

## CLEANING BUSINESS GOLD – ACTION PLAN

1. Phone up to 20, or at least 10 ‘competitors’ to find out the hourly rate they charge for cleaning homes in your area.
2. Calculate and set the agency fee applicable to your area, developing your own criteria to suit your particular market. Choose the name for your agency.
3. Design the marketing leaflet. Establish your Unique Selling Points. The key words are ‘reliable’, ‘honest’, ‘local’, and ‘experienced’. Paper or card (we recommend a card of 220 or 300 gsm). Color. (We recommend black print on yellow or gold card, blue on white, red on white or green on white).
4. Obtain quotations from printers for cards, or for leaflets. Quantity: 1000, 5,000, 10,000.
5. Get artwork done via separate printers. **Proof-read everything thoroughly.**
6. Assess areas to leaflet. Look for ‘better streets’ and young professionals. Visit the Estate Agents to find better areas. Be selective. Avoid council owed or rented accommodation, or areas with a high proportion of these types of premises. You should deliver or have them delivered towards the end of the week or at week-ends. Deliver leaflets/cards in good weather conditions – the better the weather, the better the response. Prepare **‘Leaflet Drop Report Sheet’**. This is a form for you to complete. If using a leafletter, he will have to sign it and return it to you. Always demand for the unused leaflets/cards to be returned to you. They cost a lot of money to print. How to complete the Leaflet Drop Report Sheet form (if using a leafletter):
  1. Leafletter’s Name: - Put your name, and the name of anyone else who helped you, if there was more than one of you.
  2. Date and day of drop: - Put the date and day you delivered on.
  3. Time drop commenced: - Time you started delivering – do not include time spent travelling to and from area selected.
  4. Time drop completed: - Put time you stopped – count this from when you stopped leafleting and don’t include the time it takes you to travel home.
  5. Total time used: - Claim only for the time you spent leafleting, not for time travelling to and from.
  6. Amount claimed: - Calculate what the agency owes you based upon the agreed rate per hour times the hours (and minutes) actually worked.
  7. Street name: - Complete street names in CAPITALS.

8. *F: This column is only used if there are flats in the street. Flats tend either to be in conversions, small blocks or tower blocks.*

*Conversions are distinguishable from houses by the number of bells. Also there may be more than one letter flap in the front door.*

*Tick the F column if there were any flats in the street. Or put a 'Q' for 'good quality' flats, or a 'G' for grotty flats. Don't deliver leaflets in run down looking premises.*

*Look out for brass door knobs and letter boxes. These indicate 'quality' – aluminum ones do not. If you find unpolished brass knobs they need a cleaner. Sparkling clean and super shiny well polished brass suggests they already have a cleaner.*

*Always go for brass.*

9. *S: Tick this column for shops. Use G or Q to denote 'grotty' or good 'quality'. As a general rule you shouldn't deliver leaflets into business premises – only private residential properties.*

10. *H: Tick for houses not divided into flats, or mark G or Q as above.*

11. *M: Depending upon your area, use this column to show streets with Mews houses (enter 'ME'), or Maisonettes (enter 'MA').*

*Alternatively this column can be used to score a street with points, from 1, the worst, to 10, the best. This will show the quality of the street overall.*

12. *MINS: Enter total minutes (or hours ?) it took you to cover the street.*

*If you felt the street was too grotty to be worth bothering with, enter 'N/A'. Discuss with the agency what is meant by 'grotty', if you are not sure whether you should be delivering leaflets in a given street.*

*At the end of each day spent leafletting, add up all the minutes and hours you have spent delivering and enter the total on the top of the form, on the line for that day.*

7. Preliminary newsagent advertisement for workers. Insert sample ads in selected newsagents. Consider whether to conduct preliminary interviews.
8. Inform printers and commence print run. Collect leaflets/cards or have them delivered.
9. Commence first leaflet drop by yourself or pay others. Aim for 2-4 hours per week. Complete the rest of Leaflet Drop Reports. Consider parallel newsagents advertisements. Always do the basements.
10. Monitor the response rates: by leaflet, by leafletter, by area, by quantity overall.
11. When you receive an inquiry from an interested potential client, take her name, address and telephone number and send her your agency introduction pack consisting of your introduction letter, your agency terms of agreement forms – two copies, one for her and one for you to be signed by her and returned to you, your information for clients letter, a

domestic cleaning checklist, your monthly and quarterly standing order filled by you to be chosen and signed by your client (the other copy can be discarded). The client should send you back your signed copy of the agency terms of agreement form and the preferred standing order form as soon as possible. Obtain Public Liability insurance cover.

12. Locate and assess 10 newsagents and place advertisements for workers therein. Monitor the response ratios from each newsagents to decide which ones you'll continue to advertise in.
13. Obtain referrals for more cleaners from all those you invite to interview as well as everyone you do interview.
14. Put advertisement for cleaners up in schools and even hairdressing salons, to attract mature mums, preferably car drivers.
15. When you create sample advertising copy for cleaners have one standard text or a variety of different adverts. Stick to one advert at a time so you can measure response ratio according to location of advert as well as text of advert.
16. Raise a list of what you need potential cleaners to bring with them to interview with you and keep this by the telephone. Use this list when you get a telephone enquiry from a new cleaner who you decide to invite to interview. What sort of people should you interview?
  - People referred on by good established cleaners you already know and trust – good workers will tend to refer others.
  - People who are close to public transport.
  - People looking for long term work.
  - Good ironers.
  - Those with good references from previous clients of their own – references, that is, for actual cleaning work.
  - In the country areas, quite clearly those with cars.

The main thing when interviewing a potential cleaner is their **ATTITUDE**. What is the attitude of your applicant to this sort of work? Ask them, both on the phone and at interview, **why** they're choosing to do this type of work. What **is** it that attracts them to it?

How do they feel about traipsing all around the countryside in a car, or queuing endlessly for public transport which never arrives, of going through all this hassle for what may be merely a three hour job – a job which may take as long as one or more hours to get to, and almost costs as much in fares as can be earned in the time.

When asked these questions, most will probably reply blandly that they 'need the money'. In which case, ask them why they have chosen this particular means of earning it. There must be other jobs they could get. What was it in your advertising that appealed to them?

Once you can find out what it is that makes your cleaners tick, and above all what makes your 'good' cleaners tick, those that stay around for years rather than months, you will be a lot closer to getting the type of worker you require.

17. **Never** take on a cleaner without first interviewing them.

18. After the interview with you and filling the Cleaner Form get cleaners to book their first appointment with client or do it yourself. Check with the cleaner how it went and which days she will be cleaning there. Insist that cleaner will always let you know of any changes with this assignment (lateness, time off, sickness, change of address, telephone number etc). Check with the client after the first appointment with a cleaner if they are happy to proceed or want to see another cleaner. Make sure you know on which date the regular cleaning will start, so you can use that day in your standing order forms.

19. **Get Your First Paying Client for Your House Cleaning Business, then get another and another and another...**

20. Start to cut out some of the routine work, such as leafleting, if possible through teaming up with another non-competing business, and where you employ others, remember you could use an incentive scheme to ensure workers do actually deliver the leaflets.

21. Decide whether you wish to use manual files or computer files in client administration and cleaner administration. **The Agency revolves around four core action points. – Allocation of a new client (or re-allocation of an existing client), Billing of a newly placed client, Chasing a newly billed client for payment, and processing to Deceased Client.** Designing your own system take into consideration those four stages of a clients 'life' with the agency. These are:

- New Client Enquiry in (or Existing Client to be re-allocated another worker) – TO BE ALLOCATED FILE (pending placement)
- New Client Placed – CLIENT BILLED FILE (billed awaiting payment)
- Client Payment Received (Existing Client Placed) – ALIVE CLIENT FILE (having processed bank mandate)
- Client Lapses – DECEASED CLIENT FILE (payment having stopped).

22. **Organize your office and your filing system around the key action points of the agency,** not the action points around the administrative system. It is as well to adopt a daily work pattern which you can stick to week in and week out. You need to get into a fixed routine where certain set tasks are done on certain days. This is very important as otherwise the agency would soon grind to a halt. The momentum has to be maintained. Suggested pattern of activity is as follows:

Day One	- Update
Day Two	- Interviews
Day Three	- Leafleting
Day Six	- Billing Letters Out

23. Refine administrative system for cleaners to cope with the expansion of the agency workload and increased information flow.

24. Stimulate long term worker loyalty by better matching work to those that need most where they want it most. GOLD TIP here – the better the pay to a cleaner, the better their loyalty to your agency and less turnover of workers.

25. To prevent time wasters wasting your time at interview you can introduce an ‘insurance deposit’. Either charge a small non-returnable fee or a higher ‘deposit’ refundable after a set period of service – possibly with a ‘loyalty bonus’ added. Advise workers that the onus is on them to claim their bonus off you. Recognize the importance of worker loyalty and the impact worker lapses have on client retention.

26. Arrange a separate bank account for the agency.

27. Keep all your receipts in one place. Organize your stationary so client billing and cleaner interviews can be carried out efficiently.

28. Delegate all tasks to the lowest common denominator – check everything you are doing is not below your competence level.

29. Review your current routine. Draw up a Master ‘To Do’s list for the agency. Decide which tasks can be eliminated, which delegated, and which you really must do yourself.

30. Streamline your paperwork. Deal with each class of paperwork at the optimum time.

31. Concentrate on the best areas.

32. Avoid unnecessary expenditure, especially on advertising.

33. Keep your agency separate from any other business or personal activities.

34. Research any marketing initiative fully with a dummy run before committing resources.

35. If a setback occurs, don’t allow this to reduce your commitment to the agency.

36. When you make mistake, understand what you did wrong to avoid a repetition.

37. Ensure your leaflets are designed to secure long lasting retention.

38. Have a simple one page website if you like.

39. Enforce prompt payment from new clients (receiving back the filled and signed standing order form which after photocopying it, you send to your bank. Keep copies in your separate file.

40. Secure higher client retention by implementing the idea of regular newsletter, ‘Agency Name News’ to all your clients. Write or call clients regularly to encourage referrals.

41. Monitor new prospects to check the interview has taken place and that the cleaner has definitely started **before billing**. Check with the cleaner afterwards to see how they are getting on. The better the rate of pay cleaners get, the **better retention of cleaners** you will have.
42. Leaflet delivery remains the principle source of new clients so this should be **the main marketing activity**.
43. Keep up to date with cleaner prospective movements.
44. Seek always to improve the quality of your service. Your ability to secure referrals depends on this.
45. Budget to deliver whatever number of leaflets you need to deliver to build up your client bank to the target you set for yourself. Decide now the number of clients you want to have by the end of your Year Two.
46. Be aware of **the value of your own time**. Provided the income from your agency is forthcoming, do not be afraid to pay others to perform tasks for you, provided the amount paid is less than it costs to employ yourself on that task. If I earn \$80 per hour on the agency, it is clearly in my interests to delegate on a large scale at \$8 per hour. You need to run the same equations.
47. Ensure anyone you take on is 'self-employed' so you save on PAYE admin hassles, eliminate the need to pay Employer's NIC and reduce Tax Liabilities into the bargain.
48. Make sure you use an accountant to handle your tax affairs.