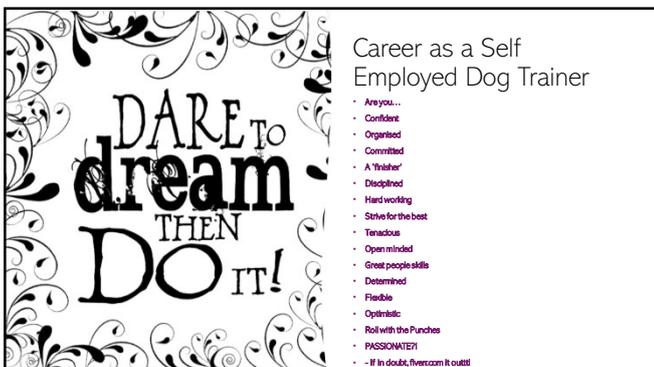




1



2



3



4

Know Your Career Opportunities

- Employed
- Dog training organisation – assistant dogs, guide dogs, police dogs, customs dogs, etc.
- Dog daycare with training
- Dog walking with training

• Or

- Self Employed... its not as scary as it sounds
- Family dog training?
- Dog sports?
- Agility?
- Enrichment walks?
- Puppy specialist?
- Senior dog specialist?

5

What is Your Dream Business – Now Twist It!

- Have your niche, aw heck, have several!
- Registering multiple social media pages / Websites can be beneficial
- What are your hobbies? What are you good at? What (other than dogs) are you interested in?
- Can you merge your business to create a unique service?
- For all you know, a dog walker could add laundry !

6

CHOOSE
A JOB YOU
LOVE
AND YOU WILL
NEVER HAVE TO
WORK
ANOTHER DAY

Know your Business

"My company / The company I work for (company name) provides (name what you provide) to help (define your clients) (solve a problem / add a pleasure) by (what do you do)"

My company, Nanci Creedon Dog Academy, provides adult education courses to help passionate dog lovers leave unfulfilling careers and become qualified and confident professional dog trainers.

7

Know Your Customers

You may think you know your market but the only true way to discover who you should be targeting is to ask them! Market research should always be done before launching a business.

This is the process of collecting valuable information to help you find out if there is a market for your proposed product or service. This information will be vital to fine tuning your business to match the consumers requirements. The information gathered from market research helps budding entrepreneurs make wise and profitable business decisions. You can find out how much consumers would be willing to pay for your product, where they are located, how old they are, what add on services they are looking for and so much more. The key to any successful business is to understand what it is that your customers want and giving this to them in a way that is profitable for you

Survey monkey asking dog owners you know existing staff at your local vets / pet shops / grooming parlours "can I pick your brain?"

If launching is a big gamble, try a soft launch before your hard launch

8

Who Are YOUR Customers?

- What services do they need?
- Where are they located?
- Can they travel?
- Where do they source their dogs?
- Where do they exercise their dogs?
- How much do they earn?
- What internet platforms do they use?
- What other hobbies do they have?
- Who are your potential customers? Are they male or female? Young or elderly? Single or families? Income levels?
- What are their needs? Can you add their needs to your services / products?
- What do they want? How can you give that to them?

9

Know your Competition – Know your Industry

- *What businesses in your market are the most similar to your potential business?*
- *Who attracts your potential customers (other industries too)?*
- *Is changing your business slightly to aim at a different target market possible?*



10

*Why are your competitors successful?
 What attracts their customers and what do they do to keep these customers?
 What is the unique selling point (USP) of their businesses?
 Price? Service? Convenience?
 How can your business perform at a more superior level to your competitors?
 What can you offer that they do not?
 Do your competing businesses have any vulnerabilities?
 Do they close Saturdays? Is their premises difficult to find? Do they have an unattractive website? How can you exploit this?
 What changes can you make to your business to become a more superior business to your competitors?
 Will your target market want these changes?*



11

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Does the best food in the area	Premises is hard to find, off the main street	They could relocate to a unit on the main street	There is a new pizza chain opening in the next town which does delivery
Very friendly staff	Do not deliver	They could begin doing party food.	The rates are due to increase in the area.

12

S.W.O.T. Your Competitors, then Swat Yourself!

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



13



14



15



Do I Need a Solicitor?

- Will you have staff?
- Contracts?
- Premises?
- Legal difficulties with clients?

"Do you promise to pay the bill, the whole bill and nothing but the bill?"

16



Do I Need Insurance?

"That takes care of health, life, homeowner's, and car — now, how about some alien abduction insurance?"

17

Talk to a Broker – But Arm Yourself with Knowledge

Public Liability
If your business has a premises, or if you enter on to the property of clients you will need public liability or mobile public liability.

Employers Liability
If you have staff then EL will cover you if any employee makes a claim against you.

Employment Practices liability
EPL will cover the employer if their error resulted in a legal case.

Key Person Cover
If a key member of staff is unable to work, KPC will cover the loss acquired while this person is out of work. Should you run a training company and your trainer becomes ill long term this policy will cover the losses incurred.
If a key person becomes injured or dies the insurance would cover losses incurred. Insurance to protect the profits during the transitional phase as a new key person is established.

Money/Cash Insurance
There are categories that you opt in for: Bounced cheques, money when in transit or on business premises during working hours. Money that is locked in a safe on site, or money in the back, money on premises over night, not in a safe, and any other money. You select which is adequate for your business.

Commercial Vehicle Insurance
If you are driving for work then you will need to talk to your existing vehicle insurance company, or shop around for a commercial vehicle insurer. Look at contents cover too.

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Professional Indemnity

As a professional, your clients are going to take your advice seriously and (usually!) follow through on your recommendations. For this reason, ensuring that you are qualified and educated in any area you are giving advice is vital. Should you give out incorrect advice to a client, and they seek compensation for following through on your advice, PI insurance will cover this compensation and legal costs. There are companies that provide full Employment Law and Health and Safety support contracts to employers for an annual fee. This type of policy will also be provided as part of their service.

When dealing with any type of aggression you must always take extreme care when giving any advice. Advice should always be written, and a copy kept (this can be an electronic document or copy of email sent) to ensure you can stand over the advice you gave, and provide clarity on what the advice was.

Building Insurance

If you own the premises from which you run your business you will require business insurance. If you are renting your landlord will be responsible for this expense.

Contents Insurance

CI will cover the contents inside in a business premises, the value at which is determined when entering into a policy. It covers Machinery, Plant, Fixtures & Fittings & All other Contents. Stock must be covered separately.

Product Liability

If you sell products then product liability will cover your business should you sell a faulty product that causes damage, injury or death.

Business Interruption

This covers your business should it be unable to trade for some time due to restrictions on your business premises. These could include fire, flood, unfit working conditions etc. The policy will cover you for the cost of losses incurred and is calculated on your gross income over a yearly period.

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Location, Location

Planning permission?
Complimentary / compassionate neighbours?
Nearby competitors?
Size? Lunchroom? Bathrooms? Storage?
Does the building need any repairs? If so, how much will this cost you and will it be worth the commitment?
Do the existing utilities-lighting heating and cooling-meet your needs or will you have to do any rewiring or plumbing work? Is ventilation adequate?
Are the lease terms and rent favourable? Remember to use your power of negotiation here.
Is the location convenient to where you live? After a long day at work you don't want a 60min round trip if you leave your house keys at work!!
Can you find a number of qualified employees in the area in which the facility is located? Or if you intend on taking a lot of work experience students are you on a bus route?
Do people you want for customers live nearby? Is the population density of the area sufficient for your sales needs?
Parking available? On a bus route?
Is the facility consistent with the image you'd like to maintain? If you are running a 5* pet boutique and bakery you would need to ensure that you are not surrounded by fun down offices and bargain stores.
Is the facility located in a safe neighbourhood with a low crime rate?
Is exterior lighting in the area adequate to attract evening shoppers and make them feel safe?



20

Risk Assessing

Become human and canine first aid trained
If you go down the premises route, engage with a health and safety officer
BeSmart.ie is Irish but very useful
www.hse.gov.uk
www.besmart.ie
Chemicals
Fires
Slip, trip, falls
Heavy lifting
Injuries from dogs
Electrical equipment



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What do I Charge?



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Different Pricing Strategies

- **Lowest Pricing Does Not Win Customers**
When looking for a trainer cheapest of course does not mean best – I would not recommend marketing yourself as the 'cheapest'
- **Competitive Analysis:**
Don't just look at the price your competitor is charging but look at what the client is getting for that price.
Can you add something special to your product or service to make your business more attractive and increase the value of what you offer? Class attendance flexibility? Better times?
- **Ceiling Price:** The ceiling price is the highest price that your target market can afford.
Your market research should help to tell you more about your industries ceiling price, as will looking at competitors pricing, though the highest priced competitor may still be priced below the ceiling price!
You can advertise your ceiling price, and also promote short term discounts to gauge the demand at different price structures.
- **Price Elasticity:** If there are very few competitors for your business then you will have a lot more freedom when setting your price.
If you have to stick to a range that consumers are used to (e.g. paying £10 for nail clipping) then you will have more less elasticity.
However, if you are providing a "pet manicure" service where dogs nails are clipped and painted, which is also more of a quality service (some nail artists would be much better than others) you can charge high prices if your service is good.

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Avoiding a Price War

A price war is a battle where both sides lose. Always!
If you are proud of your service and provide a great services, then you should always avoid price wars. Should a consumer ask you to match another providers rates you should proudly inform them that your price stated is fantastic value for the excellent service you provide.

Enhance Exclusivity

To avoid price wars aim as providing services or prices which are exclusive to you. Whether that involved being the only at-home boarder in your area who offers 24hr web cam, or being the only pet store that also offers pet care advice, have a niche which you can use as an explanation to why your business is superior to your competitors.

Value-added

Find value your business can add to stand out in the marketplace. Be the most unique business in the category.

Branding

Once your business has a great reputation clients will be happy to pay extra to use your services exclusively – if you are in a small town a wrapped vehicle is essential for brand recognition.

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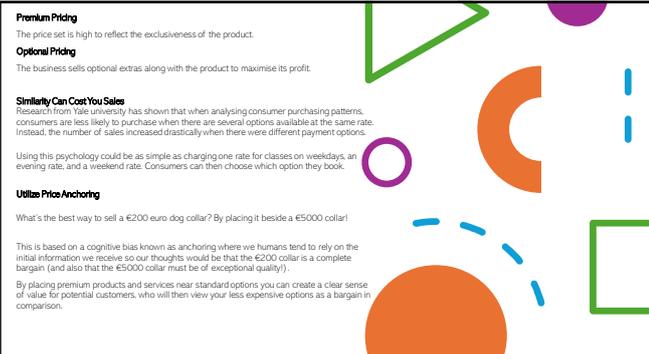
Penetration Pricing
Setting a very low price initially when launching a product or service then slowly increasing your price once you have a client base and an established market share.

Skimming Pricing
Initially setting your pricing at an all time high. You will find out what market is available at this high price, then slowly lower the price to make the product available to a wider market of clients. This way you will get the maximum profit at each market level – take care in turning away customers, so sell the value before mentioning the price.

Competition Pricing
Setting a price in comparison with competitors. You have three options and these are to price lower, price the same or price higher. It would be up to you to choose which option you go for and your reasons for why you've chosen that option.

Bundle Pricing
The organisation bundles a group of products at a reduced price. In many stores you will see buy one and get one free promotions (or BOGOF's) This is often done with services in the form of loyalty cards or bulk buying packages.

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Premium Pricing
The price set is high to reflect the exclusiveness of the product.

Optional Pricing
The business sells optional extras along with the product to maximise its profit.

Similarity Can Cost You Sales
Research from Yale university has shown that when analysing consumer purchasing patterns, consumers are less likely to purchase when there are several options available at the same rate. Instead, the number of sales increased drastically when there were different payment options.

Using this psychology could be as simple as charging one rate for classes on weekdays, an evening rate and a weekend rate. Consumers can then choose which option they book.

Utilize Price Anchoring
What's the best way to sell a €200 euro dog collar? By placing it beside a €5000 collar!

This is based on a cognitive bias known as anchoring where we humans tend to rely on the initial information we receive so our thoughts would be that the €200 collar is a complete bargain (and also that the €5000 collar must be of exceptional quality!).

By placing premium products and services near standard options you can create a clear sense of value for potential customers, who will then view your less expensive options as a bargain in comparison.

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Weber's Law

- According to the Webers Law the *just* noticeable difference between two stimuli is directly proportional to the magnitude of the stimuli. So how much a customer notices an increase in cost depends on the original cost. When it comes to price hikes, 10% is the figure that (roughly) clients will accept - though some more degradedly than others. Think of services or products that you currently pay for. Would a 10% increase stop you from making that payment again?
- Bundle your price. Charge high for 1 session, and lower for more.
- Watch your wording. Studies show that consumers are much happier to pay for nail clipping offered at a small fee of €10 instead of nail clipping fee €10.
- Offer your product or service appealing to the consumers desires. Make your service more enjoyable for your client. Dog walking €10 or Guilt free lazy evening with a tired dog at your side €10!
- Offering something 'free' can often boost your sales no end. Consumers are often more than happy to pay a higher charge for dog walking service with free back yard poop n scoop.

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Charging and Prices

Pre-Payment

Having customers pay for your service before they actually use it is often used as a source of start-up finance. This is unlikely to be beneficial in the canine industry, though is another option when sourcing start up finance.

A way you could use this would be, if through pre-launch promotion you have many enquiries, you can sell packages of your service / take pre-orders of goods at a discounted rate.

For instance, if you have been offering dog walking as a way to gain customers before launching a doggie daycare, and if you have 20 regular customers, you could attempt this option.

A month of daycare may cost €400, but you could approach your clients and let them know that you are looking for prepayment / customer investment to help your business get started. You could offer a month pass to daycare for €300 and throw in a free night home-boarding. Even if only 10 customers take you up on the offer, that's a €3000 investment into your start-up costs already.

You could approach your customers as 'investors' and this way they will feel more involved. They are likely to then promote your business to their other dog-owning friends.



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9991

Everywhere you go, you see 9! Buy a car for €19,999.99. Dog collar: €5.99, even an ice-cream cone for 99¢! But it works! Studies show that in the us when comparing women's clothing priced at \$35 versus \$39, the more expensive clothes outperformed the lower price by 24%!

Never Compare Prices Without a Reason

If you decide to promote a product or service by comparing your price with that of another, it's business suicide to simply say 'our kennels are cheaper than our rival kennels'. If you are promoting your low prices, you absolutely must always back this up with a reason why. 'Our kennels are 10% cheaper than our nearest rivals as our solar panelled kennels generate their own power keeping our costs lower, which we then pass on to you!'

Utilize the Power of Context

You can charge more if your customers believe you're worth more!

Using the power of context means showing your customers why you are superior, and they then would feel comfortable paying more. Walking into a 5* restaurant, waiters in black tie, string quartet in the corner, you automatically expect, and even want, to pay higher costs for a glass of sparkling water than in your local fast-food restaurant.

Setting your business up as an exclusive state of the art business will result in consumers expecting to pay more. This can be as simple as having a presentable waiting area with staff in ironed clean uniforms.

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Gathering Customers!

How do you make your millions? Having lots of customers. How do you get customers? Promotion/ What's the best way to promote any pet related business? Word of mouth! How do you get great word of mouth advertising? Great customer service! Your relationship with your customers is your bloodline to a successful career, don't undervalue it!

To be a great salesperson you will be able to convince anyone to buy anything once. However, to provide a great service related, or repeat purchase business you need to have fantastic customer service. Forming relationships with your customers is vital. You need to know everything there is to know about that customer and their pet.

"You will be judged by what you do, not what you say."

Remember that. Advertising and marketing and talking the talk is great. Showing up with a bunch of flowers when someone loses their pet will be remembered. You need to show your customers you value them.

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Gathering Customers

- Start collecting emails and phone numbers – build an email catcher on your website, do competitions on socials etc.
- Offer something free – like an open day or free / charity donation seminar on top tips

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Providing Good Customer Service

- Answer your phone**
If you cannot always get to your work station phone, have that number forwarded to your mobile. If you work in a noisy environment (grooming driers on) have a phone that lights up. If you can't get to calls, train someone who can. If you can't train someone, hire someone! Otherwise you're as good as closed!
- Don't make promises unless you will keep them**
- Clients need to be able to rely on you to trust you. And like all good relationships, trust is key. If you take a call on a busy day, don't promise to send on booking details immediately, explain you're rushed off your feet but that the booking details will be with them tomorrow morning at the latest. Broken promises scream 'we don't value you' and can kill a business, especially in the pet trade.
- Listen to your customers.**
- There is nothing ruder than not paying attention to your customer. When you visit a restaurant and request no onions and your meal comes with onions you're unlikely to go back!
- When your customers have something to share, good, bad or indifferent, give them your 100% attention. Don't look over their shoulder, don't check your watch. Listen. If you truly don't have time, explain why and ask when would be a good time for you to phone them back, but don't allow your customer to pour their heart out only to find out you've forgotten their cat's name!

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Deal with complaints

While none of us like to hear complaints, they will be the single best way to grow your business and satisfy more potential customer's needs. Once you have a customer it is so much easier to hold on to them than try to go out and recruit more, so invest in the ones you have, ensure they are happy with what you are providing, and ask them personally how they would like you to improve.

Be helpful - even if there's no immediate profit in it.

This is something you can do a lot in the pet industry. You have boarding kennels, and you have a client's dog who, in passing, mentions that Fido is petrified of dog groomers. They return two days later to collect their dog and you tell them you've phoned around and Mary down the road specialises in grooming nervous dogs. This will make Mary a profit, not you, but you cannot buy the feeling of gratefulness that this client will have toward you - and you can be sure that Fido will be a returning customer for the rest of his days.

6) Train your staff (if you have any) to be always helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable.

Your staff are your entire business. If they are substandard, you have a substandard business. If you offer dog grooming, your receptionist must be able to answer any question your clients may have, or if they can't they must be super friendly, ensure that they will find out the answer, and follow through on their promise. When hiring staff your first impression is likely to be similar with your clients first impression, so never underestimate your gut instinct when it comes to hiring staff.



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Reassure
"Well don't worry, you've come to the right place! We specialise in XYZ!"

Compliment
Ensure that at least once in that phone call you make that person feel special. Whether you exclaim "Flower! What a great name for your dog!", or you simply say "You're dogs very lucky to have an owner that is considering reiki to help her overcome her issues". Make sure it's natural and it shows that you are listening to that person, and you are just as crazy about their pet as they are!

Empathise
"Oh gosh, I don't envy you!" The adolescent phase is not for the meek! I remember feeling so frustrated when I got my first dog before I trained as a professional dog trainer! Then the guilt I felt for being grumpy with the pup, it's a vicious circle!

Lead the Questions to Your Package
You can have pre-arranged questions. "Do you prefer group settings or one to one? Are you looking to attend classes with other dogs or would you prefer private? Who wants to get involved in the training? Any other caregivers?"

Customise
So, based on what you've told me it sounds like the perfect package for you would be our outdoor family package, as Lily will be able to attend and we will be able focus specifically on recall in the park"

Create Urgency
I do currently have 1 spot left for next week (at this stage you've already established Sat am works best for them) if not, I'll have another slot in 2 weeks time?"

Or - Sell Timeless Packages
They can purchase the package and redeem when ready, especially if you're offering a short-term deal

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Take the extra step.
Don't be lazy. Standard email responses are quickly seen through. A dismissive "its on aisle 3" is unhelpful and rude. Take the extra step to show your customers how to use products. Address their needs before they knew they had those needs. Follow up on consults to ensure the client is happy with your consult.

Throw in something extra.
Whether its a discount on a repeat visit, or a doggie treat into the shopping bag, people feel special when they get something extra. If you run a grooming service give Daisy a bone treat on her way home for being so good. If you run a pet minding business offer a 10% discount off the next visit because their pet was so friendly, giving something extra will again leave your clients with an appreciation of you and your company that will stick with them.

If you apply these eight simple rules consistently, your business will become known for its good customer service. And the best part? The irony of good customer service is that over time it will bring in more new customers than promotions and price slashing ever did!



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Now that you have your clients, how do you keep them?!
Studies show that 43% of clients leave a business to which they used to be loyal because they fell out with a staff member. 30% leave because they no longer felt valued. Your customers are your Gods - treat them that way!

Constructive feedback will help to grow your business. After clients buy your products or use your service, getting a quick feedback form can be massively beneficial. There are many websites available, such as survey monkey, that will allow you to create free online feedback forms.

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All About The Money

- Sourcing Finance
- Unemployment Benefits
- Double Job
- Enterprise board
- Friends or Family
- Business Loans*



Often business start-ups are funded through investment from someone who has a personal relationship with you. This source of financing can be massively beneficial but is also one of the riskier sources of finance as with personal relationships comes added complexities.

If you are planning on approaching someone you know with the hopes that they will invest, you need to do so professionally. You need to almost pretend you are going on Dragons Den.

A proposal should be given to the investor in written format with details of what your business will do, how it will make money, and where your costs are.

This proposal must outline how much investment you are looking for, what that money will be spent on, how this money will be beneficial to the business, and your repayment plan.

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Your repayment plan would include information on where you will take in the finance to repay your investor, so details of potential customers, advanced orders, or promised clientele would be outlined here.

Often with investment there is a 6-month lag before repayments begin, but this would be negotiated with the investor.

One recommendation would be to put together a staggered repayment plan. For instance,

Mary borrows \$5000 from John.

She agrees to repay John \$5200 within 18months.

They agree that for the first 3 months there will be no repayments.

Months 4-6 Mary will lodge \$200 per month into John's account.

Months 7-10 Mary will lodge \$300 into John's account.

Months 11-14 Mary will lodge \$400 per month, and months 15-18 Mary will lodge \$450 per month into John's account.

This payment plan would instill confidence in John that Mary has a plan to return the loan quickly, and that Mary will be able to honour her commitment given her forecasts.



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LOANS



"Do you have any other collateral... besides this e-mail from a Nigerian prince?"

GLASSBERGEN

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Start Up Costs

- Start up costs are expenses that you are going to incur to simply start your business. These start up costs are likely, though not always, to be one off's, and are essential to the running of your business.
- Your start up costs will depend on your business. You will of course need enough finance to initially fund your start up costs, plus 3 - 6 months of running costs.
- Some likely costs would be as follows, Purchasing equipment, Advertising and promotional material and events, Vehicle, Computer, Website development, Software, and Training.

- Vehicle
- Computer
- Website
- Uniform
- Kit
- Possibly Stock
- Advertising
- Training / CPD

40



To VAT or Not To VAT

"No, it doesn't stand for vodka and tonic!"

41



Taking Payment

Prepay or not to prepay?
 Cash or not to cash?
 Online booking system or not?

When you first start taking payment from customers, it's going to feel strange! When you work with dogs you get to know your human clients quite well very quickly. You become part of their family and as you love their dog, it can often be easy to begin offering discounts or freebies. **DO NOT GET IN THIS HABIT!**

Once you offer someone a discount once, they're going to continually expect it. You are running a business, and while you do adore their pets, you are providing a service / selling a product that the client wants to use, and they should pay accordingly.

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Bookkeeping



**KEEP CALM
AND
HIRE A
BOOKKEEPER**

Bookkeeping is one of the most vital parts of running your business

As mentioned previously when discussing accountants, it is advisable to choose a bookkeeping software package that your accountant is familiar with, as this will mean that you will both be able to discuss your business finances without any translation confusion.

Plan ahead for large expenses.

You may pay your insurance annually, or need to purchase a new business vehicle. By having a constantly updated budget you will be able to predict which months would be best for making these purchases, or see large expenses ahead so delay other less essential purchases.

Log ALL of your expenses!

Running into Tesco's for milk and tea for your customers may seem like a little unimportant expense, but running a small business means lots and lots of little expenses, which when added up come to quite a number, so ensure to ALWAYS ask for a receipt and have a section in your wallet for keeping these receipts.

In case of an audit you may be questioned about increases in motor expenses, or additional "entertainment" expenses. To help remember what these were for, log on the back of your receipt.

43



Making a Scene

44



Dream to Reality

Right now, you have an idea in your head.

Make it EXIST!

Do people know about it?

Can they contact you?

Do you have voicemail?

45

Be More Social

Jack of all trades? Or MASTER OF ONE? Determine Your Platforms and GO FOR IT!
Location, Location, Location

CHAT GPT / www.keywordspeopleuse.com

MIND MAP YOUR CONTENT

46

No Bad News

47

Your Website.....

What Impression Do You Wish To Make? What's your vibe?
Your business cards, and business premises should work in harmony with the theme you decide to go with , so take your time in deciding.

Browse websites of competitors and see how you can improve.

Write down 5 words that you want to represent your company. Fun? Clean? Professional? Friendly? Skilled? Modern? Unique? Natural? Educational? Value for money? Exclusive?

Once you determine the angle ensure the graphics, font and lay out you go with reflect this theme.

Choose your tag lines and head lines carefully to reflect your theme.

Minimise clutter!

48

Your Website.....

Keep your content clear, text spread out, and font easy to read.
 Your location and contact us page must be easy to find, and your contact details should appear at the bottom of each page.
 Links to your social media pages should appear on each page and should all work correctly to increase the connection you make with visitors.
 Images on your site should be real pictures that you have taken. Whether it is the front of your building, pictures of your staff, or pictures of clients' dogs.
 You should regularly visit your site to ensure all links are working and ask visitors for feedback and advise on keeping your site performing well.
GOLDEN RULE - SPELLING AND GRAMMAR! Have several people proofread your site before it goes live.
 Answer Those Questions! A FAQ page, or blog page can include content that people search for
SEO BASICS!!!! Optimise your pages!
 Professional domain, email, and automatic responders, people!!



49



Find Your Niche

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Team Up With Complimentary Businesses



51

Advertising

Small town? Make a fuss!

Press releases for slow news day!

Text in for interviews – don't be afraid to be the expert!

Google ad words

Facebook marketplace
Like, comment, share!

Posters – fliers – local pet shops

Gumtree, Done Deal

Make deals with your mutual beneficals – host events



52



Wrap it Up

53

Google Maps and Google Websites



54

Press Release and Newsletters



Grab attention with a good headline
 Your headline should be in bold, colour, and jump off the page.
 Get right to the point in the first paragraph.
 Include hard numbers / write the article for them!
 Make it grammatically flawless.
 Proofread your press release -- and let a few other people proofread it as well -- before sending it out. Even a single mistake can dissuade a reporter from taking you seriously.
 Include quotes whenever possible.
 There is a source of natural colour that cannot be replicated: quotes. Including a good quote from someone in the company or close to the product/event can give a human element to the press release, as well as being a source of information in its own right.

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Press Release and Newsletters



Include your contact information.
 One page is best -- and two is the maximum.
 As with most good writing, shorter is usually better. Limit yourself to one page, though two pages is acceptable. This will also force you to condense your most salient information into a more readable document -- something journalists are always looking for.
 The body of the press release should read like an article you would see in the paper. Often journalists will simply copy and paste your press release into their paper, so be sure to write it in the 3rd person, and big yourself up!!
 Provide access to more information.
 Start your press release body with your location, business and target market. "Dog lovers of Cork can now avail of a 5* Pet Hotel!"
 Once you've finished your press release, read back over it. Does it cover the 5 W's? Who What Where When Why?
 Get that press release out there. EVERYWHERE! If it takes dressing up in a doggie costume and heading to your local park with 1000 print out's, do it!

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Happy, Smiley Customers

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Help me, I'm poor!



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Keep Customers in the Loop



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Rules for Non-Dog Owners who visit and like to compare about our Dogs

- 🐾 They live here. You don't.
- 🐾 If you don't want dog hair on your clothes, stay off the furniture.
- 🐾 I like my dog a lot better than most people.
- 🐾 To you, it's a dog. To me, he/she is an adopted child who is short, furry, has 4 legs and barks

A Happy Customer is a Pre Informed Customer

- One of the hardest things is when customers ask for a discount, so you need to know in advance what you are going to say. Will you offer a 10% discount for certain customers? Or perhaps once customers have spent X amount at your centre they get a 'gold standard' membership card which includes discounts and special offers?

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Following up an appointment with a phone call / text / email check in will show your customer that you appreciate and take on their feedback. It is also a very good way to find out if you are providing the great service you think you are providing.

ideally you want to find out ...
 were they happy with the service they received
 Did they think the price they paid as fair
 Did they feel that the employee was adequately educated and skilled to carry out the service
 were they happy with your facilities or would there be any adjustments they would like to see
 How likely is it that they will return to your business

You need to take on any information shared and decide whether or not you need to make any changes to how you run your business. If your customer did have any concerns, this is your opportunity to hold on to them as a return customer or lose them forever.

Were they unhappy with their groom, ask them to come back so you can make adjustments and offer a discount off their next visit. If they felt that your kennels were not clean enough, you need to let the customer know that you have taken on their feedback, improve your cleaning standards and then send on another email to let the customer know you have taken their comments on board, send on photos of your new and improved kennels, and offer that customer a free rights visit to see for themselves.

This is the difference between that customer advising that their friends and family avoid your company or recommend your company.

After training, ask did you understand instructions, were there any parts of the session that you felt could be improved upon, are you confident that the training plan advised will be successful?

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Dealing With Complaints

- Resolve a complaint in the customer's favour and they will do business with you again 70% of the time. Up to 95% of customers will give you a second chance if you handle their complaint successfully and in a timely manner.



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Handling Complaints Professionally

- Active listening - You can do this through maintaining eye contact, nodding and saying 'yes', 'ok', 'uh-huh'.
- Do not interrupt your customer until they have finished speaking, and even then allow a pause before speaking to ensure your customer is truly finished speaking.
- Smile - Not in a patronising manner, and not at inappropriate times, but smile where and when you can, to show that you are glad of the feedback and happy to take on the customers opinion.
- Smiling will help to regulate your tone of voice, keep yourself calm, and will disarm the thunder from your customers built up frustration.



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Show Your Concern
 This is your opportunity to again show your customer that the dogs well being is of paramount importance to you. Show how concerned you are over Fido's well being. Ask how has she been since the event, offer advice on how to comfort her. Perhaps email the customer some recall exercises.

Apologise without Accepting Blame
 A genuine apology straight out will massively pull the rug out from under the complainant. You can do this by letting the client know "I am so sorry that you were not happy with the product" or "I am truly sorry that you have had this experience. I understand it must have been an inconvenience to have had to come back out to our centre again to fix Fido's hair cut".

Resolution
 It is advisable to ask your customer what outcome they would like to see. You may find that the customer is happy to have you simply fix the problem. Perhaps they want their money back, or perhaps they want to sue you for all you own! It's important to establish what the customer believes is fair to determine what resolution you decide upon.

Remember that Complaints Contain Insight
 Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with a customers complaint, you will always be able to take something away from the complaint to learn from. Make sure you use each complaint as a learning opportunity, and a way to discover how to improve your business.



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Handling Complaints

- Hold eye contact
- Manage your posture
- Mirroring – where appropriate
- Avoid distraction
- Ask questions for clarity
- Summarise for the client
- Empathy, understanding and compassion "I know it's not easy to bring negative feedback to a business, so I want to thank you for being so honest and upfront with me. It gives me an opportunity to review procedure's from a clients viewpoint"



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How To Avoid Complaints



Clear communication



FAQ On Website



Terms and Conditions agreed to before booking, and reiterated in an email

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Choosing a Business Name

Your name is your identity, so choose wisely! It's important to choose a snappy, memorable business name that sums up what you do. While Annie's Pet Shop summarise what your business is all about, it's just not memorable.

Who Is Your Business?
If your business was a person, who would they be? Are they fun and funny? Or cute and childish. Maybe your business is a serious and professional character, or perhaps they are wacky and off the wall. Decide who your business is, and let that be your starting place for your name.

What Does Your Business Do?
Next, it's important that your business name represents what it is that your business does. The business name, ideally, should immediately tell a passer by what you provide.

Where Is Your Business?
Are you shipping poop scoopers worldwide? If so, Limerick Pooper Scoopers isn't an ideal name, though if you are a dog walker, Limerick Dog Walkers will keep you higher in search engines and will immediately let potential customers know whether or not you are in their area.

What Do Your Potential Clients Think?
Have you a database of potential compiled by now? You should, and this is your chance to touch base, let these customers know you're almost open, and ask for their opinion on your shortlist of names. There's no opinion more important than that of your customers so let them help!
You should always be asking your friends, family and the dogs on the street for their opinion on your names!

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Can You Spell Your Business Name??
If you decide to work on a combination of names, or an unusual name you need to ensure that people will be able to look up your details whether online or in the phone book.
Ask a sample of 10 friends and family to spell your business name. You should aim for 10 / 10 correct spelling. If you get two wrong answers it's time to go back to the grid board. 9/10 means you'll need to ask another 10 helpers! You need 19/20 correct.

Can You See Your Name?
If your business has many competitors, a great tip is to pick a name that conjures up a visual image: adding a visual element to your name will help people remember your name and increase the likelihood that they will recommend your business when asked for any pet shops in your area. For example, Mary's Pet Shop is a lot harder to remember than Smiling Puppies Pet Shop. Most will think of an image of smiling puppies, which has pleasant associations and will help store your business in their long term memory.

Is Your Business Pleasant?
It's nice to be nice, right? Where would you rather send your dog, Cranky Canine Torture Basement, or Play Bow Play School?
One of the key rules to naming a business is to keep it positive. A negative name, no matter how witty, will subconsciously lead to a negative association to your business.

Is Your Name Quick and Snappy?
The real struggle to deciding a name is to get as much information in to as few letters as possible. The longer the name the higher the likelihood that your clients will get it wrong, so ideally make it snappy!

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Business Planning

A business plan is your understanding of who your business is and how it will succeed. It's a You are going to need a business plan to start your business. It's likely that you will need to submit your business plan if you are looking for financing, or some landlords will look for a business plan before offering you a lease. A business plan is a fantastic way to sit down and truly think about your business, it's likely that creating a business plan will bring up aspects of your business that you hadn't even thought about.

Your business plan will also help you think about your long term goals.

Once you are operating it is a good idea to review your business plan every six months to ensure you are on track and heading in the right direction.

Writing a business plan is likely to be an overwhelming task. For this reason, as mentioned above, we need to change it in to lots of mini task.

Get out your sheet of paper and get mind mapping!



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Business Plan Format

There is a standard format to creating a business plan, and then your content is all your. A standard business plan includes the following sections, which we will explore in full below:

- Executive Summary
- Company Description
- Market Analysis
- Marketing and Sales Strategy
- Research and Development
- Day to Day Running
- Projected Financial Accounts
- Pre-Bookings
- Funding Requirements and Distribution

So now that we have our categories, we need to open up nine mind maps, one per section. The mind map is the fun part where any thoughts that pop out of your head are written down. You can refer back to your mind map once you get stuck in to typing up your plan.



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Day to Day Running

You need to illustrate your thorough understanding of how your business will operate on a day to day basis. Will you have staff from day one? What will your hours of operation be?

Have you wall charts where your day to day scheduling is outlined? Have you a training plan for new staff?

How are you going to get your products or services to your competitors? Are they going to buy in store? Are you going to travel to their homes to provide pet acupuncture?

Organisational skills – do you have 'em? If not, get 'em!

When running a business the desk in your head should always be clean! What I mean by this is that its not practical to keep all of your ideas, jobs, reminders and future plans juggling around in your head. No doubt some important notes will slide off the back of that desk never to be seen again.

From day one you need to train yourself to become an organisational machine. Your filing system should be easy to access, well labelled, and tidy.

A weekly and monthly 'to do' list

Your wall chart should state your daily 'must do' projects and should be wiped clean at the end of every day.

You should never ever have a customer contact you and say 'I was expecting a phone call but never heard from anyone'. This is business suicide.

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Personal Protection – Schedule It!

Be a two phones Tammy!!

Out of Office / Scheduled Replies

Hi Mary,

Many thanks for your enquiry. I have checked with our puppy trainer David and he is more than happy to have your whole family attend the training session. I have this slot on hold for you now (Tuesday at 7pm), would you like to confirm?

Kind regards,
Melissa



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Bedtime Light bulbs

Many entrepreneurs have their best ideas away from work. Ideas are great, and these flashbulb ideas keep us in work so they truly must be cherished. However, you also need to sleep!

When these light bulbs go off, grab your phone and simply email yourself. These ideas can be explored further tomorrow and you can rest well knowing that you've a great day ahead of you tomorrow.



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DO'S
 Live frugally and begin saving up money for operating your business.
 Learn your business by working for someone else in the same business first, or at least volunteer in a similar industry
 Consider the benefits of starting a moonlight business.
 Upskill where needed – lots of small business / accounting / sales / customer service courses available
 Objectively measure your skills and training against potential competition.
 Test market your product or service before starting or expanding.
 Talk to lots of people for advice.
 Don't delay! Imposter syndrome only goes away with practice

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DON'TS
 Quit your job before you have completed start-up plans and ideally double jobbed!
 Consider operating a business in a field you do not enjoy.
 Risk all the family assets. Limit your liabilities to a predetermined amount.
 Compete with your employer in a moonlight business.
 Be in a hurry to select a business. There is no penalty for missed opportunities.
 Select a business that is too high a risk or hurdle. Go for the 2-foot hurdle.
 Operate a business in which you must have the lowest price to succeed.
 Neglect to learn the negative aspects of an intended business.
 Permit entrepreneurial self-confidence to outweigh careful diligence.
 Allow the promise of a conceptual high reward to deter reality-testing first.

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Finally....

- Enjoy it!
- And if you're not, then change it!
- Life isn't fixed. This industry has more avenues than New York, enjoy your journey!

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