



## Marketing Your Blind Cleaning Service

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### ***I. Defining your market.***

There is no question to succeed in business you have to identify and target the market and the first step is defining what services you wish to offer.

1. Do you invest and go on site?
2. Do you clean only at your location?

The difference on the surface seems to be only resources (money) however, to an extent it defines the market your going after. Offering on site cleaning services lends itself to larger jobs where the volume justifies going to the location or a job that requires the blinds be cleaned and replaced quickly. There is flexibility and there is a healthy investment if you have to buy the van along with your blind cleaning system.

Offering services based out of one location reduces the investment and from a marketing perspective puts more emphasis on partnering with area maid cleaning services and janitorial companies. These type of companies typically do them by hand because there is not enough volume to justify the investment of a blind cleaning system. Partnering with several of these companies can be a good niche in your market. One good way to help you define the market in your area is to survey potential clients. Who should you call upon? Below are some suggestions:

1. Hospitals
2. Schools and Universities
3. Restaurants
4. Maid cleaning services
5. Janitorial companies
6. Nursing Homes

First you have to find the right person in the organization that may be the maintenance manager, housekeeping manager if a hospital or university. This can be done in person or by phone. May I speak with the person responsible for cleaning and maintaining your blinds and light lenses?

Once you have contacted the appropriate person the following are some questions you may wish to ask:

1. How are your blinds and light lenses now?
2. How often do you clean your blinds and light lenses?
3. When was the last time you had your blinds and light lenses cleaned?
4. How many blinds do you have in your complex?



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5. What is the largest blind you have?
6. Would you be interested in the service if it became available in your area?

Surveying the Maid and Janitorial services the questions would be somewhat different.

1. Do you currently offer blind and light louver cleaning as a part of your service?
2. How many blinds do you currently have to clean now?
3. How do you currently clean blinds and light louvers?
4. Do you clean many offices where there are smokers?
5. Have any of your clients mentioned allergy problems with employees?
6. Do you think it would be an asset by offering this service?

Be sure to record your contacts and answers to help your analysis and for start up business this is critical information for your business plan.

## **II. Pricing**

Check the yellow pages and find the competition in your area. They may be listed under various categories. If you have access to the internet you can expand your survey to other cities with similar demographics using a search engine like [www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com). Also, while taking your survey, names of companies who offer blind cleaning services may be mentioned, keep a record of the names and do a pricing survey of the companies.

Knowing the pricing in your area is critical and the best way to find out is just to ask for prices from people currently in the business. You may want to ask some of the following questions:

1. Do you clean blinds on site or do I have to bring them to your location?
2. Are there different prices for different kinds of blind?
3. What type of equipment do you use to clean the blinds?
4. How do you charge?

The more information you can get the better. Pricing depends on what the market will bear and varies. To form some number the following are some prices taken from a cross section of area's.

Pick up and delivery charge:  
\$35-\$50 minimum

Plastic and Aluminum blinds:  
\$2.50 per linear foot for blinds up to 6 feet in height  
\$3.00 per linear foot for blinds over 6 feet in height



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Wooden and Fabric Blinds:

\$3.00 per linear foot for blinds up to 6 feet in height

\$3.50 per linear foot for blinds over 6 feet in height

Plastic Vertical Blinds:

\$2.50 to \$3.00 per linear foot

Fabric Vertical Blinds:

\$3.00 to \$3.25 per linear foot

or

\$1.75 to \$2.25 per slat (based on height, weight, etc.)

\* Plastic Light Diffuser Covers

\$2.75 to \$3.50 for 2' X 4' standards

\* Parabolic Light Diffuser Covers

\$3.50 to \$4.25 for 2' X 4' standards

\* NOTE: It is critical to use DI water to rinse do to spots generally caused by water containing lime and other minerals.

### **III. Profits**

Ultrasonic Cleaning of blinds and light louvers is extremely efficient saving time and labor. Wiping a blind down by hand or using a spray washer takes much more time and doesn't clean the products very well. The average blind takes about 3 to 4 minutes to clean ultrasonically and it is this efficiency that produces high profit margins. Below is a conservative example:

#### **Assumptions:**

1. Average 15 blinds per hour
2. Average charge per blind is approximately \$10.00
3. 6 hours per work day
4. 5 day work week
5. 90 day vacation

#### **Expenses:**

Ultrasonic Power Corporation Blind Cleaning System: \$10,595

Part time employee 32 hours per week @ \$5.15 for 9 months: \$ 5,932

Advertising Expenses: \$2,000

Phone, insurance, accounting expenses and misc.: \$5,000

Total: \$23,527



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Once you have established a customer base that fills the 15 blinds per hour for 32 hours this would be your first years figures:

1. 15 blinds per hour X \$10.00 per blind: \$150 per hour
2. 6 hour work day X \$150 per hour: \$900 per day
3. 5 day work week X \$900 per day: \$4,500 per week
4. 4 weeks per month X \$4,500: \$18,000 per month
5. 9 month year X \$18,000: \$162,000 per year

Expenses \$23,527

Potential Income: \$138,473 per year

#### **IV. Advertising**

Advertising your services is of course very critical and there are the obvious ways:

1. Yellow Pages
2. Radio
3. Newspapers

These can be expensive. There are some other ways that can be less expensive. Doing a Mailing using post cards offering a percentage off the first cleaning. Networking with your clients asking for referrals.

Business Cards

Calling local newspapers to see if they spotlight businesses.

#### **V. Financing**

Obtaining financing for the start up business can be more challenging however, not impossible. Your first step should be developing a business plan presenting the information you have compiled into a presentation that makes sense and is believable. This is essential when applying for a small business loan at a bank.

Use the resources that are at your disposal. In most cities across the country there are offices for the Small Business Administration, they provide information for starting a business.

Leasing offers some advantages in managing cash flow, and in other areas.



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