

How to Start a Cleaning Business

Table of contents

Why Start a Cleaning Business?	4
.....
What Type of Cleaning Business Should I Start?	7
.....
What Equipment & Resources Do I Need to Start My Cleaning Business?	11
.....
How to Write a Business Plan for Your Cleaning Company	16
.....
The Legal Requirements of Starting a Cleaning Business	20
.....
Advice on Advertising & Marketing Your Cleaning Business	24
.....



CHAPTER 1

Why Start a Cleaning Business?

Introduction

Decided that 2016 is finally the year for you start your own cleaning business? You've come to the right place!

We've put together this comprehensive guide to starting a cleaning business to help you learn the basics about beginning a company, from identifying a target market and writing a business plan through to choosing your cleaning products and marketing your services.

Is It Worth Starting a Cleaning Business?

It's suggested [by the British Cleaning Council](#) that the UK's cleaning industry is currently worth around £12bn, with almost 3 million households spending their well-earned money on well-deserved domestic help each year.

It's evident that there's [money to be made](#) in starting up a cleaning company.

Despite many families within the UK falling on hard times in recent years, spending a bit of cash each week to have someone do your ironing or clean your kitchen is one of those little luxuries that brighten up the darkest of days. As such, there is and perhaps always will be a demand for cleaning services, so from that perspective there is a reduced risk in starting your own cleaning business.

The Pros of Starting a Cleaning Business

Whilst it may be quite overwhelming to think of all the tasks that need to be completed before you start looking for business, there are also many positives to starting a cleaning company that will have you reaching for the mop and bucket in seconds. Take a look at the following:

- **Low start-up costs** – you can start a cleaning business with very little money. All you need to get started are a few basic cleaning products and the passion to succeed!
- **Very few overhead expenses** – it's unlikely that you'll need to rent or buy premises, buy a company car or pay utility bills, especially in your early days, meaning you can start your business with minimal monetary concerns.
- **Work from home** – with no office, shop floor or warehouse required you can run your business from the comfort of your own home.
- **Be your own boss** – setting up your own business means that you'll be working for yourself. You can set your own hours, have total control of expenses and pick and choose the jobs you want to do.
- **Flexible working** – being self-employed means you can work when's best for you, whether it's 7 days a week or mornings only.
- **No experience required** – starting a cleaning business requires no specific qualifications or certificates. All you need is hard work, determination and the desire to do well.

The Negatives of Starting a Cleaning Business

Having your own cleaning company and being your own boss won't always involve calling clients in your slippers from the comfort of your living room, however. Here are a few things you should be aware of before you begin:

- **It's tough, physical work** – cleaning is a highly physical job that involves repetitive movements, carrying heavy supplies, reaching high shelves and crawling on your knees to reach the corners. It's not for the faint of heart!
- **Income might be slow** – especially to begin with, you might not earn much money in the first months (or even years) of starting up your business.
- **It's a competitive business** – cleaning is such a lucrative market that start-ups are popping up left, right and centre. You'll need to keep your head down, keep on top of your competition and keep your focus on succeeding.
- **Jobs might take longer than you think** – it's so important that you get your timings right and leave enough time to get jobs finished. If people have a very messy house then what you expect to take you 1 hour might take you 3!
- **It's stressful** – managing work schedules, employee wages, legal compliance and advertising (as well as doing the actual cleaning) can take their toll when you're doing it all yourself. Make sure you factor in some down time.

Cleaning Success Stories

Many people have made their fortune as a result of beginning their own cleaning business – perhaps because it's so simple and cost-effective to do compared with other business genres. Here are a couple of our favourite tales of soap-fuelled success:

Molly Maid – Molly Maid is one of the most iconic cleaning company brands, recognisable by their iconic pink and blue branding.

Their story began in Ontario, Canada, in 1979 with Chris and Adrienne Stringer. The Stringers believed that busy homeowners would much rather be spending their free time doing activities which are much more enjoyable than cleaning – and the Molly Maid brand was born.

Since 1979 the company has become an international franchise and performs more than 2 million cleans each year around the world.

Mopp – Mopp is a UK based company that brings cleaning into the digital age.

Its founders, Pete Dowds and Tom Brooks, started the business after failing to find a last-minute cleaner for a house party. Their website and app helps customers to book a cleaning service within a matter of seconds, with next-day appointments available.

Mopp put their success down to their intense, creative marketing techniques. The pair uses a combination of offline marketing, social media and video content to great effect. On their YouTube channel – Mopp TV – the company offer free weekly cleaning tips and work hard to get people involved with the brand for the benefit of the customer.

Since their start-up, the Mopp team now employ 35 people in their London HQ and have more than 1,000 cleaners available for hire.

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of various cleaning-related icons. These icons include brooms, dustpans, gloves, buckets, mops, sponges, spray bottles, and washing machines. The icons are rendered in a light blue color against a light yellow background. The pattern is dense and covers the entire page.

CHAPTER 2

What Type of Cleaning Business Should I Start?

10 Essential Traits of Cleaning Business Owners

First of all, you need to truly assess whether or not you have the right personal characteristics to start a cleaning business.

Whilst anyone with enough drive can start their own cleaning business, there are certain attributes and skills which, if you possess, will give you an advantage over competitors. You don't need to have qualifications in cleaning but it does help if you can demonstrate the following:

1. **Perfectionism** – cleaning is well-suited to those with an eye for detail and who won't rest until a job is done 'just so.'
2. **A love for organisation** – if you love tidying, organising and re-arranging then cleaning will be a satisfying outlet.
3. **Stamina** – cleaning involves tough, physical work so it's important that you're fit and able to keep up the pace.
4. **Lone working** – to start with you may be the only person in your company and you're likely to be cleaning whilst clients are out. A love for solitude can be beneficial.
5. **Not easily bored** – some tasks may be repetitive or un-stimulating for the mind so mental stamina is just as important as physical.
6. **Trustworthiness** – if you're spending periods of time in someone's home or office then they must be able to trust you with their possessions and house keys.
7. **Likability and friendliness** – if you're unpleasant or brash with your clients then they're unlikely to recommend you or come back for repeat business.
8. **Administration skills** – being self-employed means that a large part of your role will involve sorting out tax, wages and invoices etc so being good with papers and figures is essential.
9. **Time-keeping** – nobody likes to be left waiting – and it also looks unprofessional – so being able to keep track of appointments is vital.
10. **Creativity** – this will help you to advertise your business. Unique marketing ideas are much more memorable and will help you to get your brand out there.

What Type of Cleaning Business Should I Start?

Before you can begin to stock up on soap and pick up the polish, your first important decision is to decide what kind of cleaning company you actually want to start. There are 3 main areas that you may want to consider:

Domestic cleaning – this involves cleaning people's homes and is usually done whilst the client is out of the house. You can work solo or hire a few employees to help you but the jobs are likely to be small and manageable. You might want to specialise in kitchens and bathrooms, focus on vacuuming and dusting or offer other services, such as washing and ironing. The start-up costs for a domestic cleaning business are low and you can often choose whether you use your own products or ask the client to supply them.

Commercial cleaning – this involves cleaning business premises, such as offices and shops, usually outside of working hours when the premises is closed. You're more likely to need a team to tackle commercial cleaning tasks as the premises can be a lot larger than your average home. Your role in this sort of business could be more managerial and the start-up costs higher if you need to buy specialist cleaning equipment or transport.

Specialised cleaning – this can involve a range of different cleaning tasks depending on what you choose to be your speciality. For example, you may choose to focus on window cleaning, carpeting cleaning, graffiti removal or cleaning cars. The start-up costs for a specialised cleaning company can vary but it's likely that you'll need to buy specific cleaning equipment and products. You'll also need to consider whether you can do the cleaning by hand or if you'll require machinery.

Tidying or Cleaning?

Whilst pretty straightforward, this is a question you need to think about very carefully before starting your cleaning company, particularly for domestic and commercial businesses.

Consider this: when you offer to clean a client's kitchen or office, have you offered to wipe the surfaces and mop the floor? Or have you offered to wash the dishes and tidy away the papers before you wipe the surfaces and mop the floor?

It may not seem like a big deal to have to tidy up someone's coffee table before you can clean it, but tasks like these can quickly add up and contribute towards lost production time. When you determine your services it's therefore important to clarify exactly what you do, and don't, want to include in the price.

For example, imagine turning up for a 2-hour cleaning slot to find that you need to spend half of it tidying away children's toys. You'll have to stay an extra hour, or come back another day, to make sure you get your actual cleaning tasks completed. Either that or you can only complete half the job and will have to let your client know why!

Remember what tasks the client specifically requested, and make sure to ascertain this information from the onset; the last thing you want to do is play a guessing game and end up tidying away some important papers when the client only wants their children's bedrooms cleaned!

Tips for Doing Market Research of Your Local Area

Market research is an essential first step of starting a business as, without it, you may find yourself diving straight in at the deep end struggling to stay afloat due to lack of demand for your business.

You can never assume that you already know everything about your target market – how do you know what they're looking for or how much they're willing to pay you? Market research will help you to answer these important questions and prevent you from making costly mistakes.

But where do you start? First of all ***get yourself amongst your customers***. Knock on doors and call around your local area and actually speak to the people who you hope will become your clients. A warm smile and a friendly approach can work wonders and you'll be surprised at how many people are willing to talk to you. Remember to ask key questions such as:

- Would you be interested in paying someone to do your cleaning?
- Which tasks would you like help with?
- How much would you be willing to pay for the service?
- Would you prefer a flat hourly rate or a variety of prices dependent on the task?
- At what time of day would the service be most beneficial to you?

- Would you prefer to supply your own cleaning products or have us bring them?
- Is there anything you wouldn't want a cleaning company to do?
- Is there a cleaning service you wish a company offered, but currently doesn't?

By asking everyone the same set of questions you'll be able to collate the results and find out which choices are the most popular in your area. You'll also be able to identify any potential gaps in the market where you may be able to thrive.

For example, have several people identified that they'd love someone to vacuum their hallway and stairs? Perhaps people have suggested a need for a more environmentally friendly cleaning service, or maybe several people have stated that they're looking for a company offering better value for money.

Another market research method is to **take a look at your competition**. Have a look online, in the phone directory and local business guides, or simply ask around and find out if there are other cleaning companies operating in your area. You'll need to consider:

- Which cleaning services are already on offer?
- Are there any services which aren't offered locally
- What prices do other companies charge?
- Which companies are the most popular and why?
- What methods of advertising do they use?
- Do they have any unique selling points (USPs)?

Who's Your Target Market?

This is another important question to answer as it'll help you to determine what type of cleaning business you want to start and what kind of questions you should ask customers during your market research phase. Think about whether you want to focus on:

- Cleaning for individual clients in their houses.
- Cleaning empty rental properties on behalf of a landlord or letting agency.
- Cleaning offices.
- Cleaning schools etc.

The type of individuals and/or establishments that you target can drastically affect your business. For example, will you be cleaning everyday family homes or will you be cleaning luxury apartments? Are your clients hiring you as a service within their own business, like office managers and landlords? Does your target market value 'green' cleaning, high-end cleaning products or value for money the most?



CHAPTER 3

What Equipment & Resources Do I Need To Start My Cleaning Business?

A List of Basic Cleaning Supplies

Now that you've done your market research and determined the type of cleaning business you want to start, it's time to get shopping for the basics! Not every cleaning company will require the same products as it depends on what exactly you'll be cleaning but a few ideas to get you started include:

- Sponges and scourers.
- Yellow dusters/microfibre cloths.
- Glass polishing cloths.
- Cleaning brushes.
- A mop and bucket.
- A dustpan and brush.
- Protective gloves.
- A plastic caddy to carry the essentials.

The type of individuals and/or establishments that you target can drastically affect your business. For example, will you be cleaning everyday family homes or will you be cleaning luxury apartments? Are your clients hiring you as a service within their own business, like office managers and landlords? Does your target market value 'green' cleaning, high-end cleaning products or value for money the most?

Of course this is just a basic list and is best suited towards a domestic cleaning business. If you have chosen to operate a commercial or specialised cleaning business then you may also need specialist equipment such as vacuums, pressure washers or hoses.

Bigger companies, or those that are required to travel between locations, will also need to consider their transport arrangements. You could think about using your own car or you could hire or purchase a company van to get from place to place. Don't forget that this will be an extra outgoing cost for your business.

And where would a cleaning company be without their cleaning products? If you're a domestic or commercial cleaner first you need to determine:

- Are you bringing your own cleaning products to a job?
- Will the client be providing you with their own products to use?

Some clients will prefer to provide their own cleaning chemicals if they have particular preferences or if they're allergic to certain ingredients. Always find out in advance of the job whether this is the case. It's a good idea to have a supply of basics to hand regardless though just in case what you're using runs out or if there's been an oversight and the client isn't actually supplying their own.

Here's our list of **15 essential cleaning products** which you may wish to invest in:

1. Furniture polish.
2. Glass cleaner.
3. Multipurpose cleaner.
4. Disinfectant
5. Mildew cleaner.
6. De-scaler.
7. Degreaser.
8. Floor cleaner.
9. Bleach.
10. Sanitiser.
11. Toilet cleaner.
12. Washing up liquid.
13. Oven cleaner.
14. Laundry detergent.
15. Dishwasher chemicals.

Warning: All of these chemicals are classified as **hazardous substances** and must be handled, used and stored with care. If you're using these then you should also wear protective equipment, like a pair of Marigold gloves. Head to the COSHH section of this article to learn more about hazardous substance safety.

What Are a Cleaning Company's Start-Up Costs?

A domestic cleaning business can be started for very little money, especially if you're the only person working and you don't have any other employees. This means that your only start-up costs will be those demonstrated in the basic cleaning supplies section – unless your clients are providing their own products and equipment in which case your costs will be even fewer!

You can save more money on buying the essentials by buying in bulk online, from wholesalers or at the supermarket. It's often cheaper to buy direct from the manufacturers too so be sure to check their websites and mail order catalogues.

To obtain a basic range of cleaning equipment and chemicals, expect your start-up cost to be around £150.

Of course this will vary depending on what you do and don't need and it doesn't take into account extras such as transport, a company uniform or an advertising budget.

A domestic cleaning business can be started for very little money, especially if you're the only person working and you don't have any other employees. This means that your only start-up costs will be those demonstrated in the basic cleaning supplies section – unless your clients are providing their own products and equipment in which case your costs will be even fewer!

You can save more money on buying the essentials by buying in bulk online, from wholesalers or at the supermarket. It's often cheaper to buy direct from the manufacturers too so be sure to check their websites and mail order catalogues.

To obtain a basic range of cleaning equipment and chemicals, expect your start-up cost to be around £150.

Of course this will vary depending on what you do and don't need and it doesn't take into account extras such as transport, a company uniform or an advertising budget.

If you provide your own cleaning products you may find that you can actually charge slightly more for your services so don't feel too disheartened by your initial spend – it's likely that you'll recuperate the costs fairly quickly once business gets going.

If you own a more specialist cleaning company then the start-up costs can be much more substantial, especially if you have to invest in specialist cleaning equipment. In these cases always shop around to find the best deal.

Hiring Staff

In your initial start-up days you may choose to go it alone and run your cleaning business on your own, either to keep costs down or because you're waiting for your business to take off before hiring your first employees. On the other hand, perhaps you're starting up your company with a friend, family member or colleague, or maybe you've already promised a job to your daughter, nephew or neighbour.

No matter the circumstances, chances are there'll be a time when you want to hire employees for your business. So how do you do this?

Finding suitable workers is often a fairly easy task as cleaning is a job that all types of people can do. You don't need to check whether people have the right qualifications or experience – you simply need to find people who possess the list of desirable traits from the start of this article. As long as your employees are hardworking, full of energy and trustworthy then you're good to go!

And don't forget that staff = increased expenses. You'll need to pay them at least the minimum hourly wage and may need to supply them with a uniform as well as their own set of cleaning supplies.

Always Follow Safer Recruitment Practices

Finding and recruiting workers for your cleaning business won't be an arduous task, and you're bound to have numerous applications, but that doesn't mean you can or should simply hire the first person you see. If you own a domestic cleaning business then clients will be trusting you with their homes, their possessions, their pets and their house keys so it's vital that the people you employ are as trustworthy as you are.

Before hiring anyone be sure to ask for, and follow up, references. Speak to the person's current or previous employer to find out how they behave at work and ask for a character reference to assess how they are as a person.

It's also a good idea to apply for a DBS check too. The Disclosure and Barring Service will help to prevent you from hiring unsuitable people. A standard check will inform you of any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that the person has on their record. You don't want to employ somebody who is going to steal from clients' homes!

If you need to learn more about safer recruitment best practices then take a look at our [safer recruitment online course](#).

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of various cleaning-related icons in a light orange color. These icons include a washing machine, a vacuum cleaner, a mop, a broom, a spray bottle, a bucket, a pair of gloves, a sponge, a dustpan, a trash can, and a scrub brush. The icons are arranged in a grid-like pattern, creating a textured, thematic background.

CHAPTER 4

How to Write a Business Plan for Your Cleaning Company

How to Write a Business Plan for Your Cleaning Company

All businesses need a plan and, without one, you're unlikely to attract clients, get your company name known and make a profit. But it's not all bad news, as chances are you've already started creating your plan without realising it! If you've done some market research or started to look at the equipment you need to buy then you're already beginning to put together a plan – now you just need to get it down on paper.

Your business plan is merely a short document that sets out your objectives and helps you (and other potential investors) see exactly what your aims are and how you're going to go about achieving them. The plan will help you to keep a focus on what's most important in order for your business to thrive.

The idea of writing a business plan sounds quite daunting but it needn't be a complicated job. In fact, one side of A4 paper should do it! Your goal is simply to get all the key information written down in a logical order.

Which Topics Need Including in a Business Plan?

The topics that you need to include in your cleaning company business plan are:

- The name, address and contact details for your business.
- Information on the management of the business; who's in charge?
- Your company's Mission Statement: in one sentence, simply summarise the overall aim of your cleaning business.
- Where you will operate from; where you will be based (including if it's at home) plus information on any overhead costs associated with the business premises.
- Your start-up costs; what cleaning equipment and supplies do you need to buy? Do you need to pay anyone a wage? Have you got insurance?
- The everyday costs of the business; how much will you spend on a weekly or monthly basis? Include all overheads and outgoing costs, like top-up cleaning supplies, petrol and wages.
- Funding and financial projections; where do you plan to get the money from to start the business and what are your projected profits/losses for the next month, year, 2 years etc? How will you maintain the cash-flow?
- Will you work on the business full-time? What will your working hours be?
- Does your business have any local competition and what is the USP of your own business that will make it stand out from the crowd?
- What is your marketing strategy?
- Your pricing strategy; what are you going to charge for your service? Will you charge per job or per hour?
- How you will be paid for your service; do you plan to issue invoices, have a monthly subscription for clients or ask them to pay in cash on the day?
- Are there any other logistics you need to consider, such as transport?

Download our free, ready-made, [one-page business plan template](#) and begin writing all this information down to get you started. You'll notice that it groups some of the questions above into six key headings but do feel free to add in your own sections to ensure that all the relevant information has been recorded.

The Prince's Trust website may also come in handy if you want to learn more about writing a business or financial plan and download more complex templates and tables.

Should I Operate as a Sole Trader or a Franchise?

If you take a closer look at some of the other cleaning companies out there you'll notice that they're divided into two formats: sole traders (like Mopp) and franchises (like Molly Maid). But which is best?

Sole traders are self-employed. If you're a sole trader then you own the company, you work for yourself and you hire your own employees. You're also responsible for paying your own tax and sorting out your own insurance. Sole trading means that you have complete control and responsibility over how your business operates but you'll have to work very hard in order to get yourself noticed and make money.

Franchises are part of a company owned by someone else. The idea is that you 'buy' your cleaning business from the larger company and then you operate using their brand name. The company will also give you all the information and training that you need to deliver your service, plus it means you can get started with a business name that's already well-known which may help you to attract clients. However, franchises can be expensive to start (it might set you back £10,000 to 'buy' the company name) and it doesn't necessarily guarantee that you'll see more success than if you began a company from scratch.

10 Things to Consider When Creating a Budget

Budgeting is a key part of your business plan as without it you're likely to accidentally overspend one month and find you can't afford to pay your employees the next. It'll help you to keep track of how much money is coming in (your income) and how much is going out (your expenses) so that you always know how much you have available to spend, to spare or to save. Consider the following tips when creating your cleaning company budget:

- 1. Cut yourself some slack!** Don't plan to use every penny that you have and keep in mind that whilst some outgoing costs are fixed, others can vary. Always overestimate your expenses so that you don't find yourself in the red when something was more costly than you planned.
- 2. Delete unnecessary expenses.** If your expenses are higher than your income then take a look at which of them could be removed or cut. Could you use a cheaper brand of cleaning chemicals to reduce costs, for example? Or perhaps you don't really need to dry-clean your uniform every week?
- 3. Review your budget every 6-12 months.** Take a look at your cash flow and see whether you need to make any adjustments. This is also a good time to do a price comparison on cleaning products or insurance to ensure you're getting the best deal
- 4. Have a 'rainy day fund!'** Make sure you have a contingency plan in place in case your expenses change – how will you cope if costs go up, if the minimum wage changes or something breaks?

5. **Plan on a month-by-month basis.** Does each month in your business see the same income? Perhaps you have busy periods in the summer where you see your income rise and quieter months in the autumn where your income drops. Make sure that you plan your budget according to your predicted schedule.
6. **Time is money!** Don't forget that the time you spend doing the job equates to the amount you'll earn. Set time limits for tasks so you don't spend longer on them than necessary, thus losing essential income.
7. **What are you going to charge clients?** This will have a huge impact on your budget as if you don't have enough money coming in then you won't have enough cash to spend on what you need. Think about whether you'll charge clients per job, per hour or per month. Most domestic cleaners average around £10-15/hour.
8. **Don't forget start-up costs.** It's likely that your first year may be more expensive than others as you'll need to incorporate your business start-up costs. You may want to set aside part of the budget each month to buy something new or you may be paying off debt from a one-off start-up purchase.
9. **Don't spend all your profits!** When planning your budget you may find that your income is higher than your expenses and this means profit – which is great! However be careful not to plough all of this money straight back into the business. Instead keep some aside and pop it in your rainy day fund for emergencies.
10. **Consult a financial adviser.** If you need help with budgeting or want to create a more thorough financial plan then consulting a financial adviser can be a good investment. Don't be afraid to ask for a helping hand if you need it!



CHAPTER 5

The Legal Requirements of Starting a Cleaning Business

Whilst you don't need a specific licence to start or run a cleaning business, there are certain UK government requirements that you need to comply with in order to trade legally. This includes ensuring that your business is registered and that you've taken out the correct insurance to protect yourself and your employees against costly claims.

Register your business – if you're self-employed then you must [register as a sole trader](#) with HMRC to show that you own the business. You'll also need to [register for self-assessment tax](#), meaning that you calculate and pay your own tax each year. You can do this at the following links:

Get the right kind of insurance – there are two types of insurance that are essential for all cleaning businesses and a third if you hire staff. These are:

- **Public liability insurance** – this protects you against claims from third parties in cases of personal injury or property damage, including accidents. It means you'll be covered in case you accidentally break someone's heirloom vase!
- **Professional indemnity insurance** – this protects you against claims from unhappy employees or clients. It means you're covered if a customer refuses to pay an invoice or if you need to rectify a mistake.
- **Employers' liability insurance** – if you have any number of staff then this protects you against claims from employees if they have sustained an injury or illness whilst working for you.

To purchase insurance you can simply do an online search and take a look at the options available. Most insurance isn't expensive and you can pay on a yearly or monthly basis. If you don't take out the correct insurance then you risk hefty expenses if someone makes a claim against your company so it's worth doing!

Pay the National Minimum Wage – if you employ workers in your cleaning company then it's essential that you pay them fairly, and at least the minimum amount set by the UK government. The [minimum wage rate](#) depends on the employee's age and is usually updated every October. As an employer you must keep on top of any changes and ensure that your workers are paid correctly.

Cleaning Chemical Safety (The COSHH Regulations)

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (or COSHH) is the UK law that requires all employers to control the risks from harmful substances. As the owner of a cleaning business it's your responsibility to ensure that the chemicals you use are handled, stored and used safely so that they don't cause harm to you, your workers and your clients.

But how can you ensure chemical safety?

All cleaning chemicals are hazardous substances and must be treated with care.

The people who use them must be correctly trained and understand the risks, plus how to minimise them. If used incorrectly then cleaning chemicals can cause all sorts of ill-health problems, such as asthma, skin irritation or even poisoning. They may even have flammable or explosive properties if they're not handled and stored in the correct manner.

And it's not just a legal requirement to use your cleaning chemicals safely. Doing so will protect the health of your workers and will reduce the likelihood of expensive medical costs and lost productivity. If a staff member is off work ill then you'll lose a vital pair of helping hands and your income will begin to drop.

To comply with the Regulations you should first carry out a risk assessment. This means taking a look at your cleaning chemicals and the places you'll be working and identifying what may pose a risk to health. Read the warning labels of your cleaning

14 Top Tips for Cleaning Chemical Safety

Follow these top tips to ensure that you're using your cleaning supplies safely:

- **Avoid the use of harmful chemicals where possible.** Substitute the chemical for a less-toxic one wherever there is a choice.
- **Never mix chemicals together.** It could make them incredibly toxic or cause a chemical reaction or explosion.
- **Don't use more than is needed.** Always follow the chemical's instructions about how much to dispense.
- **Don't use chemicals past their use-by dates.** Safely dispose of any out-of-date chemicals as they may become hazardous (as well as less effective).
- **Prepare a fresh solution each time.** Don't re-use chemicals or carry the same bucket from house to house.
- **Use a measured dispenser.** This ensures you get the right amount each time and helps to avoid accidents.
- **Dispose of hazardous chemicals safely.** Most cleaning chemicals are water-soluble so can be poured down the drain, but those that aren't mixed with water must be disposed of via an authorised waste carrier.
- **Be careful not to spill anything.** If you're manually dispensing products then avoid spilling them, especially in areas where they may come into contact with people's food or skin.
- **Store chemicals in labelled, sealed containers.** Keep them in their original packaging so you always know what they are and so you can access their labels' safety information.
- **Keep your chemical storage area tidy.** Even if it's just a box that you carry from job to job, ensure that it's clean and secure so the chemicals can't spill.
- **Don't use broken equipment.** Keep everything that you use clean and in good repair to avoid accidents or contamination.
- **Open a window or turn on the extractor fan.** Ventilation is particularly important in small spaces, like bathrooms, where fresh air cannot flow as freely and you may become overwhelmed with the smell of chemicals.
- **Train your employees.** Ensure that they also know the risks and how to handle, store and use cleaning chemicals safely.
- **Provide protective measures.** It's unlikely that you can avoid the use of chemicals altogether so make sure you and your staff are protected from the risks. For example, wear gloves, long sleeves and a protective face mask where required.

What Training Should I Take?

Qualifications aren't needed to run a successful cleaning business but if you want to help yourself rise above the rest then it's essential that you know what you're talking about.

Taking an online course is an inexpensive, convenient way to bump up your knowledge and ensure that you understand all the different areas of your business. Training is also useful for your staff members if you want to educate them in safe working practices. High Speed Training offers the following basic-level, online courses which you may find beneficial:

Health and Safety Courses

[Control of Substances Hazardous to Health \(COSHH\)](#)

[Level 2 Cleaning in Food Premises](#)

[Infection Control and Prevention](#)

[Level 2 Health and Safety Induction](#)

Business Courses

[Starting a Business](#)

[Safer Recruitment](#)

[Customer Service Skills](#)

[Sales, Pricing and Marketing Skills](#)



CHAPTER 6

Advice on Advertising & Marketing Your Cleaning Business

You've written a business plan, identified your target market and bought the required cleaning equipment. You've even done your budget for the months ahead and got yourself a uniform – but where are your customers? Whilst the planning stages are essential for your business to be a success it's your book of loyal clients that's the difference between make and break.

So how can you advertise your business and attract your target market?

Think back to the market research stage of your business start-up. Hopefully you identified what other cleaning companies are (and aren't) currently doing and you came up with a unique selling point (USP) for your business. Ideas for USPs include:

- Use only eco-friendly, 'green' cleaning products.
- Use luxurious, high-quality products.
- Take a personal, tailored approach for each client.
- Pride yourself on customer satisfaction.
- Offer a bonus service, like dry cleaning.

Your USP is what makes you stand out from the competition and is what will make your customers come to you rather than someone else. Try not to just focus on being competitively priced but also offer a competitive service – concentrate on the things that money can't buy.

5 Easy Marketing Strategies

Getting the word out to potential customers is easier than you think. You don't need an enormous marketing budget to get your voice heard and never underestimate the power of word-of-mouth. Your aim is to get the name of your cleaning business into the everyday lives of your target clients through memorable (but not intrusive) advertising. These five marketing strategies will help you to get started:

- 1. The humble flyer.** Don't undervalue the importance of traditional, glossy flyers! These small pieces of paper can be reproduced in large quantities for a very low price and allow you to display all of the information you need in one place. Use an eye-catching image and ensure your business name and contact details are prominent and then deliver and pin them around the neighbourhood.
- 2. Knock on doors.** Another somewhat old-fashioned idea but one that can really work for local businesses. Take some time on an early evening to visit houses around your area and inform people of your company. Be friendly and chatty – not pushy – and you'll be surprised at how many people are willing to have a conversation.
- 3. Get social online.** Online marketing doesn't need to cost you a penny and is great for getting your message out there. Use Facebook and Twitter to gather a following and regularly update them with images, cleaning tips, useful links and special offers. Don't forget to interact with your customers too – a friendly and helpful attitude will make you memorable as a fantastic company.
- 4. Advertise in the right places.** Stick your flyers in places where your target market will see them. Use the school playground, coffee shop windows or on community message boards online – wherever is most appropriate for you.

5. **Be creative and quirky.** Fun and unusual adverts are the most memorable. Why not try printing your details on a yellow duster rather than a flyer? Or attach a free tea bag with the message 'put your feet up and we'll do the rest'? You could use a postcard, a Christmas card or a mini jigsaw puzzle. The more unique you are the more likely people will remember your name!

How to Develop Your Cleaning Brand

Your brand identity covers everything from your company name through to the logo, fonts and colours that you choose for your flyers and uniforms. But have you given it much consideration?

Your brand needs to represent who you are as a business. It needs to communicate the image you wish to portray and entice customers to interact with you. For example, if you only use eco-friendly cleaning products then you may wish your brand to feature shades of green and images of trees to represent your environmentally-friendly approach.

- Your company logo needs to be unique, simple and different from everyone else's. Make sure that it's clear and easy to reproduce on flyers, uniforms and transport etc. Ideally it'll feature an image or graphic alongside your company name.
- Your company colours should reflect the image you want to portray. Are you an all-women company? Then maybe you'll choose pink. Do you offer a high-end service? Try golds and silvers. Want to look sleek and modern? Opt for a monochrome theme. Take a look at this article from smallbiztrends.com which shows the power of colour and how it can affect a person's reaction.
- Your company name also needs to be unique as well as short, catchy and easy to remember. If it's too cheesy (like 'The Dust Busters') people may associate your brand with low quality, and if it's too long (like 'The Eco-Friendly Domestic Cleaning Company') then people will forget it and may be more likely to call a different business whose name they can remember. Make sure you pick a name that sounds professional – using your surname might help as it makes you look like a family-run business which could resonate well with local customers.

Once you've developed your brand the key then is simply to be consistent across all communications!

Have You Got a Company Website?

Think about the last time you needed to locate a hairdresser, a gardener or a charity collection – how did you go about it? Chances are you went online and entered the words into a search engine to find what you needed.

In this day and age it'd be foolish to pass up on the internet. If you don't feel tech-savvy yourself then ask a friend, relative or specialist to help you create your own space on the web. You don't need to pay loads for a website either – there are many places, like WordPress or Blogger, which will host your site for free until you decide to create one completely on your own. But it's important that you make a start.

Think back again to your own online searches – if a local company didn't appear in your search for 'hairdressers in (your town/city)', would you know it was there? It's likely that you'll focus entirely on the search results that you get, which is why it's so important that you have an online presence.

You can also use your website as a great marketing tool so that when customers do find you in their search results they are wowed by what they see and are desperate to get in touch!

Retaining Loyal Customers

Getting people to try out your company once is the (sort of) easy part. Getting them to return and use your services again requires slightly more work! Your aim is to build up a list of regular clients who ensure that your income stays consistent and your calendar stays busy.

Keep in touch with people who've used your service before but don't pester them. Perhaps **send them subtle, creative email marketing, direct mail or a newsletter** to remind them of who you are, but limit this to once a month at the most. People don't want to feel annoyed or pressured into buying from you!

You could also consider some sort of **reward scheme** to encourage customer loyalty. For example, offer your customers a 25% discount on their next cleaning service, give them a discounted service for getting a friend to sign up or say that if they book 3 cleaning services then they'll get the 4th free.

Another approach is to feature **testimonials** from happy customers on your website or flyers – if people can see that others have had a positive experience with you then they're much more likely to sign up themselves. Use an interactive online review system and consider this the online equivalent of word-of-mouth recommendations.