

How To Start and Operate A Financially Successful Handyman Business



A Quick Course By
A. William Benitez

**How To Start and Operate
Your Own Financially Successful
Handyman Business**

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Introduction

Thanks for requesting my Handyman Business Short Course. I wrote this course because the present economy with its high unemployment and extraordinary number of home foreclosures has created a difficult financial environment for many of you. Some have been searching for a good job for more than a year without success. The handyman business offers an opportunity to those of you with some handyman skills to begin making a solid income using these skills.

In addition to developing a solid and consistent income, your handyman skills could help you to establish the kind of business that is always in demand, even when foreclosures are rampant. People need to maintain and improve their homes and even banks and real estate companies need to repair homes before they can be placed back on the market. Using your handyman skills puts you in a position to benefit from this much needed work even when things are bad.

This Short Course contains valuable information to help you get started in the lucrative handyman business. Even though you received this course free, I know you will find it of real value and it contains a great deal of information that can help you start making money with your handyman skills right away.

Please contact me with any questions or comments. I look forward to communicating with you and will be glad to help you get started in a new handyman business. Please email me at bill@positive-imaging.com

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Lesson 1

Self Employment

Starting any business, including the handyman business, requires the choice to be self-employed. This seems simple enough but many fail to understand exactly what self-employment entails. Before you jump in and attempt doing handyman jobs for others you should understand the responsibilities that must be undertaken to be successfully self-employed.

Most handyman businesses are operating entirely by one person who gets to do everything. It all sounds simple enough but think about it for a moment. As the one person in your handyman business you go to the job site and perform all the work but that is just the beginning. Or, perhaps that is just the last step. There is much more that you must do yourself. Let's go through just a few things that require attention every day.

Getting Jobs – To succeed you have to obtain handyman work and that means you need new jobs

coming in regularly. You have to decide how to market the business and then you are also the salesperson who convinces the prospect to become a customer. That means taking calls in the middle of the jobs you are working on, making appointments to see prospects for handyman work, selling the jobs and preparing and executing the contracts for the work as necessary. Obviously, this is no small task since it has to be done in addition to getting the jobs completed promptly.

Recordkeeping – For any business keeping good records is essential. You will have to pay tax on your income and this requires good records to make certain you can deduct all your expenses and keep your taxes to a minimum. This recordkeeping is essential to keep you out of trouble with the IRS.

Handling Complaints – No matter how good you do your work, there will be problems. A customer may be unsatisfied because the job was not completed as they expected even though it was done correctly. Or, you may have too many jobs causing missed completion dates and unhappy customers. No matter what the problem, you get to handle it because you are that one person. It involves a lot of work and it must be done if you are to succeed financially as a handyman or in any business.

Tools – The purchase and maintenance of tools is a costly and time consuming job. It has to be done in a way that your business will absorb the cost of the tools,

parts, and time involved to keep the tools in ready to work condition. And, as with everything else, you are the one person who must handle it all.

Lesson 2

What Are Your Best Skills

While you can learn how to do many things around your home and that of friends and family, you may already have considerable experience repairing your own home. The best way to get started is to list all the various kinds of work you have you already done and are you good at. Learning what you do best is of great help in choosing the kinds of jobs you are willing to take with your handyman business..

Obviously, the more kinds of work you can do the more work you will be able to get during startup. This is important to keep the work and the income flowing. However, it would be foolish to take on jobs that you don't understand or those for which you lack skills. It may be OK to brazen it out when you are doing work on your own home, but you don't want to run the risk of messing something up for a customer. This can have a serious and long-term negative effect on your business.

You can count on a satisfied customer telling at least one other person about how well you did their job and that will certainly bring you more work. Unfortunately, you can also count on an unhappy customer telling at least nine people how you screwed up their job. This can be disastrous to a fledging handyman business. You will be much better off turning down work for which you lack skills. In time, you can overcome this lack of experience by practicing these skills on your own home or that of friends and family. Once you know that you can perform the tasks competently, you are ready to charge customers for the work.

Start by creating a list of all the kinds of jobs for which you have the skills and the tools. This ensures that you will do the good work better and faster, make more money, and in the process keeping your customers happy. These customers will then become your best salespersons and get you many referrals.

Lesson 3

Tools and Vehicle

If you are doing work around your own home then you already have a fair collection of tools. Make a list of all the tools you have that are still usable. If you have some essential tools that are in poor condition, replace them right away so you will have good tools when you go to every job.

It's not necessary to buy every tool you could ever need for every job. You could wind up with tools that you may not use for some time or not at all. Instead, after compiling your initial tools, buy tools only as you need them for the jobs that come in. This way you will be collecting the tools that you actually need and will use regularly and limiting your investments to spending money only from job profits. This avoids wasting money and reduces financial stress.

Most handyman work is done in someone's home or office and therefore requires a vehicle to serve as a tool repository. You want to have a vehicle that you can

organize to facilitate prompt and easy access to all your tools. All your tools and specialty supplies should be readily available and easy to reach. If after arriving at a job you have to spend a lot of time searching for the necessary tools, you are wasting time and time is money so your profits will be reduced. A well-organized vehicle, with a complete set of ready to use tools, will not only make the work go faster and more efficiently, it also projects a professional image to your customers.

There are different ways to handle the vehicle requirement. You can use your car with a well-organized trailer. You can use a pickup truck with either a commercial camper over the cargo area or large tool boxes fastened to the sides. My preference was the commercial camper style with three doors, one door on each side and a rear door, which allowed full access from all sides. The standard camper style with only a rear door is completely useless for this business because you would have to climb into the back of the truck to find and get tools. The final possibility is a large van which is the most spacious but also the biggest gas guzzler.

Any of these will serve the purpose and it is strictly a matter of preference. Regardless of your choice, the important thing is that it be well-organized and then kept in that condition.

Lesson 4

Licensing and Accounting

Maintaining professionalism in a business requires that you meet local licensing rules and keep accurate records for tax purposes. While a one-person business can remain under the radar of some of the regulations that are geared to large companies and corporations, it's important to avoid violating the basic rules of business set forth in your community.

These rules vary and you may or may not need an occupational license to function as a one person handyman business in your community. Most likely there will be some regulations and you should become aware of and adhere to them. Once you begin advertising your business, your activities will be public and government inspectors may visit your home or office if you fail to obtain required licenses.

The cost for these licenses, especially for one person businesses, is normally reasonable and having the

license will avoid many potential hassles as your business grows. You can usually get complete information about these requirements at the City Hall or County Offices but often complete information will be available on the appropriate government website. You may be able to get everything you need without visiting the actual office. More and more communities use the Internet to cut their labor costs.

Accounting is another important aspect of operating your own handyman business. The law requires that everyone pay taxes on their income. Since you are running a business, there will be income and it will be taxable. Accounting serves two important purposes. The first is evidence of the business you are conducting and the profits you are making. More importantly, it is evidence of your costs and expenses, which are deductible from your income. Without this evidence of expenses, you could be required to pay taxes on all your gross income. This would be a serious problem and is easily overcome with good accounting practices.

For more information check out my book:

The Handyman's Guide To Profit: Using Your Skills To Make Money In Any Economy – complete information at: <http://handyman-business-guide.com/>

Lesson 5

Getting Business and First Impressions

Once you have all your tools, vehicle, and licenses, you are ready to get started. The next step is critically important because it involves getting actual jobs which is the only way to make money. This means getting noticed by potential customers. Most people own homes or rental property of some kind. They are all potential customers but they have to know that you exist and can help them resolve repair problems.

Family and friends are the best places to start getting the message out. Let everyone know what you are doing and ask them to tell their friends and acquaintances. Start by contacting everyone by email, mail, or phone. Use the method best suited to each person. If you are on Facebook or Twitter, let people know but don't make it a big commercial. Just be informative since it is a part of your life.

Create or purchase business cards that state clearly what you do. Don't concern yourself with how fancy your card is but make it look professional and conveys the kind of work you do.

If possible, create a simple web site that explains the work you do in detail and tells a little about your skills and the way you handle the work. Make certain you put your web address on your business cards. As soon as you have customers who agree to be referrals, use their names in your web site. Ask them to send you testimonials and use them on your site. Make it clear that you are a highly competent and reliable handyman.

Always make a good first impression. Have a 30 second message memorized for when anyone asks what you do. When you go to check out jobs dress neatly and respond to all questions professionally. Explain yourself without hesitation and welcome all questions. Create an atmosphere so that even if you are the highest bidder, the prospect will want to give you the job. If you don't get the job, handle the situation courteously and they may call you again if their experience with the handyman they chose is not a good one.

Check out the Handyman Business Forum now at: <http://forum.handyman-business-guide.com/> to ask questions or make comments. Join the Forum today.

Lesson 6

Pricing and Contracting

While it is critically important to treat the customer professionally and courteously, it is just as important to treat yourself in a totally professional manner. Doing the work well is important but getting paid in full for your work should be equally important. If you don't get paid, your business cannot survive.

There are two important steps to the process of getting paid in full for every job. The first one is pricing. You must make certain that the price you charge for a job covers the full amount of the materials, your labor and that of any helper you use, and leaves you a fair profit. If you fall short on any of these, your business will have difficulties. So, it's important that you know the cost of the materials needed and have a good idea of how much time it will take to complete a job. You also have to consider other related and often on-going expenses.

The materials part is easy and is accomplished by checking regularly with your suppliers. On-going expenses are seldom difficult to calculate because they have to be dealt with on a weekly or monthly basis. The time a job takes is more difficult to calculate. Determining the correct amount of time a job will take requires experience so your figures will get more accurate as you complete more jobs. It's best to start by over estimating the amount of time a job will take so you avoid losing money.

Profit is something that is often overlooked. Individuals become accustomed to the idea of working for an employer and assume that they can only charge for their labor in addition to the cost of material. It's important to remember that you are no longer an employee. You are a business owner. You may be the person doing the actual work, but you still own the business. The business has to cover the ongoing expenses that are not directly related to individual jobs and make a profit to continue functioning. Failure to charge enough on each job to cover all of these means almost certain failure for your handyman business.

A critical part of charging enough and collecting for every job is preparing a good contract that is signed by both parties. Contracts should be as brief as possible while making certain that you collect in full for your work.

Lesson 7

Safety

This is the last lesson and most important lesson in this course. Most handyman jobs involve the use of power tools. These tools make the work easier and ensure that the job goes faster but they are also dangerous.

Safety is critically important when using power tools for two reasons. The first is that injuries are painful and sometime deadly and no one wants to get hurt. The second is that getting hurt can mean the inability to work for long periods. For a self-employed person this can be personally and financially disastrous.

Take special care when using power tools to avoid injuries. Never use tools when you are tired, sleepy, drinking alcohol, or using drugs. The chances of injury are increased significantly with all of these.

I hope you enjoyed this short course on the handyman business and I look forward to hearing from you with any comments or questions. Please contact me at bill@positive-imaging.com and I will respond promptly.

Thanks for requesting my Handyman Business Short Course. This course is completely free and I did not obtain your email address so you won't see any other emails unless you choose to contact me for additional information. I hope you will start your own handyman business and I would like to help you make it financially successful. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

I owned and operated my own successful handyman business for over twenty years. During those years I made mistakes but I learned from them and now I have written a book to help others make money with their skills right from the start and avoid the mistakes.

Please check out my book:

The Handyman's Guide To Profit: Using Your Skills To Make Money In Any Economy – complete information at: <http://handyman-business-guide.com/>

My experience in the handyman and woodworking business extends some forty years both in Tampa, FL and Austin, TX. I write all my down-to-earth how-to information based entirely on first-hand experience, not from research or theories. I know it works.



You can read more about my experiences at my blogs and web sites listed below or email me at bill@positive-imaging.com and I will answer personally.

Starting A Handyman Business Blog at:

<http://starting-a-handyman-business.com/>

Woodworking Simplified at:

<http://woodworking-simplified.com/theblog/>

Woodworking Business at:

<http://woodworking-business.com/woodworkbiz/>

Please email me and let me know if you found this quick course useful. I would appreciate hearing from you.

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