



Paint Professionally

How To Start A House Painting Business

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

There is nothing quite like having your own business to make you feel financially independent and in charge of your own destiny. One easy business that you can start up, that is just right for the current economy, is a home painting business.

Why home painting? People always need services. Even in the Great Depression, service businesses were still in hot demand. Since most people are not selling their homes and are staying put, many of them want to spruce things up a bit. Painting is one of the most inexpensive ways that people can fix up their surroundings. Most people do not know how to paint nor do they want to learn. They would rather hire a painter who is in the business to do this necessary, but messy, job.

House painting is a recession proof business. It also works well when the economy is good and people are selling their homes. One of the first things that a real estate agent will advise someone who is looking to rent or sell a home is to give it a fresh paint job.

House painting entails both inside and outside house painting. Both of them are basically the same concept, although different paints are used for inside and outside. Your company should offer as many services as possible in order to fit the needs of just about every customer.

This book will teach you all you need to know about how to start your own home painting business, how to hire help, how to get customers, and what you need to know about starting any type of business. It will also give you an insight as to which are the right paints to use, the difference between paints, the different types of finishes and designs people like to have in the home, stains and even how to deal with customers who do not pay.

It is not difficult to learn to paint. It is one of the few trades that does not require vocational training. You just need the right equipment, the willingness to work hard, a few simple tips and the desire to succeed and you will have so many painting jobs that you will not know what to do with them all.

Even in today's economy, people are searching for those who perform services. You can develop your own prosperous business and never look back at the 9 to 5 world again!

Chapter 2 - Incorporating Your Business

When you start your own business, it is a good idea to incorporate it as a separate entity. This way, your own personal assets are protected. There are several ways that you operate your own business. They include:

- A Sole Proprietorship
- A Limited Partnership
- An LLC
- A Corporation

Of all of these, an LLC and a corporation give you the most protection. There are pros and cons about operating a business under all of these different options. Here is a little bit more about them:

A Sole Proprietorship

This is an ideal way for an individual to get started in their own business without having to spend any money on organizing. You can pay your taxes for the business using a Schedule C on your personal income tax form. It is also ideal for anyone who is working on the basis of cash payments. Those who are only accepting cash for jobs can get around the income tax man for a while, but are also putting themselves into personal jeopardy. A sole proprietorship is easy to start up - just get started and say that you have your own painting company. Many people with small companies do just that. They start out a little business of their own, get some cash on the side and do very well at trying to make ends meet. The problem with this sort of business is that you have no protection against your personal assets. If, for some reason, some accident should occur, a customer should not pay or you suffer a loss or get hurt, you are not protected. If someone working for you falls off their ladder and gets injured, they can decide to sue you directly. This means that you can lose your home and other personal assets.

A sole proprietorship works best for those who are just planning on doing the work themselves, or with family members. You do not have to do anything to start up such a business and can pay your taxes at the end of the year. You should take some money from each job and put it aside for your income taxes as Uncle Sam will surely want to get a piece of whatever you are making.

If you just want to accept cash jobs, you should know this is illegal, although plenty of people are resorting to this sort of option because they cannot get by with what they are making. It does limit you with regards to the customers you will get, some of whom will balk at paying cash, and you can also get in trouble with the IRS if someone is disgruntled and reports you.

A Limited Partnership

This protects against your personal assets, has to be formed by drawing up papers to form

the partnership and filing them with the State. This is ideal if you have a partner in the business and both of you are willing to take a cut. It does not afford you the same protection against personal assets as a LLC or corporation, however. It also makes you liable for some of the actions performed by your partner. If you are going to go through the trouble of forming a Limited Partnership, you should consider better options such as an LLC or corporation, both of which are easier to form and can even be done so without an attorney.

LLC

An LLC is a limited liability company. This is preferred by those who do not want to issue stocks and who also may have company heads who are not Americans. Those who form corporations must be American Citizens. Those who form an LLC do not have to be citizens.

It costs more to form an LLC than a corporation. There is a lot less paperwork in this type of organization, however. But if you are just working a small business, you can easily complete the necessary paperwork (annual meetings of shareholders and officials) within a few minutes on your own computer. It costs about \$300 to file Articles Of Company for an LLC.

Like a corporation, an LLC is a separate entity. If someone gets hurt or sues you because of your painting business, your personal assets are protected. You pay quarterly taxes with the LLC like you do with a corporation, but you cannot issue stock. You are limited as to how your business can grow with this sort of company and many banks would rather lend money to companies that are fully incorporated rather than those who are limited liability companies. If you form an LLC, you have to put the initials LLC after the name of your business.

Corporation

A corporation is a complete entity. When you create a corporation, it is like you are creating a person. The corporation can open bank accounts, get loans, sue people, get sued, buy cars, buy equipment and do anything (just about) that a person can do. There are two types of corporations - An S Corp and C Corp. Most small businesses charter under the S corp. This puts a limit on the amount of stock that you can sell (you can only sell 100 shares) . However, if your business decides to grow, you can regroup as a C corporation.

Creating a corporation is easy and many people do this without an attorney. You have to get an FEIN number from the IRS. You can get this online. You also have to file Articles Of Incorporation with the state in which you are operating in. The amount that you pay for this depends on the state in which you are working. In most cases, it is about \$100. Once you do this, you will receive quarterly income tax information that you have to pay. You can also opt to pay annually, if you so choose. Many people who form a corporation will use an accountant to figure out their taxes.

A corporation totally protects you not only from liability, but also protects your identity. The owners of the corporation are the shareholders. The principals of the corporation, such as the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, are listed publicly, but do not have to be the same people as the shareholders. You only need a President and Secretary to form a corporation and they can be the same person. You can issue stock to others (up to 100 shares) to get some financing for your business.

You have to have annual meetings of shareholders and principals, although you do not need to purchase expensive company books or a seal. You can just write down the results of a meeting as “no action taken” state who was present (you and whoever else was at the meeting) and the date.

If you form a corporation, you will be issued Articles of Incorporation by the state. You can bring these and the FEIN tax number to the bank and open a bank account under the name of the corporation. Your personal assets are protected, but you must be sure that you keep your business assets and personal assets separate. You can pay yourself a salary from the corporation, you can purchase business insurance from the corporation and even get credit under the name of the business in this manner. This keeps your personal assets totally protected.

If you are planning on starting a house painting business and hiring others to help you, you should protect yourself by forming a corporation. If you are just planning on doing indoor painting, you can operate on your own, although you should realize that you do incur a risk to your personal assets should some accident occur, you break something valuable or there is some sort of litigation over payment or work.

Chapter 3 - Employing Or Contracting - What Is The Difference?

After you have decided how you want to organize your painting business, you should then decide whether or not you want to hire actual employees or use contractors. You are better off to use independent contractors when you are starting out. If you hire actual employees, you have to pay Workmen's Compensation Insurance and payroll taxes for them. If you hire independent contractors, they are responsible for their own insurance and paying their own taxes. Many businesses today are saving money by hiring independent contractors.

The problem with independent contractors is that they can be very transient. When you have jobs scheduled, you need to have people who are reliable and who will show up for the job. Most people would rather be employed by a company rather than have to work as an independent contractor. However, with so many people who are out of work, you may find that it is easier than you think to get independent contractors to help you with your painting jobs.

If you are first starting out, you may be tempted to do all of the work on your own. This is fine, except that it will take you much longer to complete a job. You are better off to have people help you. Most customers want their house painting to be done in a reasonable amount of time and do not want you at their home for months on end finishing up work. This also puts a limit to the amount of work that you can take on.

You are better off to hire independent contractors to work with you to get the jobs done. This eliminates your need for Workmen's Compensation insurance and payroll taxes. You will need to get social security numbers from your workers and issue them a 1099 form at the end of the year so that you can take their payments off of your taxes.

There are a number of people who will be willing to work for you for cash under these circumstances. Many of them do not have social security numbers because they are not eligible to work in the United States. They may be willing to work for less money if they get paid cash. It is illegal to hire illegal workers in the United States. However, many independent companies, especially those in the trades, can find it difficult to get reliable workers for their jobs. If you are caught hiring illegal workers, however, you can be penalized. Also, you cannot take the money that you pay them from your taxes.

If an independent contractor gets hurt, they are liable for their own medical care. They cannot come to you for a workman's compensation claim because they are not a legal employee. They can, however, sue the corporation if the injury was your fault, such as you gave them a faulty ladder to work on. One of the reasons that people hire those who are not legal citizens is to alleviate this potential. Again, this is an illegal practice. However, there are quite a few sole proprietors operating businesses who hire illegal contractors to do the work so that they can get around the taxes imposed on corporations and save money. They can usually offer customers a much cheaper deal on the project and most customers will be glad to pay cash for such work. Again, this is an illegal way

to practice business, but certainly not unheard of.

When you are beginning your painting business, you are better off to hire independent contractors who are legal citizens and also who have insurance to do the job. This is the legal way to do business and will eliminate any potential of you getting in trouble with the Federal Government for hiring illegal workers.

Chapter 4 - Where To Hire Workers

In the midst of a recession, you may think that it is easy to hire workers for jobs as so many people are out of work. The truth of the matter is that it is more difficult than you think. Many people who are on unemployment insurance are looking for extra work as this money does not cover the bills that they need to pay. However, if they accept a job with you, they have to give up that money. Many people will make more on unemployment than they will working as an independent contractor for you, so they will not take the job.

For a painting business, you are better off hiring young people who are willing to work hard and who have a good work ethic. House painting is hard work and many companies hire students to do the work for them. Many of these students are not really students at all, but young people who are looking for a way to earn extra money. If you live in a four season climate and do outdoor paint work, you can hire college or high school students to do the work for you.

You can advertise the job in your local paper, on school bulletin boards and get young people who may be happy to earn a few dollars doing this type of work. House painting is hard work so you will want to hire people who can lift and are strong enough for the job. Most house painters are men, although there are a few women who also do this sort of work.

Another avenue that you can take is to advertise on sites like Craig's List. Many people are finding jobs by using this service. You will need local people who are willing to work on a contracting basis.

You may be able to get other workers for the job as well, those who were on unemployment and whose benefits have ceased. The problem with hiring people who are trained for another profession is that they will be looking for other jobs while they work for you. Still, they can be a good source of help when you need them.

If you have friends and family members who are looking for work, consider them first. They are less likely to not show up for a job than strangers.

There are government sources that fit people with jobs so that they can work. You can contact these sources and even contact your local unemployment office to offer work for those who are seeking jobs. They may be able to send you some people who truly want to work and are willing to paint for a living. Painting is physically challenging work, but not difficult mentally. You should be able to come up with a few strong guys who will be willing to work for you provided they get paid.

There are two things that you have to remember when you are hiring employees for a job, especially when you are hiring independent contractors:

- Always be looking for more help

- Always pay them on time

You never want to get into a position where you turn down jobs because you do not have the help. It is better to have too many workers than too few. With many workers, you can take on more than one job at a time. This is important if you live in a four season climate where you only have several months where you can do outside painting. You also have to take into account those who will not show up, who will quit or who will find other jobs.

By paying people on time, you develop a sense of loyalty from workers. Put the money aside for the painters that you hire from the start. If you do not pay people, they will obviously not come back and you will continue to have trouble hiring people for work in the future.

You should have several people working at one time rather than trying to do all of the work yourself. Homeowners like to have projects completed as soon as possible. If you are trying to finish up a job, you can pay them extra money to work overtime. This also develops a sense of loyalty between the workers and your company.

House painters are not unionized. You do not have to worry about hiring union help for the job. You can hire as many independent contractors as you want. You can also encourage those who you hire who have friends and who are good workers to bring their friends along.

The beauty of using independent contractors is that you do not have to guarantee them work on a daily basis. If you have a slow period, they do not work. You may want to hold on to some good workers by offering them interior work so that they do not go elsewhere.

Many people are under the impression that with the economy being the way that it is, it is simple to hire people for jobs. This is far from the truth. It has always been difficult to find reliable employees to do a job, especially if you are hiring independent contractors. This is why you want to be sure that you treat your workers fairly and compensate them properly for their time.

Other places that you can look for employees are youth centers. There are programs for disadvantaged youth that place kids who come from poor families into jobs. In some cases, you can get a partial reimbursement from the state or federal government for hiring disadvantaged workers. You should do whatever you can to make sure that you keep your employment roster complete and that you always have workers on hand who will be willing to do work for you.

The last thing that you want to do when you are starting your own painting business is to turn down work. If you continue to hire contractors and always keep on the lookout for more workers, you will not have to do this. You will find that you can oversee several jobs at once when you have plenty of workers. As your business continues to grow, you

may want to put some of the workers in charge, giving them a raise. This can help you get even more business.

However, when you have your own business, it is never a good idea to just put it in the hands of the workers and sit back and rake in money. You should always be on hand to make sure that they are doing a good job and deal with the customers directly.

If you are doing interior painting, you should make sure that your workers are bonded. This is a type of insurance that protects your business in case one of your workers should steal something of value from a home or be accused of such a theft. It is not much money to get someone bonded. You can use a bonding agency for this type of insurance.

Running your own business is rewarding and can allow you to make more money than you can by working for someone else. On top of that, it can give you a sense of freedom and the ability to make your own hours. But be aware that the main problem that people encounter when running their own businesses is to get reliable employees or contractors to work for them.

You should always be prepared in case workers do not show up, do a bad job or even storm off the job. Your business ultimately comes down to you, as does your reputation. The number one element of your house painting business has to be customer satisfaction as you will find that by providing good work, you will receive many referrals from happy customers.

Chapter 5 - Getting Insurance

As stated earlier, house painting is a profession that takes strength and also incurs risk of injury. You can protect your personal assets by being incorporated., but you also want to protect your business as well. One way to do this is to get business insurance.

An insurance agent who specializes in business insurance can help you with this aspect of your business. They can cover you in case of the following:

- You break something
- Someone accuses you of stealing
- You injure someone on the job
- Someone steals your supplies
- You get hurt
- One of your employees gets hurt
- You ruin something in a house that you are painting

You want to be sure that you have adequate coverage for your business whenever you are starting a business that entails you dealing with people, especially if you are entering someone's house. There is a potential for loss and accidents when you are painting houses. Independent contractors should have their own insurance, but what about you and any employees you may hire? You still need some insurance. Plus, if you injure someone on the job, such as the homeowner, some kids playing outside or even the family dog, you may be liable for a lawsuit.

If you are working in a house and happen to get paint on some furniture, you need to be covered. If you accidentally break something while you are painting, you have to be covered. If a gallon of paint falls on the head of the homeowner, you have to be covered.

Insurance does not only protect you against mishaps that might occur while you are working, but also things that you or your contractors may be accused of while you are working. You are always, always taking a risk when you enter the home of someone else. Unfortunately, there are some dishonest people in the world who will look for a way to take advantage of you or your workers. Someone who is strapped for cash may report their diamond bracelet missing and accuse you or your contractors. You will not be able to prove that no one stole it and they will insist, even if no such diamond bracelet exists. Insurance will cover such a problem. This sort of scenario does not happen often, but it can happen. Which is why you need insurance.

Another scenario involves someone getting hurt on your ladder or scaffold on purpose. Such as the homeowner or one of their friends. Your insurance will cover this type of mishap as well. Like it or not, there are some people out there who are looking for a way to make a dishonest living, instead of an honest living like you and your workers. You should always carry business insurance and have your workers and yourself bonded in order to be prepared for such occurrences. This is not meant to dissuade you in any way as most of the time, nothing like this occurs and most people who you encounter are

honest and simply want to have some work done on their home. But you have to be prepared for those who are looking to make a fast buck off of you.

Theft insurance is also very important. You should have your vehicle as well as your equipment insured. If your business equipment is used for business, it is not covered by your vehicle insurance or homeowner's insurance. You need to get business insurance to cover any of your property that is used for business purposes. This includes your van, ladders, scaffolds and painting equipment. If you leave your van in the driveway and someone steals it and makes off with all of your equipment, it will not be covered by your homeowner's insurance as this is property that is used for business purposes.

Shop around for business insurance to get the best rate. Most insurance will have a per occurrence amount as well as an aggregate. The premium that you pay for the insurance depends on the amount of your deductible.

You will see that your business insurance is much cheaper if you do not have employees but use general contractors. This is one reason why many small businesses are going this way. Insurance for your business is not that expensive and can potentially save your business from ruin should any type of mishap occur. Your insurance agent will be able to help you get the adequate coverage and type of insurance that is right for your business.

Chapter 6 - Getting Ready - Portfolios, Flyers And Cards

Before you can hope to get customers for your home painting business, you need to prepare by getting together a portfolio as well as printed advertising media. If you are just starting out, you will not have photos of homes that you have painted to show to potential customers. What you can do is to make up a portfolio of what you can do using stock photos and what they can expect from you. You should make up a portfolio that depicts all of the work that you can do, both exterior and interior, including any faux painting or mural painting that you will also want to offer customers.

The more impressive the portfolio, the more impressed the client will be. In addition to creating a portfolio that you can show the customer when you bid for the job, you should also create flyers and have business cards printed. These are relatively inexpensive to do because of computer technology and will not cost you much money at all. In fact, you can use a service like Vista Printing to print up your business cards for free and only pay shipping and handling. You should look for professional looking cards for your business to give to your customers.

Brochures are another way that you can advertise your business. Have brochures created that detail the type of services that you offer with the name of your business on them. You should have a business name and even a logo for your business that you can use to distinguish your business from others. Remember, the more professional the business material appears, the better impression will be made on the customer.

In addition, you want to have bid sheets and letter head for your company. The process of getting work will entail you submitting a bid to do the work. You will have to go through the house, take a look at what needs to be done, figure on how much time it will take to do the job plus the materials, and present a bid.

Many painters and other tradesmen think that the customer will accept the lowest bid. This is not true. A customer will be looking for professionalism and also a company that will get the job done in a timely manner. Many customers are hesitant about going with the lowest bid because they feel that they will not get good service. You are better off to have a bid in the middle as studies show that most customers will take the middle bid over the top and the bottom just about every time.

In addition, you also want to start a website. You do not have to be a webmaster in order to get started with a website online. You should create a website for your business even though you have an off line business simply because the internet is how many people today find information. You should list your website in as many local directories as you can to further help potential customers find you.

You do not need to have an elaborate website. You can get one that is hosted by a smaller web hosting company and consists of several pages. You can keep it updated with blogs and also incorporate the use of pictures in the website and slideshows, showing the work that you can do.

You do not have to show the actual work that you have done when you make up brochures, website slideshows and flyers. As long as you do not state that you have actually done the work depicted, you are not committing any sort of fraud. You should use stock photos when you are starting out because they look more professional than the photos that you will take yourself of your work. As your business continues to grow, you will want to add the photos of work that you have actually done to your portfolio. Eventually, you can get rid of the stock photos and have a full portfolio of work you have accomplished with your home painting business.

Remember to conduct yourself in a professional manner and show off your business in the most professional light that you can in order to get the best response from customers when it comes to your house painting business.

Chapter 7 - What You Need To Have For Outdoor Painting

Your home painting business should include both outdoor and indoor painting. You are better off offering as many services as you can for customers rather than just specializing in one area. If you are using contractors, you can find those who are better working outside as well as those who are better with the finishing touches such as inside work.

Outdoor painting is performed during decent weather, obviously. It incurs more risk, especially if you are working on two story homes and have to get up on ladders to do the job. Most people, however, are more than willing to pay someone money to do this job rather than take it on themselves.

Outdoor painting entails painting siding as well as windows, gutters, soffets and fascia. In some cases, only the siding will have to be painted as many people are moving towards getting aluminum fascia, soffets and gutters and often have aluminum or vinyl clad windows.

In order to accomplish outdoor painting, you are going to need ladders as well as reliable scaffold. A scaffold is necessary as it is a safer way to paint and allows the painter more freedom to put the paint can down and use both hands. You should have several scaffolds, all of which can be adjusted according to the area where you are painting, so that you and your workers will be safe. You also will need ladders so that you can reach up to do detail work.

When you are painting the exterior of the house, you need exterior paint. Later in this book we will go over paint types and what to use for each job. Outdoor paint is oil based and will withstand the elements. You should use the best paint that you can for the job. You do not want to use inferior paint as you will have to put on twice as many coats as you would with good quality paint.

You should start at the top of the building and work your way down. If you have an entire crew, which you should have for exterior painting jobs, you should all start in different areas of the house. The objective of this type of painting is to complete the job in one day. One of the problems with exterior painting is that you cannot rely on the weather to be cooperative. You may have to stop if it begins to rain and should look for a day when it is slightly overcast and not raining or too hot to work. If you time it right, there should be no problem getting the job done in a day.

In reality, outdoor painting is much easier and has fewer customer complaints than interior painting, where there is a potential for damage to property and where people are more likely to point out flaws. This does not mean that you and your workers can do a shoddy job on the project. To the contrary, you want to do a good job with good paint so that the customer will recommend you to others.

For outdoor painting jobs, you will most likely need to have a work van so that you can

carry your equipment with you. You can use a car wrap on the work van to further advertise your business as well. A large, panel van will work well for you when you are carrying ladders, scaffold and paint. You also should put down tarps so that you do not get paint anywhere else but on the building.

You should put safety first for your workers when you are painting a two story or higher building. Make sure that they wear safety belts that attach to the scaffold and also make sure that the scaffolds are set up properly.

Outdoor painting can also entail painting decks and fences. Many people are willing to pay someone to do this sort of job for them so that they do not have to do it themselves. This can involve painting, staining or sealing.

Exterior painting can be very profitable because of many different reasons, including:

- People do not want to go up on ladders to paint their houses
- People do not want to invest in equipment for painting
- It can be accomplished in one day
- You can charge more for this type of work than you can for interior painting

If you are starting a home painting business, you should consider not only interior painting, which people will also be glad to pay for, but exterior painting as well. Although there are many people who are investing in maintenance free siding for their homes, there are still plenty of homes out there that have wood siding that needs to be painted.

Wood siding generally needs to be painted every five years. If you do a good job on your painting, you can not only have more customers in this field, but you can also have repeat business from those who were satisfied with your work.

Chapter 8 - What You Need To Know About Indoor Painting

A great many people will be glad to pay for interior painting. This includes painting walls, ceilings, woodwork and even cabinets. Interior painting is a tedious job and most people want to avoid it, if at all possible. They are usually only too happy to have someone else do the painting for them.

There are two ways to get business with interior painting. One is to appeal directly to customers and bid for jobs for them. You need to make sure that you understand everything that needs to be painted before you do this work.

The other way is to offer your painting services to general contractors. General contractors who are building houses or even renovating them or apartment buildings are usually looking for subcontractors to do this sort of work. As is the case with individual customers, you have to bid for the job. When you paint for general contractors, it will also involve staining woodwork that will be put in the home. This can be a very profitable business all on its own and many painting contractors concentrate most of their business on this area. The bad news is that housing starts are down and that there is not that much work for those who only focus on painting new construction. However, the renovating business is booming because of the recession, so it still pays to bid out jobs for general contractors.

You need the same type of materials when you do indoor painting as you do for exterior painting. You will need ladders and scaffolds, although for many homes you will not need to have a scaffold. If you paint a large home with a two story entryway or living room, however, you are going to need a scaffold. If you concentrate only on interior painting for your business, you can skip buying scaffolds and rent them. This can allow you with getting away with just basic materials, like paints, tarps and smaller ladders. Of course you also need painting supplies such as brushes and rollers for this type of job.

The paint that you use for interior painting is usually latex paint that is water based, although for woodwork and cabinetry, you will have to use a primer as well. If you are re-painting a room that has a dark color in it, you will also want to use a primer as this will not only enable the paint to go on easier, but will eliminate any see-through paint from the previous job. Primer is much less expensive than paint, so it makes sense to put a coat of primer on the walls if they already have color.

The most important thing that you want to remember when you are painting interiors of home is that you do not want to damage anything in the home. While it can be easy painting new construction because there is nothing to damage, it is not so easy to paint in a home where there is furniture, draperies and woodwork that does not need painting. You will want to be sure that you take every precaution to cover up anything that can get damaged during the painting process. If you damage the property of someone, you are liable for it.

Painter's tape should be used to prevent you from painting any woodwork and can also help you when painting a room with white ceilings. Most people prefer the ceilings remain white while the rest of the walls are painting. It can be difficult to make these cuts for an amateur painter, although using tape to prevent the roller from hitting the ceiling is a good idea. There are also tools that you can use to make ceiling cuts easier. Trimming tools are available wherever paint supplies are sold. You should make sure that you make use of these instruments. You will want the paint job to look even so that the ceiling looks neatly cut in. You also want to make sure that you protect windows and woodwork from getting painted.

Always make sure that you use good paint. In new construction, the paint is usually cut with water and is very cheap quality. If you are painting new construction, you can get away with this as most people will eventually want to get rid of the white walls and add more decorative touches. When you are painting a home, however, you want to use good quality paint. You will not only get a nicer finish, but you will be able to put on less coats of paint and actually end up saving money on this supply.

Indoor painting can be very profitable. Many people will want to have a certain look achieved with this effect and some will just want white walls so that they can sell their homes. There is a great demand for those who have home painting businesses for interior painting. This type of work is not as difficult as exterior painting.

In addition to colored walls and ceilings as well as stained woodwork, some customers will want to have unique finishes and even murals for their walls. You should be able to offer this service as well if you are going to start a full service home painting business.

Chapter 9 - Fancy Indoor Painting Touches - How To Get Them

When you are offering interior painting services, there are some people who will want something fancy done for their walls. These may include the following:

- Faux finishes - such as patina effects
- Murals
- Sponge painting
- Washes
- Glazes
- Stenciling
- Stamping

These are only a few of the decorative touches that customers will often request for their interior painting projects. Naturally, these extra touches cost more. Unlike regular painting they require a bit of artistic skill. But not much. Virtually anyone can learn to provide these finishes and with the exception of murals, you should be able to learn how to provide fancy interior painting that so many customers today are seeking.

It is always a good idea, when you have your own business, to offer as many services as possible. Even if you cannot paint a mural, it pays to offer this service. You can find a local artist and contract them to do the job, taking a percentage of the money offered. The local artist will be happy to earn money for the job and you will be getting paid just for contracting the job.

Before you hire a local artist, however, you want to be able to see their work. You can find artists in various places and even advertise for them. Art schools and ads can help you find who you are looking for. Be sure that you find someone who is reliable and can do the job.

The one problem that you will encounter when you are offering fancy touches with your interior painting is that many customers have an idea of what they want but cannot express it. Some see something that they like somewhere else but do not end up liking it when they see it on their own walls.

One good way to alleviate this problem is to use boards as samples. Have each sample of the finish that you offer painted on a board for the customer. This can give them a good idea not only of your work, but of what they can expect. If the customer wants a certain color, which they will, you can practice on a piece of board and show them what it will look like before you commence to painting their walls.

There are various places where you can learn this sort of artistic interior painting. It would be well worth your while to take a class at a local community college on faux painting so that you can offer this service to your customers. Because this is a specialty type of painting, you should naturally charge more for the job than you would ordinary

painting. You can also contract this sort of painting out to others as well if you are seeking a way to get it done faster. This way, you can concentrate on other jobs.

Chapter 10 - Paint Primer 101

Before you can start your own painting business, you need to know everything that you can learn about different types of paints. You are going to need to know which paint works best for which type of job.

When you are using paints, you will want to wear a mask over your nose and mouth to avoid inhaling the fumes. Even latex paint, which is commonly used for exterior painting, carries some toxic fumes. You should also require that your workers also wear paint masks to avoid inhaling any fumes.

Some of the most commonly used paints and materials that you will be working with include the following:

- Latex paint
- Enamel paint
- Wood stain
- Primer
- Glazes

All of these are used for different purposes. For murals and artistic paint, you will usually use water based acrylic paints, although these are used for fine details and small areas, such as stenciling, stamping and free hand artistic painting.

Latex Paint

Latex paint is a water based paint which means that it cleans up easily with water. It is used for indoor painting. Latex paint has different finishes. You can choose a matte finish, eggshell finish, semi-gloss finish or high gloss finish. The type of finish that you use depends on the area where you are painting.

For walls, you will want to use a matte or flat finish. A flat finish shows up less imperfections in the walls than a finish with a gloss. If you want to add a bit of sheen, you can use an eggshell finish.

For kitchens and bathrooms, you might want to use a semi gloss. This is easier to clean up than a flat finish, which can be difficult to clean up with water. High gloss is used for painting woodwork in the home, which needs a primer before painting.

Enamel Paint

Enamel paint has an oil base which means that you have to use paint thinner or turpentine to clean up when using. Enamel paint is used for exteriors of homes. Enamel paint also comes glossy and flat. Flat finish is preferred for home exteriors, although you should talk to the customer to see what is preferred. Enamel paint is also effective at painting metal, such as gutters and downspouts.

Wood Stain

Wood stain is used on plain wood, decks and even on the exterior of houses. It is oil based. It goes on translucent, instead of opaque, like regular paint. Wood stain is also used on woodwork, primarily new woodwork such as doors and trim that is going into homes. The process of using wood stain on such woodwork is to paint it on and then wipe it off. The wood should have a hint of color and still look like wood, instead of painted wood. You can find wood stain in a variety of different wood shades. You can also find colored wood stain as well.

Primer

Primer is an undercoat that you need to use to cover up previous painting jobs as well as adhere paint to surfaces such as cabinets or wood trim. You can even use primer on tile floors or walls if you plan to paint them. Primer can also be used on wood such as paneling, which many people prefer to paint rather than have to remove.

Primer comes in both oil based and water based. Kilz is an excellent paint primer and goes on well. It comes in both oil and water based products. The oil based Kilz has a very strong odor, although it tends to adhere better to wood and also provides more coverage. If you use an oil based primer, be sure to wear a mask to avoid inhaling the fumes.

A primer is white and has a very opaque finish. It can be used on shiny surfaces so that paint will stick on and will also cover up mistakes that may have been made. If, for example, you go to paint a house that has bright pink walls, you will have to use primer to prevent the color from bleeding through when you are painting the walls with the new paint.

When painting wood with primer, you are better off to sand down the wood first. The primer will cover up very dark cabinets and make them eligible for getting painted with light colored paint. Many people today are opting to paint old cabinetry rather than go for new cabinets in order to give their home a new look and also save money.

Glaze

Glaze is used in decorative interior painting. It is used for a variety of different painting purposes and is used for faux painting. Glaze can come clear or it can come in colors. It goes on very smooth and usually wipes off. It can be used to create a variety of different decorative finishes for the home.

Other products that you need include paint brushes, rollers and trays. You should stay away from cheap products if you plan on having a professional painting business as they will not give you a good finish. You should use good paint brushes that will not lose their bristles and also good rollers that will provide a smooth finish on the walls and ceilings.

Use a hard metal tray and tray liners so that you have less of a tendency towards spills.

You should find a paint dealer near you who has premium quality paint. Gather up some paint chips so that you can show them to your customers. It cannot be said enough that you should use good quality paint when you are painting anything, be it for yourself or for your business.

The only time you should use contractor's paint is if you are painting new construction or new drywall. You want to have the most concentrate of the pigment in the paint and the least amount of water. Contractor's paint is half paint and half water.

It can be difficult for customers to figure out what they want by looking at tiny paint chips. While a color may look good on the chip, it may not look good on the walls. One way to eliminate this problem is to paint a board for the customer with the paint they have selected so that they can see what it looks like.

You can buy small pints of paint for this from a paint dealer with whom you have a good relationship. If you have a business, chances are that you will get the painting company to provide you with samples of paints for board painting.

Chapter 11 - How To Get Customers

Now that you are ready to get started with your painting business, you can start looking for customers. Fortunately, this is now easier to do than ever, thanks to the internet. Putting an ad for your services on a site like Craig's List is free. You can also advertise in grocery stores and other local shops where there are bulletin boards.

Taking out a newspaper ad can be expensive. If you decide to do this, remember that it pays to continue to advertise with them for a long period of time. Once people get used to seeing your name, they will know to call you when they want painting done.

You can put flyers on the sides of mailboxes on homes that look like they need painting. You should also join a local builders association and advertise your services to local contractors. You should use your internet website in local directories as well to gain business. These directories are free to submit to and many people are learning about local businesses in this way.

New businesses opening up in the area or who have closed down are also a good way to find business. Contact the landlord and see if they need the place painted. Contact building landlords and offer your services for rental units. Most landlords will paint a unit before putting it up for rent.

Use family and friends to get referrals. Give them your cards and brochures and ask them if they know someone who needs some painting done. Look for all avenues when it comes to finding your first customers. Once you get started in your business, the customers will come to you. Until then, you have to go to them.

Make sure that you are accessible. Have a cell phone and use it for your contact information. People who dial a number looking for a painter and who reach a machine will not leave a message. They will simply dial the next painter.

Once you get a call from a customer, make arrangements to see them as soon as possible. You never want to make it sound as if you are desperate for the work, but you also do not want the customer to slip through your fingers. Tell them that you are in the middle of a job but that you can make some free time for them on such and such date and time. This gives them the impression that you are successful and are not just sitting by the phone waiting for work.

Take a good look at what the customer wants painted. Figure out how much time will be spent on the job, how soon you can get a crew together and how much materials will cost. Tell them that you will give them an estimate on the job.

You should always give a customer a written estimate. If they choose to accept your offer, you should make them sign the estimate. At the time that you present an estimate, you should also sign it and make it known that it is good for a certain period of time. You should have a binding contract with the customer if they decide to accept your bid.

Always get money for materials up front. You should also get a portion of the job paid up front as well, at least this will cover some labor and material costs if the customer decides to stiff you for the rest of this money. Yes, this does happen sometimes. It is one of the hazards of being in any service business. The next chapter will discuss what you can do about such an incident.

Get back to the customer with the bid in two or three days at the most. Many people report that they call out contractors to do jobs and never hear from them again. This happens even today, with the economy being in the state that it is in. By providing them with a written estimate in a timely manner, you appear professional and stand a better chance of doing the job.

You will want to do the job right and fast. If you say that you are going to show up at a certain time for the job, be there. Unless it rains, you should be there when you promise. One of the biggest gripes that customers have about those who perform services is that they do not show up when they are supposed to show up. Do not start a job, wait a week and then go back. Chances are that you will have a very dissatisfied customer on your hands.

No one wants to have their house in shambles for days on end. You should make sure that you complete any job in a timely manner. At the end of the job, you need to ask for the payment for the completion of the job.

You should make sure that any problems are addressed at the time the job is being performed. If you paint an entire house in a certain color and take two days doing it, and at the end of the two days the customer says that they do not like the color, you have a problem. You need to make sure that the customer is satisfied with the process. Some customers will be easier to please than others when it comes to painting jobs.

Some people will be satisfied if you just slop paint on the walls and spill it all over the carpet. Some will be upset if you get one drop of paint on a piece of wood. This is the way it is with all service business. You must realize that not everyone will be pleased - some people are downright impossible to please. But the overwhelming majority of your customers should be pleased with your service or you are doing something wrong.

Satisfied customers will give your business a good name and also recommend you to others. Those who are not satisfied may badmouth you, but will usually not go out of their way to do so. You should make sure that you ask satisfied customers if they will let you use them as a reference for future jobs.

Once the job is complete and the place cleaned up, get the money. You are better off getting a certified check, cashier's check or cash. You can, however, set up a merchant account and enable yourself to accept credit cards. This can cost you a percentage of the profit, but it does give you an entire new customer base from which to work. You should make sure that you are paid as soon as the work is completed, as stipulated in your

contract. Never do a job without a contract and never give a waiver of lien until you have been paid fully by the customer or contractor for whom you are working.

Chapter 12 - The Non-Paying Customer

All businesses run into the non-paying customer once in a while. This is why it is important to get a signed contract and money up front for some of the labor and all of the materials. This way, you are not out of pocket for anything.

You can deal with a non-paying customer by putting a lien on their property. In order to do this, you have to issue them a Notice Of Lien. This liens the property so that when they go to sell, get financing or even refinance, the lien comes up. The lien will stay on the property for 7 years in most states. The lien is filed in the county where the property is located. Be sure to follow all of the rules for issuing a lien when you are doing this.

You can also move the court so that the lien is satisfied. You can do this on your own or have an attorney do this for you. If you lien the house properly, the judge can issue an order for the lien to be satisfied or the house sold. You should be aware of how you can collect for work that was done but not paid for whenever you start a service business. Whenever you do work on property, you can put a mechanic's lien on the property to reclaim the amount due to you.

Most customers will pay. Some might ask you for a waiver of lien as well as a materials waiver of lien. You can download these forms online or get them from the county in which the property is located. If the work is done and paid, then you are basically telling the customer that you have been paid and waiving all claims to future monies due. Most customers will not ask for a waiver of lien because they are unsure about mechanic's liens or do not even know that they exist.

Before you issue any waiver of lien, make sure that any check has cleared and any credit card payment has also cleared. Many credit card companies will dispute claims for their customers. If you have already issued them a waiver of lien and they decide to dispute the claim with the credit card company, it leaves you in a poor position. Again, this is another reason why you need to have a signed contract before you perform any work. These disputes are usually only good for 30 or 60 days at the most, so you can wait until then to issue the waiver.

You can join a local trade association to learn more about starting a service business like a home painting business. You should also join your local chamber of commerce as this is a likely source for getting business. Always do the right thing by the customer, never try to cut corners by cheating them with inferior products and fix any problems that occur and you will have a profitable home painting business.