

Starting A Driving Service For Pleasure And Profit

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Starting A Driving Service For Pleasure And Profit

This is the business of driving other people's vehicles (cars, trucks, vans, RV's) for them.

Examples are: part-time chauffeuring, driving and delivery service of and with the customer's vehicles, transporting vehicles, taking people shopping or any combination of these and many other services.

It can be delivering people to the airport and picking them up when they return (in their car), running errands for them in their vehicle (with or without them along), delivering their car to another destination, and of course, driving your customers in their cars on trips, or to and from the hospital.

It can also be a service to drive senior citizens in their own or their children's automobiles to go shopping, visiting or to visit a relative. This kind of service can not only be handy for your customers, it can save time and/or money, speed up their activities, enable them to do things that would not otherwise be possible and improve their lifestyles.

A good example of how you can save them money is when they must be out of town for a few days.

They can, of course, drive themselves to the airport, but then they must walk from the parking lot to the terminal, which means they must go there early and carry their luggage a good distance.

Then they have to leave their car in the airport parking lot for the duration of their absence where they not only have to pay a pretty stiff parking fee but also take a chance of having someone break into it.

Your service would deliver them to the airport door, return their car (or your) garage, where it would be safe, they go back and pick them up **AT THE DOOR** when they return. You could even have it washed and serviced in the interim (at their request). That kind service is worth a few dollars to lots of people!

Other examples are taking people shopping, picking up the kids after the movies, going after packages, delivering their car to a relative's house, driving them on a tour or trip,, being available to drive elderly or disabled persons.

Note that there are many elderly people who have cars but are not really qualified to drive them on the highway or in big cities. Wouldn't it be nice for an elderly lady with poor eyesight to have a "younger" lady drive her on shopping trips --or to her

doctor?

In most states you will need a chauffeur's license and insurance to cover any liability you might incur. It is very unlikely that you would drive a car with no liability insurance, but with your own, your insurer will "represent" you in case of any problems -- saving you worry and the cost of a lawyer.

While you are at it, check on bonding -- for yourself and any employees you might hire. This is not expensive and can be an excellent selling point: "our drivers are bonded!"

You will need your own transportation -- to get to and from the jobs, but probably not use your vehicle in the business (that requires additional insurance and gets into another, more complicated area like taxis and buses.

Once you have your business established, look around for several possible assistance or employees that you can hire by the hour or on a commission (sub-contract) basis.

Have them bonded and make sure they are good, safe drivers and that they have the proper credentials. Then, they can be on call for when people call in for drivers.

College students or retired seniors would be ideal for this kind of work. Make sure some of your standby drivers are able to make overnight (or longer) trips on short notice!

Advertise your service. Wear something that will identify you and your drivers as drivers (hat, monogrammed shirt unique colored windbreaker, etc.) because you are serving your customers, not accompanying them!

Place notices in airports and depots, hospitals, nursing homes, retirement centers, condos, or wherever there might be potential customers.

Always stress that your drivers are safe, trained and bonded -- and that your service is available on a 24 hour basis (if you want to thrive). Your ads should also suggest some of the benefits of using your service -- to get them thinking "right."

For example, you might compare the cost of renting a car to drive to a city a few hundred miles away. Compute the mileage, time, insurance and other charges and compare that to what it would cost to hire your service and use their own car. Your rates will look much better when compared to renting a large car from Hertz or Avis for a few days!

Set your rates by the hour or mile (with a minimum charge of course) and provisions for overnight travel and return trips

(like if you deliver their car and return by bus).

For example, 25 per mile for local trips (\$10 minimum); 8 for out of town trips the same day (\$25 minimum), the same for longer trips, but with a \$50 minimum plus expenses (return fare, meals, motel).

In your consideration of this type of business, you will surely have noticed where there is a need. This need should be investigated thoroughly, so you can plan just what type of service would be best, how it should be set up, and how much you can expect to make from it.

If you live near a large airport, you might concentrate on that to begin with... Work out plans to offer pickup and delivery service to commuters. If there are a lot of retired people in your area you might want to figure how you could best serve their needs. In either case, talk to potential customers and ask them what they would like -- then plan accordingly.

When you and your assistants drive your customers, take extra pains to be careful drivers. Make up a set of rules for your drivers and make sure they understand and agree to abide by them. Always be neat appearing, courteous and helpful. Open the door for the customers, help ladies in and out; carry the baggage, etc.

You can use the exercise after driving a while and these little extras will make all the difference in the world to your customers -- and probably ensure your success.

Startup costs for this business are very low, just a chauffeur's and adequate insurance. Try it for a while by yourself, and when you have learned the ropes, hire (or sign up) and train (don't forget bonding) active and on-call employees,

The biggest advantage to commission drivers is that technically they pay you a fee to obtain a driving job for them. They are responsible for their own withholding and social security taxes.

Also you might check into driving cars for dealers, towing travel trailers on trips or for dealers, and chauffeuring the owner's or even rented motor homes on vacations (register with the RV rental places). These jobs would not pay as well as private parties, but might be great as well as private parties, but they might be great to fill in between private jobs.

Perhaps the biggest possible problem area is to get the reputation as a bad driver, although poor service would be a close second.

Make sure any contract drivers you hire know that they are not

only expected not to cause accidents, they are expected to see that they don't happen!

This means they must be good defensive drivers. Several large corporations that employ drivers have a standing rule -- one accident and you are out!

Also, don't take it for granted that your drivers can handle the customer vehicles: be sure they are qualified to handle a manual transmission, pull a trailer or drive a 26 foot motor home BEFORE sending on these jobs.

Have them complete a course or at least demonstrate to you that they can safely and professionally operate vehicles they are to drive for YOUR CUSTOMERS!

Wouldn't this be a great business for a group of college students! They could even provide safe (sober) drivers for party goers.

BUSINESS SOURCES

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC., 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, NY 11501.
Discount books, clip art, stencils, etc.

QUILL CORPORATION, 100 Schelter Rd., Lincolnshire, IL 60917-4700,
312/634-4800. Office supplies.

NEBS, 500 Main St., Groton, MA 04171, 800/225-6380. Office
supplies.

IVEY PRINTING, Box 761, Meridan, TX 76665. Letterhead: 400 sheets
plus 200 envelopes - \$18.

SWEDCO, Box 29, Mooresville, NC 28115. Rubber stamps and
business cards.

ZPS, Box 581, Libertyville, IL 60048-2556. Raised print and
letterhead. Will print your ready logo or design, even whole
card. Good prices.

WALTER DRAKE, 4119 Drake Bldg., Colorado Springs, CO 80940. Short
run business cards, stationery, etc. Good quality, but no choice
of ink or color and mass-produced layout.
