**How to Start a Mobile Car-Detailing Business**

Mobile auto detailing eliminates the need for a physical business location, therefore limiting start-up costs considerably. Start a mobile car detailing business with inexpensive supplies and tools and grow as needs arise. As a mobile detailer, you will perform jobs in customer parking lots, driveways and garages, giving you the advantage of visibility for marketing purposes. The downside includes not being able to work outdoors in inclement weather and the limitations of having to travel with all necessary tools and supplies, including large quantities of water.

**Step 1**

Obtain a cell phone and a reliable vehicle large enough to safely hold tools and supplies or use your existing phone and vehicle. A medium- to large-sized car, pickup or SUV is sufficient for small to medium operations, or you may opt for a trailer.

**Step 2**

Obtain a local business permit from your jurisdiction’s clerk's office and a state tax certificate from your state's department of revenue. Confirm that there are no special licenses or requirements to operate a mobile detailing business. You may be required to collect sales tax for services in some states or may be prohibited from working on public or private private property such as business parking lots without owner consent.

**Step 3**

Buy printed materials, including business cards, fliers and a magnetic vehicle sign, from a local print shop. Buying locally will help spread your business name and may result in referrals and detailing jobs from business owners.

**Step 4**

Buy cleaning chemicals from a supplier or auto detailing supply company, including auto wax, window, exterior, interior, wheel, tire and carpet cleaners.

**Step 5**

Buy cleaning tools from a hardware store or auto detail supply company, including a vacuum, buffer, towels, window squeegees, buckets, brushes, sponges and plenty of cotton cleaning towels.

**Step 6**

Outfit your vehicle with carry bags, boxes or compartments to hold your cleaning supplies and tools.

**Step 7**

Market your detailing company by passing out or mailing business cards and fliers to local businesses and homes and use your magnetic vehicle sign to attract new customers. Place ads in local publications, ask other businesses to display your card and flier and engage in other marketing and advertising efforts as budget allows.

Things Needed

Cell phone

Vehicle

Local business permit

State tax certificate

Marketing materials

Water supply tank, pump, hose, electric generator and extension cords

Cleaning chemicals

Cleaning tools

Carry bags, boxes, compartments for tools and supplies

Tips

If you plan on doing jobs in business parking lots, you may not have access to a water and electrical supply. Consider purchasing a water supply tank with a pump and hose and a portable generator or limit your jobs to locations with permissible access. Carry hoses and extension cords to tap in to utilities where permitted.

Host a "detail day" at a business or shopping center parking lot, obtaining permission from the property owner. Set a date and pass out fliers to businesses to distribute to employees. Contact churches and nonprofit organizations for a fundraising detail day and donate a percentage of profits to the organization.

Use environmentally friendly products whenever possible. They may be more expensive but are safer to use and their mention may prove useful for marketing purposes.