

Start an office cleaning business

Many people feel that the best cleaning business to startup would be an office cleaning service. The consensus is that it could be started part-time in the evenings and weekends and over time, and with relative ease developed into a full-time business while they keep their current job. As a cleaning service consultant I often meet people who are considering this plan of action.

While it sounds like a logical approach, there are pros and cons, as in all new enterprises. For example, it may surprise you to learn that an office cleaning business is in reality more difficult to launch than other cleaning services. Here are other elements to consider.

Access

When marketing your service, you will find it hard to get direct access to offices. They tend to be in office parks that are often in outlying areas of the town or city. This can actually be a positive, because if you can get into the park, you can efficiently drop off your marketing material to multiple businesses during one outing. The tricky part is you usually have to enter the business to drop off your direct marketing pack. With residential cleaning you can get easy convenient access by going door to door and leaving a flyer without having to talk to anyone. Up to five hundred homes can easily be flyered in one day. Getting access to twenty offices in one day would be a real accomplishment. For these reasons, the service is likely to take much longer than a housecleaning service to start up.

Once you have accessed the premises there is usually one person who intercepts and takes your marketing pack. Once you leave, they decide (based on their own biases and preferences) whether to pass your packet to the decision-maker, if it is not them, or whether to toss your packet in the round file (trashcan). The decision-maker may never know you were there. In comparison to starting up a

housecleaning business, directly flyering residences means that usually it is the homeowner who receives your flyer. Not always, but it is much more likely.

Momentum

Direct marketing for office cleaning has a slower return per effort than residential, so it can be discouraging. You do not build momentum quickly at a rate that entices you to get out there and do even more. The reward is slow. You just have to realize that it will take months instead of weeks to build the business up to full time. This is just a fact, especially if you are marketing in your free time above and beyond the hours you put in working your current job. I've seen many people who, as it turns out, are just not motivated enough to do that. So, they keep putting off flyering, or they do far too little of it, and much too slowly, to work up a decent amount of enthusiasm about it. It takes discipline, which can be hard for a lot of us.

Habits hard to break

There can be advantages to quitting your job and forcing yourself to make office cleaning work. You are more likely to get out there every day, all day long, because you really have no other choice. But after a full day's work, you are tired, and more likely to want to relax and reward yourself by spacing-out on TV or hanging out with your family and friends. This is human nature, and if it happens to you, it's because you are operating out of a common sense of earned free-time. It's a habitual force that anyone who wants to start up a new business must confront.

Scale

Offices, as opposed to commercial cleaning jobs, tend to be small in size to begin with. As technology improves and production grows more efficient, office spaces are actually

shrinking. Just as an example, we run our entire business in a 12 x 12 space. Ten or fifteen years ago, our business would have required three times as many on staff, and the additional desk-space to accommodate everyone.

So you really need to target complex, mid-size companies that have numerous employees and cubicles to make the business work for both you and the client. Small manufacturing businesses that make a product onsite is even better. For instance, a mail-order company that produces some sort of specialty device. Think in terms of light manufacturing companies that house both production and office space.

Typical return of averages

Typically, around three out of a hundred residents will respond. This is an average. Your response rate might be as high as seven callbacks, and as few as zero. But if you post a thousand flyers your response rate will be around three calls per every one hundred. That is for residential cleaning service.

Response to flyering for office cleanings will be closer to one call per every one hundred. It will take three times the effort, so prepare yourself. The problem with that is you need to do three times the work, and it can only be done during work-hours in the day time. If you are working days, you have a problem.

In this business you will get a poor response if you simply leave a flyer or marketing packet on Saturday morning. Your flyer will not get noticed or picked up until Monday or Tuesday morning. Many things can happen to that flyer. It could get blown away, it could get wet, or my favorite is that it could be intercepted by the current office cleaner. In my days cleaning offices, I frequently intercepted other cleaning service's flyers and "disappeared" them into the void, as

part of my ongoing campaign to secure my jobs from the competition.

Transitioning

Once you do have enough part-time work and you want to go full time, you have a problem. You are now making two incomes (one FT and one PT) and when you quit your day job, you are going to have only one part-time income. You need to get cleaning work fast. It is recommended that you have one month's-worth of income saved up, so you can take one month to hit it hard with an all-out effort at full-time marketing.

One of the pros of starting an office cleaning business is that once you do get the work, it is possible (preferable in many cases) to work evenings and weekends. No question, it does make an excellent second job.

More pros, now that you know the cons

The work environment is solitary and serene. You rarely have to deal with the client, unlike residential cleaning. It is in many ways easier because you are not cleaning multiple full baths and usually there is not a full kitchen to clean. You are also not dealing with children's bedrooms and half-baths, the worst and most time-consuming part of home cleaning. There is usually much less clutter and people tend to keep their work stations fairly clean.

An office cleaning business is a truly good way to make a living for all the reasons detailed on this website, just as long as you realize that starting up is a different process, it will probably take longer, and your expectations cannot be the same as for starting a residential cleaning service.