

# How to Start a Detail Business in 2 Weeks.



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## **Congratulations!**

You've taken the first step toward starting your own car detailing business. Prepare to work on some fun and exotic cars, meet some great car people, and make a tidy income as your own boss—full or part time.

## **The Paperwork**

You will need to reserve your business name with your Secretary of State then open a checking account in that business name. Get a business license in your county, and you are ready to go. This can all be done on the Internet. Google is your friend.

Note: The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> includes step-by-step directions (with Internet links) on how to start your detailing business legally.

We give you specific links in our detailers' startup guide, <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com>.

## **The Equipment**

There are four critical pieces of equipment that allow you to do a professional, detailed job, and do it quickly:

1. Pressure washer.
2. Heavy duty wet/dry vacuum.
3. Cyclo polisher.
4. Air compressor (min. 3 gallon).

Tip: this equipment is in abundant supply on craigslist! Buy used, and save at least 50%. Much of the used equipment on craigslist has barely been used.

Electric pressure washers with 1500+ psi of pressure are perfect for car detailing. No need to go beyond 2000 psi or you can damage a customer's car.

Buy a wet/dry vac (Rigid from Home Depot is recommended) with no less than 5 horsepower.

The Cyclo polisher allows you to polish and wax a car in 15 min. or less. With a rotary buffer, this takes 30+ minutes plus a lot of tape work. By hand...1.5 hours. The Cyclo is an absolute must have piece of equipment for the profitable detailer. Buy your Cyclo on eBay, autogeek.net, or topoftheline.com.

A 3 gallon+ air compressor will cut your interior detailing times by half. Use compressed air to blast dirt out of areas you cannot get your vacuum cleaner into: speaker decks, under seats, between seats, in the tight spots of cupholders, in map pockets, in switches, in dials, in buttons...everywhere. How do detailers clean cars so thoroughly so quickly. Simple...air compressors.

Note: The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> reveals where you can buy a Cyclo polisher package with the exact pad/wax/polish combination you need to work fast and produce mirror finish results.

## Supplies

As a professional charging \$175 a car, you have to be ready for the problems people pay professional rates for: water spots, pet hair, upholstery stains, tobacco odor, oxidized paint, deeply stained wheels, headliner stains, and dull trim, just to name a few.

You're going to need a small arsenal of brushes, chemicals, odor removers, compounds, waxes, water spot removers, degreasers, and wheel cleaners to make your customers happy.

Here's the full list:

1. 12 squirt bottles.
2. 1 gallon of All Purpose Cleaner Concentrate.
3. 1 gallon of Super Degreaser Concentrate.
4. 1 gallon of Tire Dressing.
5. 1 Meguiars claybar.
6. 32 oz. Meguiars #105 Compound.
7. 32 oz. Meguiars #205 Polish.
8. 64 oz. of Meguiars #21 Synthetic Sealant Wax.
9. 3 Meguiars dispenser bottles.
10. 1 gallon of Hyper Dressing Concentrate.

11. 1 gallon of Wheel Brightener.
12. 5 crevice brushes.
13. 18 microfiber towels for wax removal.
14. 6 no lint glass towels.
15. 18 cotton towels for interior (carpet, leather, plastic) and exterior (bugs, road tar) cleaning.
16. 2 packages of very fine steel wool.
17. 1 gallon of paint thinner.
18. 3 black bristle carpet brushes.
19. 4 double headed toothbrushes.
20. 1 long handle brush for wheel cleaning.
21. Gallon of wax/grease remover or adhesive remover from hardware store. Place in a spray bottle.
22. 2 bug bricks.
23. 1 long handle washing brush.
24. 1 pet hair removal stone.
25. (3) 50 foot extension cords.
26. (5) yellow handle detailing brushes.
27. (5) black handle detailing brushes.
28. Garden hose from hardware store and reel.
29. Bucket, wash soap, and wash mitts from a general store.
30. Razor holder and razors from auto parts store.
31. 5 medium bondo spreaders from an auto parts store. Cut to 3" wide.
32. Wax and grease remover from auto parts store.
33. Goof Off from general store.
34. (2) 2 gallon plastic gas cans. Fill one with regular unleaded and the other with premium. You'll need these if a car runs low on gas.
35. Jumper cables in case a car needs a jump.
36. Air gun and fittings to attach to your air compressor.
37. 4 floormat hangers.
38. Small trash can.
39. Boxes of disposable nitrile or latex gloves.
40. "Lifter" "Spot Shot" or "Folex" carpet spot cleaner.

**Note:** The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> reveals where to buy the above supplies for the absolute best prices, and where to get refills from reliable, quick-shipping suppliers.

In total, expect to pay \$1500 for equipment and supplies if you buy new equipment. \$1000 if you buy used. Used equipment holds its value well on craigslist, so if you do need to sell someday, expect to get 90% of your investment back.

## **The Detailing Process**

Now that you have your equipment and supplies, you will want to practice, practice, practice your detailing skills.

Detail about 5 cars before you go “public” with your services. Detail your own car, your wife/girlfriend’s car, your friends’ cars. They’ll be happy to volunteer their cars, as no one will say no to a free detail!

In 62 steps, here is the process I developed in 10+ years and over 5000+ cars detailed. Every car, no matter how large, how expensive, how dirty...I did them all in this exact way in this exact order.

**Note: The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> includes 21 videos in which I demonstrate my exclusive detailing process.**

**The 62 step detailing process to produce pro quality results 25% faster than your competition.**

1. Arrive 5 minutes early wearing your uniform. Wear a hat and sunscreen on a sunny day.
2. Greet the customer and make small talk. It helps when he/she makes a personal connection with you. Compliment their car. Ask for the location of their water outlet and electrical outlet.
3. Walk around the car slowly and ask the customer what their particular concerns are for the detail, and write them down on your check in sheet. If there are stains on the interior, write them down. If there are water spots on the windows, write that down. Later, you’ll check all of these things off when the detail is completed.
4. Give the customer their final price and write it down on the check in sheet. Generally, for cars you will have a range of \$160 - \$220 for a full detail. For SUVs, Vans, and Trucks, it’s \$180 - \$240. It’s up to you to choose the final price, but most appreciate it when you keep it near your average. Customers with pet hair, interior soiling, overspray, dull paint, and otherwise challenging cars are usually understanding that their cars will be priced near the top of your pricing range.
5. Have the customer complete their name, email, and phone number and sign the check in form.
6. Accept the keys and give an approximate completion time (3.5 – 6.5 hours depending on condition). Generally add an hour to your estimate so you don’t go over your estimate. Finishing early makes you look good, and you finish early when you make longer estimates. Let them know that to avoid a dead battery, you will run their car during the duration of the detail. I never had a customer object to this, as a gallon of gas is less fair trade for the prospect of not having a dead

- battery. You will bring two gas cans (one with regular, one with premium) to the job in case their gas light comes on during your work.
7. Put on your detailing apron. Place clean rags in the big pockets. Place one yellow handle detailing brush, one black handle detailing brush, and one toothbrush in the small pocket.
  8. Connect your water hose and pressure washer. Plug in two 50 foot extension cords.
  9. Unpack your equipment and supplies and place them within 6 feet of the car.
  10. Park the car in a spot where you have adequate room to work and on as flat ground as you can find.
  11. Drop an ounce of car wash soap in your bucket and fill it with water.
  12. Remove the trunk liner to avoid getting it excessively wet while cleaning trunk jambs.
  13. Turn on your pressure washer and test for leaks and proper pressure.
  14. If the customer requests an engine detail, we'll do this first. Open the hood and cover any exposed electrical systems with rags. Spray the engine and the underside of the hood with water. Spray the underside of the hood with degreaser. Spray all engine areas with degreaser. Dip your long handle brush in your bucket of soapy water and proceed to scrub clean the underside of the hood. Hose off the underside of the hood. Use the long handle brush to scrub the inner fenders, the intake, the top of the radiator...anything you have access to. Hose off the areas you just cleaned. If there are finer points in the engine that need to be cleaned (manifold, battery, brake booster, etc.) spray degreaser on them, then fine clean them with your black handle detail brush. Pressure wash clean. Note that there are three angles to the underhood: left, right, and center. Be sure that the engine is clean from all angles. **Not everything will come clean.** There are areas of caked on oil that will not clean up. Get the engine bay as clean as possible—particularly black plastic items. Now, spray the entire engine with Hyper Dressing (diluted 4 parts water to 1 part dressing). Remove the rags used to cover the electrical systems, then close the hood and let the engine run for about 20 minutes before checking it later.
  15. Floormats. Let's do these first, as they take a while to dry. Remove all floormats from the vehicle. This includes trunk liners in sedans (usually carpet glued to cardboard) and trunk mats in SUVs (usually carpet). If the trunk liner just needs to be vacuumed, set it aside. If it has stains, mud, food, etc. Spray it down with degreaser. If the trunk mat (carpet) is relatively clean, set it aside and "spot" clean it later. But if more than 1/3 or it is soiled and dirty, spray it down with degreaser. Take all floormats and soak them with degreaser. Now, pressure wash the floormats from the back to the front in overlapping passes. Resoak with degreaser and scrub with a carpet brush, then pressure wash if necessary. If the floormat has rubber streaks from shoe soles, or embedded rubber or tar, spray paint thinner, then scrub with a carpet brush, then pressure wash. Repeat this process for all floor mats. As you pressure wash, note that the rinse off water is no longer brown and soapy...you should continue until you have clear water running off. **The driver's floormat will never look brand new.** This mat has seen dirty shoes for every mile the car has been driven. It has layer after layer of dirt and rubber markings that won't come out entirely. This is okay, and I've never had a customer object to this. However, the other mats should come out nearly new. The only items that cannot be removed are red, yellow, and orange

food stains. Once you have satisfactorily rinsed the floormats clean, hang them from your floor mat clamps. You may need to bring a large board to mount your floor mat clamps to. Or you can experiment with ways to use your work vehicle as the mounting board. It's very important to hang these mats and let them drip dry, though, as we cannot deliver wet mats to the customer. Just putting them out in the sun is not enough...they will not get dry this way. Once you hang the mats, you will not touch them for at least three hours, at which time just the very tips will be wet (vacuum the tips dry, put some stripes in the mats, and reinstall in the car at the end). Cardboard trunk liners can simply be leaned up against a wall. Large trunk mats (carpet) may need to be hung by two mat clamps or dangled out the back of your work car...they can get heavy.

16. Wet the entire car, including wheels.
17. Grab your Wheel Brightener and Degreaser bottles. Walking around the car counter clockwise, spray degreaser in the wheel wells, door jambs, and trunk jambs. Spray Wheel Brightener on the wet wheels. Do this all on the same trip—do not make separate trips for Brightener and Degreaser. A quick note about Wheel Brightener and wheels. It's fantastic on 95% of wheels, but it will stain uncoated aluminum wheels. Here's how to know if you're working with uncoated aluminum. Are the wheels factory? You are 100% safe to use WB. Are the wheels chrome? You are 100% safe to use WB. Are the wheels aftermarket with a perfect, reflective finish? You are 100% safe to use WB. However, if the wheels have a dull, unpolished finish, you may have an uncoated aluminum wheel. These wheels are cheap, often made by Prime and American Racing. Avoid using WB on these wheels and just scrub with soap and water. If you do, however, accidentally use WB on aluminum wheels, you can remove the stains with Mother's Wheel Polish. It won't take long until you can spot aluminum wheels, don't worry. I strongly suggest you use WB, as it is a huge time saver and profit maker.
18. Get your pressure washer and make one more clockwise trip around the car, pressure washing the wheel wells, wheels, door jambs, and trunk jambs. Get low when pressure washing the wheels and pressure wash them from all angles. Do this all in one trip and do not make separate trips for Brightener and Degreaser. Be careful not to get the interior of the car wet when washing jambs. After a few cars, you'll find this is not difficult.
19. Back up the car 2 feet. You'll see that the wheels are dirty from an angle you couldn't clean from previously. Walk around the car and spray Brightener on all the wheels again, then make a trip again with the pressure washer and spray off the Brightener. Check that all dirt is gone from the wheels from every angle. If there is any remaining dirt, dip your yellow detailing brush in soapy water and scrub the dirt free, then pressure wash. If you find, yet again, that you have stubborn dirt and brake dust, spray more Brightener on the wheels, allow it to dwell for at least 15 seconds, then scrub with the tighter bristle black detailing brush. If there is still remaining dirty, you will have to manually clean this dirt with a rag and paint thinner later in the detail.
20. Wet the car again. Wash the car from top to bottom with your long handle brush. This should only take about 60 seconds. Do not pause to wash off soap! You need to move fast. Spray off the soap bubbles with the pressure washer when the entire car has been scrubbed. If the car has dead bugs on the grill, bumper, mirrors, windshield, etc., dip your yellow bug brick in soapy water and scrub the

- bug matter clean; don't worry, the brick seems like it might scratch the car, but it won't.
21. Take your wash mitt and dip it in the soapy water. Hold the mitt in your left hand and your clean claybar in the right. Soap down an entire panel...start with the hood. Then, in a tight circular motion with medium pressure, rub the claybar over the car's paint. You will initially feel some resistance from the rough surface, but as the claybar removes embedded contaminants (brake dust, rail dust, tree sap, overspray), the paint will feel slick. Repeat the process until the panel you are working on feels smooth...relubricate with the soapy wash mitt when needed. Once you have clayed an entire panel, wash it clean with the pressure washer. Do every panel of the vehicle AND all windows (claybarring windows makes them easier to clean later in the detailing process). Not every car needs to be claybarred. About ¼ have smooth paint surfaces that will not benefit from it. If the paint feels smooth..don't claybar and save 7 minutes. However, all white cars must be claybarred. Tar, sap, brake dust...all of these stand out on white cars and must be removed with the claybar process.
  22. One more time, walk around the car with your pressure washer and rinse thoroughly. Now, we will be looking at seams and rubber seals where dirt and even moss accumulate. Use your pressure washer to blast these areas clean...we don't want to clean them by hand later. Look in wheel wells, double check the wheels, check around trim. Get these "nooks and crannies" clean with your pressure washer. Don't be afraid to get within 4 inches...1500 psi is a very safe setting and you will not damage anything or cause any leaks.
  23. After rinsing the car, turn off your pressure washer. Get your "Absorber" chamois towel and proceed to dry the car. Start from the top to the bottom. Drag the chamois across the roof of the surface, then wring it out as it gets full and won't absorb more water. For smaller, tighter areas, wad up the chamois into a smaller ball and use your fingers and hands to wipe dry. **Do not spend more than 60 seconds drying the car and do not try to wipe up every drop of water on the car.** It will be at least one hour until you will polish/wax the car. The car will naturally air dry as you detail its interior.
  24. Let's check under the hood. You should see a dramatic difference: the engine bay is clean and the black plastic is stark black again. You may notice some white pooling of the dressing. Wipe this up with a rag. You may also noticed dirty areas under the hood, on the inner fender wells, on top of the battery, etc. Wipe these clean with a rag and All Purpose Cleaner (APC). Close the hood when you're satisfied. Remember, the car is running this entire time.
  25. On to the interior. Open all doors, trunk, windows, and sunroofs. Roll the front seats all the way forward.
  26. Walk around the car and place the customer's personal items in bags and boxes. Place small items (cell phone accessories, loose change, fingernail clippers) in plastic bags and place large items (CDs, tissue paper box, paper towels) in boxes. Remove child seats. Set aside all personal items. Check in all consoles, compartments, map holders, door pockets...everywhere. Remove everything but what's in the glove box. Leave the glove box alone for now.
  27. Walk around the car again and throw away trash. This includes food wrappers, paper cups, receipts...anything of no value.
  28. Air purge the car. Take your blow gun and blow down every surface in the car. Map pockets, compartments, between seats, unders seats, across seats,

dashboards, consoles, footwells...everywhere. We're trying to dislodge as much dirt as possible without vacuuming it up. Keep blowing compressed air everywhere. You'll see dirt flying out the doors and hatch. If you're making a mess of the driveway, don't worry about it...you'll sweep it up later. **We air purge the car repeatedly to avoid filling up our vacuum cleaners with dirt and junk. It's faster and preserves our vacuum cleaners.**

29. Start at the trunk. The trunk liner has been removed, right? Wipe the jambs clean. Spray All Purpose Cleaner (APC) on the underside of the hood and wipe it clean. Vacuum everything clean. Remove the cover to the spare tire. Vacuum in the spare tire area. Spray APC into all areas, wipe clean with a rag, agitate tight spots with your detailing brush (yellow handle) then spray compressed air into all tight spots to "blast clean" the dirt. Wipe clean again. Repeat with this process until everything is clean. Vacuum one last time. If you didn't pressure wash your trunk liner, vacuum it clean, then place in the trunk. Avoid using a carpet brush on trunk liners, as this causes the carpet to ball up irreversibly. If there is debris on the liner that won't vacuum clean, use compressed air to purge it free. Reassemble the trunk liner and tire cover. Place any personal items back in the trunk and close. You're done.
30. If the trunk is a hatch (minivan, SUV, station wagon) the process is a bit different. You have a large black seal that surrounds the opening. Spray APC on this. Agitate all areas with a yellow handle detailing brush. Wipe clean with a rag. Follow up with compressed air to "blast clean" the remaining cleaner chemical and dirt. Wipe clean again. Check all areas of the seal and jambs to make sure they are clean...the pressure wash doesn't get everything so followup with a combination of APC, brushes and compressed air to clean up every hinge and bolt. Now look up and clean the under site of the hatch. This is often overlooked! Sometimes you will find dog hair and stains here. Clean from the back to the front. Look up again and you may find stains in the headliner. Spray APC on a clean rag, THEN wipe the stains clean. Do not spray chemical directly into the headliner, as you will water stain it. Crayon stains? Ink stains? Spray a small amount of thinner into a rag and wipe across the stains to transfer them into your rag. Now, working from top to bottom, look at the plastic liner pieces that form the walls of the cargo area. Spray them with APC and wipe them clean. Are there rubber scuffs and other marks that won't wipe clean? Use very fine steel wool and APC to scrub them clean. There will be cubby holes and small doors. Open them, blast them with compressed air, spray APC, agitate the APC with a detailing brush, then blast them again with compressed air. Wipe dry. You may find speaker grills. If the grill is plastic, spray with APC, agitate in the little holes with a detailing brush, blast with air, then wipe clean. If the speaker grills are cloth, spray your rag with APC, then wipe across the face of the cloth speaker grill. The trunk mat (carpet) is out, right? Now clean the area beneath the carpet. If there are stains in the tight trunk liner, spray them with APC, scrub with a carpet brush, then dry with a clean rag. Repeat repeat repeat until the stains are gone. If the stains are particularly difficult (cola, coffee, tee), use "Lifter" or "Spot Shot" or "Folex" carpet cleaners. Spray with cleaner, scrub with carpet brush, then push a clean rag across the area until it's dry. If you see rubber, tar, or any "black" staining, use a little paint thinner on a rag (don't spray thinner onto the spot) and wipe back and forth over the stained area. The trunk liner may lift up. It may be removable. Lift up and remove everything that can be lifted or

removed. Clean every door and every cubby with our basic spray/agitate/air blast/wipe clean method. If we pressure washed the trunk mat (carpet), leave it hanging for a few hours. If we didn't, put the trunk mat back in the car. Vacuum it clean. If there are stains, scrub them first while dry with a stiff brush, then air purge. Spray with APC, then scrub into a foam, then push a clean dry rag across the face repeatedly. Check the rag for dirt transfer. These are the fundamentals of shampooing: vacuum, scrub with a brush while dry, air purge, spray APC, scrub into a foam, then push clean rags into the area until dry and clean. Repeat, repeat, repeat. Use as little chemical as possible! Use carpet spot cleaner when needed for coffee and cola. Use thinner when needed for tar or rubber.

31. Okay, so we cleaned the trunk area from **top to bottom, back to front**. Keep this principle when detailing interiors. Always work from the top to the bottom and the back to the front. Next will be the passenger rear door panels. Remember that the window is rolled down. Air purge the door again...the handles, the map pockets...everywhere. Now spray it down with APC. Wipe clean with a rag, then agitate tight spots and seams with a detailing brush. Then air blast all seams and tight areas, then wipe dry with a rag. Are there kick marks and rub marks that didn't come clean? Clean with APC and very fine steel wool. Occasionally, door panels will have cloth inserts that are very dirty from pets or people's arms resting on them. Spray these wet with lots of APC. Scrub until foamy. Vacuum out the foam, then push clean dry towels into the cloth until dry. Repeat until the dirt is out and your towels show no dirt transfer.
32. Now look up and clean the passenger's headliner area.
33. Look back. If you're cleaning a sedan, there is the speaker deck up against the rear window. If you can, recline the rear seat so you have better access. Air purge and vacuum the areas exposed when you fold forward the seat. Now air purge the speaker deck...there's often debris and bugs there. Vacuum clean and wipe down and all panels until clean.
34. Now we look to the rear seats. Air purge them. If they are leather, spray them down with APC. Wipe them dry. Air purge the cracks and creases. If there is still dirt, spray them down again with APC and use a detailing brush in every crease and seam, then air purge and wipe dry. If they are still dirty, you will need to use a combination of APC and steel wool (gently) to get the surfaces clean. Even faster, spray with APC and use a carpet brush. Yes, a carpet brush. Just air blast the bristles clean, and the carpet brush will work wonderfully. No, it won't damage the leather. I've used them thousands of times and never damaged leather. Here's how: spray down a 2 foot by 2 foot area with APC, then scrub in small circles with the carpet brush. Wipe dry, then air purge all creases clean and wipe dry again. Pull up headrests and clean around those; remove them if you have to and clean them and reinstall them. Drop the center arm rest. Spray APC in the cup holders and agitate with a brush and air purge. Air purge and vacuum all doors and compartments in the console. Check the lower cushions. Do they fold forward? Always check. If so, pull up the lower cushions and air purge, clean, and vacuum.
35. If the seats are cloth, we don't spray them down entirely with APC as we do leather. We spot clean them. If there are isolated dirt spots and stains, mist APC onto the spot, scrub with your carpet brush, then dry with a clean rag. Don't use too much APC or you will get water spotting. However, about 10% of the time you will find seats that are so dirty and soiled in so many places that they cannot

be “spot cleaned.” Here, you will have to soak the seats in APC (yes, you will need to refill your APC..always bring your concentrates to the job site in case you need refills). Soak the entire seat from top to bottom...every visible surface so you don't get water staining. Scrub aggressively with a carpet brush until foamy, then vacuum. Then push clean rags into the seats to dry them further. Once your done with the interior later, you will close the doors and place the heater on to dry out the seats entirely. You may have to repeat this process once the car is dried later on. But, for 90% of cloth seats, you can “spot clean” them using a minimal amount of chemical.

36. Next: the backs of the front seats. These often get kicked. Food and drinks are spilled on them. They have map pockets. Mist them down with APC and clean/air purge/dry as usual.
37. Look down. It's time to shampoo the carpets. Do not bother shampooing where floormats go. This area is clean and we want it as dry as possible. First air purge the carpet. Then scrub when dry with a carpet brush, then air purge again. Now mist with APC, scrub, and dry with clean rags. Keep pushing clean rags across the carpets firmly until the dirt transfers into the rags. If the carpets are exceptionally dirty, spray enough APC that it “foams” when you scrub it. Then vacuum the foam, then dry with clean rags. As always, use lifter and thinner for isolated stains when appropriate.
38. Once you have cleaned the rear passenger area on both sides, move on to the driver's area. **The driver's seat, door panel, steering wheel, visor, etc. is the most important part of the detail—your customer looks at these areas for hours a day while in his/her car. Make it spotless!** Let's first clean the door panel as we did previously. Now roll the seat back and sit in it. Look up. Clean the headliner and driver's visor. Flip down the visor and clean the back side of the vanity mirror. Clean the sunroof controls. Clean the grab handle. Clean everything. Look forward. There's a lot to clean: vents, gauge panel (speedometer, tachometer, etc.), steering wheel, turning stalk, wiper controls, steering column, dashboard, etc. Now mist down the vents, dashboard, steering column, gauges, and steering wheel with APC. Use your detailing brush to brush back and forth deep in the vents. Wipe with a rag. Blast dry with air. Now wipe down the gauges but **never spray compressed air around the speedometer/gauges area.** You will get chemical behind the plastic lenses that you can never remove...very amateur mistake. Just wipe it clean with a rag. Now rotate the steering wheel to the left (remember the car is running; and by the way...there's no harm in listening to the stereo at a normal volume—I've never had a customer complain about that) and clean the steering wheel front and back and in every crease and seam using APC, brushes, and compressed air. Rotate the steering wheel to the right and clean it again from every angle. Mist APC on the steering column, the turn selector, the controls for the windshield wipers, and clean them with APC, brushes, and air. Now clean the right visor. Mist down the dashboard and wipe it dry with a rag.
39. On to the center instrument panel, which contains the heater controls, radio, NAV screen, etc. We have to be careful again here not to use compressed air to spray chemical behind digital displays. Air purge the whole panel with air. Then mist APC on the entire panel. Working from the top down, we agitate with a detail brush then blast dry with compressed air. Don't worry about radio and heater controls—I've never damaged one using compressed air and chemical. **But when**

- you encounter the digital displays (stereo display, NAV display), do not air blast when wet.** You will get chemical staining behind the display that is permanent. Simply wipe these areas clean with a rag. Open the ash tray, open any doors or compartments and clean in them.
40. Now to the console, which contains the gear selector and emergency brake. Put the car in drive. This will expose the shifter gate, which must be cleaned. Mist APC onto the shifter and shifter gate and clean. Place in 1<sup>st</sup>. Clean. Place in Reverse. Clean. The shifter gate is often overlooked...don't miss it. Mist APC on the entire console and clean, being sure to blast every bit of dirt and food out of every crease. Open and clean in all doors. Clean deep in the emergency brake recess. Now you may notice dirt and staining between the seat and console. Air blast it. If there's still staining in areas where you can't get your carpet brush, mist them with APC, then scrub with your skinny tooth brush, then air blast. Clean the seat belt receptacle then step out of the car.
  41. Time to clean the driver's seat. We'll use the same techniques we used in the back, Clean it from top to bottom. Clean it from the sides. Clean it from low angles. If you see kick marks or scuffs clean them with fine steel wool. Clean the electric control buttons and heater buttons. Fold it forward and back to clean in the hinges.
  42. On to the foot well. Air purge then vacuum. Now mist the plastic panels with APC and clean. Now mist the carpeted areas, then scrub with a carpet brush, then scrub with clean dry towels. Repeat until the carpets are clean. Now spray APC on all pedals and scrub with a carpet brush then air purge. Clean all buttons and levers that release the trunk or gas cap. Wipe dry repeatedly.
  43. Repeat this process for the passenger side, but when you get to the glove box remove everything in the box, blast dry, then place everything back in the glove box. Customers do not like the items in their glove box to be bagged up, boxed, or reorganized. Leave them as you found them.
  44. Now the interior has been scrubbed clean from back to front, top to bottom. Once last and final time, we will vacuum EVERYWHERE, top to bottom. If the carpets are damp, set the heater to high and point it through the vents and at the floor. Set it to "fresh air" not "recirculated." Close the doors. We'll now move to the outside of the car.
  45. First, we need to remove road tar and tree sap from the exterior. Walk around the car with your can of Goof Off and a rag. Wet the rag, then wipe off the sap and tar. You'll find a lot of tar around the tires, particularly on the lips of fenders and quarter panels.
  46. Walk around the car and dress the exterior black plastic using your Meguiars Hyper Dressing. Spray it up in the wheel wells. Spray it on fender trim. Spray it on all black or dark gray exterior plastic items. You can be sloppy with it. It will run like milk, but don't worry because you'll be wiping it down in about 20 – 30 minutes.
  47. Now dress the tires. Mist tire dressing on the tires in a uniform pattern. Use as little dressing as possible. Don't touch the dressing for now. If it runs or looks uneven, we'll touch it up at the end, but we just want to quickly walk around the car and mist dressing on the tires. Get in the car and roll it back 18 inches. This will expose the lower area of the tire that we missed the first time around. Mist dressing on this area.
  48. Identify areas of the paint that need compounding and polishing. This includes

- small scratches and cuts. Not all scratches can be removed with our machinery... some have gone all the way through to the basecoat paint (the colored paint beneath the clear paint) and will need to be repainted or touched up. To verify, spray wax and grease remover on the damage. If it disappears, we have clearcoat damage that we can remove with machine polishing. If it remains, the damage has reached the basecoat and cannot be corrected with a detail.
49. Place a small bead of Meguiars #105 compound on the scratches you intend to polish out. Spray some pink Detail Spray on yellow (firm) foam pads attached to your Cyclo. Place the pads on the compound and smear the compound around on the panel. Turn on the Cyclo and slowly work the compound from left to right and up to down on top of the scratch. The compound will turn to dust and the scratch will disappear or improve significantly because its edges have been polished down. You may need to repeat this process to get the best results. Continue with the polishing process all the way around the car on each defect that needs machine polishing.
  50. Now get your Meguiars 21 Sealant and walk around the car, placing a 7 inch bead of wax on every panel (two on the hood, two on the roof). Place orange pads on your Cyclo and spray pink detail spray on the pads to soften them. Place the pads on the wax and spread them around on the panel. Turn on the Cycle and with medium pressure spread the wax on the panel in overlapping passes. Spend extra time on doors, fender, hood, and trunk, as these panels reflect direct light and will be scrutinized by the customer. As you slowly go back and forth over these panels, the firmness of the pad is polishing the paint and the wax is sealing it. This is a major time saver, as it saves us from having to polish every square inch of the car, wipe off the polish, then wax every square inch.
  51. Move fast. Go from panel to panel, working the wax into each panel. Pass quickly over non critical areas low on the car and bumpers. **Do not get obsessed with getting wax on every square inch of the car.** All this does is get wax on trim, wax in seams, and wax in emblems...it looks horrible. Stay 2 inches away from all panel gaps, emblems, and trim. You may feel like the car will look strange...like it was partially waxed. But once you have removed the wax you cannot see where the wax begins and the wax ends. One note about vans and SUVs. Unless the customer specifically requests it, do not polish and wax the roof. Just be sure the roof is clean—no tree sap, no bird droppings, no dirt, no moss. But polishing and waxing up there is a waste of time, as very few owners ever check.
  52. Wax the entire car and do not stop to wipe anything down. You should be able to do the job in 5 minutes or less. Once done, get a clean microfiber towel and your pink detail spray. Mist detail spray on each panel, then wipe off the wax. You will need to wipe several times to remove the wax entirely. On dark cars, you may notice some blurriness and hazing. Keep misting pink spray and wiping off the wax until there is not blur or haze...just a clean reflective glossy panel. Go around the car from panel to panel removing the wax with this method. Move fast. Don't obsess over every detail, as we'll make small corrections at the end.
  53. Now that the wax is removed, let's return to the black and grey plastic trim. Get a rag and wipe down that trim if the Hyper Dressing has puddle up a bit on it. Wipe the entire panel and it will come up deep black. Check mudflaps too...these must be dressed evenly.
  54. Check the tires. If there are any runs in the dressing, dab them with a rag. And be

- sure that the entire tire has been dressed. Touch up any missed spots. You will have tire dressing on the wheels. Wipe them dry at this time.
55. Now onto the windows. This is a critical part of the detail. Imperfections in windows are one of the most common sources from customers, so be sure to put some time into making them smear and smudge free—particularly the windows that can be seen from the driver’s seat. Start with the driver’s door. Lower the window about an inch, then mist cleaner on the window’s inside surface. Wipe down the outer area of the window in a “box” then wipe the inside. This is now your “wet” window towel. Using another, clean window microfiber, wipe down the entire window, being sure to remove the finest streaks and imperfections. Crouch and look at the window from all angles. Keep wiping with the “dry” towel until the window is perfect. This is the two towel window cleaning method: wet with cleaner, clean with “wet towel”, dry with “dry towel.” You may encounter stains on the inside from your APC that don’t clean up with window cleaner. Use steel wool and window cleaner to clean these. On the outside, you will encounter water spots. Remove them with a combination of very fine steel wool and Chemical Guys’ water spot remover. Be sure to finish up with glass cleaner and clean glass towels. Avoid using Chemical Guys water spot remover on the areas of the windshield that the windshield wipers clean—for some reason a film can be exposed over time here that gets stained by the spot remover chemical. Elsewhere on the car, the water spot remover is safe. Refer to the advanced techniques section of this ebook for more on water spot removal.
56. If the seats are leather, we’ll next condition them. This is relatively easy. Wet a clean towel with leather conditioner and work one panel at a time. Start with the driver’s backrest. Wipe it down with conditioner. You will see streaks...this is normal. Now follow up with a clean towel and wipe in a circular motion until the streaks are gone. **Do not bother wiping the backs of seats, door panels, consoles, or any other non-seating surfaces with leather conditioner.** Only condition the parts of the seats that touch the customer’s body—these are real leather. Now proceed to the lower cushion. Wipe down with a towel wetted with conditioner. Now follow up with a clean towel in a circular motion to remove streaks. Do not obsess about getting conditioner on every square inch of every leather panel. Once the excess conditioner has been wiped away, you can’t tell which small areas were missed. You want to do this as quickly as possible. Usually it only takes 2 minutes for a sedan and 3 minutes for an SUV. In the end, the seats will be slightly softer and more pliable, but NOT GREASY.
57. Now check your floor mats. They should be 95% dry with a wet edge. Vacuum that wet edge dry. You may have lines caused by your pressure washer which you will want to mist with APC then scrub with a carpet brush in an ‘X’ pattern to remove the deep lines. Now, brush your floormats upward and with a carpet brush and use your bondo spreader (cut to 3 inches wide) to drag downward “stripes” in your floormats to simulate carpet extraction. Keep your stripes evenly spaced and professional looking. Customers love the stripes for some reason. With your trunk mat (carpet), you can use your carpet brush to place a “houndstooth” pattern, which we show in an online video. Now air blast the bottoms of your floormats clean, then lay them back in their correct spots in the car.
58. Take a look at your customer’s check in sheet. Remember the notes you took when you took his keys? Be sure that everything you noted was fixed (or at least

- was attempted to be fixed) during your service: scratches, stains, water spots. Check them off one by one. He may have made extra notes like “don’t move this” or “this seat moves forward, but not back” or “this is broken.” Be sure you noted these during your service.
59. Thus begins the most important part of every detail you will ever perform: error checking. **Spend at least 10 minutes double checking everything.** You will be amazed by what you find: areas that didn’t get waxed, bugs in the grille, tar that was overlooked, smeary windows, scuffs that didn’t get cleaned, compartments you missed, angles from which the wheels are still dirty. The best way to go about this is systematically. Start at the front of the car and go around clockwise looking up and down for errors, correcting them as you find them. Go around the car twice. Then systematically check the interior of the car starting at the back working your way forward. Open this, open that. Look up. Look down. Look under seats. Look at everything and correct it until it looks right. Finally, sit in the driver’s seat. Adjust the mirrors like they were when you found them. Turn off the radio. Turn off the heater. Look at the instrument panel. Look at the steering wheel. Look up. Do you see any dirt, lint...anything that got overlooked. Look out the windows...do you notice any smears. Your customer sits in this seat and looks at these things for hours each day. He paid you good money for your service, and these angles, above all others, must look as perfect as you can make them.
  60. Organize your things but don’t pack them up. Take one last look at the car for any errors. Now get your customer and hand him the keys. He will be excited to see you! Note what was written on the check in sheet and that you corrected everything you could. If anything did not come out right, immediately say so and explain why (“that scratch could not be buffed out because it was too deep” “that stain had red or orange food dye” “there’s caked on oil stains on your engine block). Ask him to review the entire car and tell him to let you know if you missed anything. Give him time to look everywhere. He will find things that you missed. Don’t make a big deal about it...it’s not personally. Say “sorry about that” and touch it up with a clean towel. There may be major things that you missed. Apologize and ask for a few minutes to fix them. Again, nothing personal...it’s just business. You will get customers that are extremely picky, even a bit insulting. You can never, never say anything sarcastic or confrontational to a customer. They will tell their friends. They may go online and tell the world. Just bite your tongue and fix the problem.
  61. Once touch ups are complete and the customer is satisfied, accept payment and pack your things. Double check that you haven’t left anything. Look in the car, on top of the car, and under the car. Sweep up the customer’s driveway...never leave it dirtier than you found it. Put a receipt and some business cards on the customer’s passenger seat. Place his personal items in the rear seat of his car.
  62. When you get home, refill all your chemical bottles, your waxes, and your compounds. If anything needs replacement, order it online right away or go to the local store to pick it up. If your uniform or apron are dirty, wash them. File your customer’s check in sheet in a file folder.

This concludes the fundamental process of every car detail. There are many advanced problems that we address in a separate manual, but these basic steps must be followed in this order every time you perform a detail. Having a system and sticking to that system cuts down on your time spent per job.

## **Marketing**

I'll assume that you've practiced on at least 5 cars and have confidence in a system that works for you. Now, let's take our services to the public. There's two basic sources for work that we'll cover here: offline and online. Offline sources are car dealers, mechanic shops, body shops, car clubs, stereo shops, paintless dent techs, vinyl/leather repair techs, and window tinting shops. These are brick and mortar stores, clubs, and people that you must personally introduce yourself to and befriend. Online, you will be pursuing marketing sources such as craigslist, Google, Yahoo, and Angies List. There, we will depend on your ability to write compelling ads and websites that get lots of clicks and traffic. At all times you need to be aware of your presence offline and online and continually work to improve your marketing efforts.

### **Marketing Offline**

#### **Business Cards**

The first step in your offline marketing is to obtain at least 500 business cards. There's a service online where you can design your own cards and have them mailed to you within 2 weeks for about \$30:

<http://vistaprint.com>

Your local Staples, OfficeDepot, or OfficeMax also make business cards.

Don't buy too many at first because you may find that you'll make modifications to the wording or add your website url or add services.

#### **Car Dealers**

Ideally, you want to minimize the amount of work you do for car dealers because they generally pay sixty percent of what you can get directly from car owners. We call dealership work "wholesale" work. When you work directly with the customer, this is "retail" work.

Good car dealer accounts are worth keeping because they give you steady business all year round. If you work in an area with heavy winters, car dealers are a must to keep your schedule full in the slow season between November and April.

Dealers are very easy to find. The biggest ones are on the major streets in your town and city. Franchised dealers (Chevy, BMW, Audi, etc.) almost always use their own detailers, so don't approach them. But independents that sell only used cars contract this work out to companies like yours. Don't approach them on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, as these are their busiest hours. Approach on a weekday afternoon. Ask for the sales manager...he chooses the vendors. Give a card and ask if they're happy with their

current detailer. If they are, say no problem and that you're around if things fall through and they need a back up. Often, though, they'll mention that they're unhappy with their current detailing company and they'll mention why (not available, finish cars late, poor quality, etc.). You'll want to immediately volunteer yourself as a solution to their problem. So if the company they use is often booked up and not available to service them, let them know of your immediate availability. Or if the company often misses small things, let them know that you have a system and a checklist that ensures nothing gets missed.

They may ask you to do a "trial" car. If they insist, give them a small discount of \$25 or \$40. But after the trial car never do a full detail (inside and out plus engine) for less than \$125. It's simply not worth the time. Do your very best on the trial car. This is your chance to make an impression and stand out from their current detailer.

No matter what the result is of your sales presentation, keep it brief, leave a card, and remind them that you are available as a back up to their current detail company. Dealers switch detailers a lot, so don't be surprised when they call you months later. And if it's a dealer you're particularly interested in because of the quality of their inventory (high end, generally clean cars to beg with), stop by once a month, say hi, and remind them of your service.

Again, don't sell your services for less than \$125 to dealers. Once you get the job, don't let them push you around with unreasonable requests for discounts and extra services. Just give them effort that you feel is worth \$125 and nothing more. If you lose their business, there's always more dealer work if you want it. And get paid as soon as possible. If they "float" a bill of more than 3 cars, refuse to work until you get paid.

### **Mechanics**

Mechanics' customers ask for a referral to a good detailing service a lot. You'll want as many mechanics in your area to know you as possible.

Stop in and quickly introduce yourself and your business. Don't emphasize that you're new. Say that your customers are often buying or selling a car and need a good mechanic for inspection work. Take some of the mechanic's cards and say that you'll hand them out. Hand the mechanic your cards. He may put them on his table. Mention that if he ever wants his car done that you can give him a \$50 discount. If he takes you up on it, do GREAT work for him and you'll be the company he refers his customers to from then on.

### **Window Tint and Car Stereo Shops**

Stop by during non-busy hours and ask to talk to the owner. Mention your detail business and that you get requests for window tinters and stereo installers all the time. Mention that you like their shop and it looks like they know what they're doing. Take a stack of cards and mention that you will hand them out to your customers.

Give them a bunch of cards. They may leave them on the desk for their customers if you're lucky. Let them know that you do things right—no wet carpets, no burned paint, and no detail overlooked—and that if they refer you their customer is in good hands.

### **Paintless Dent and Vinyl/Leather Repair Techs**

You will meet these specialists at dealer lots. You will want to know as many as possible because your customers will ask for their services.

Ask for their cards and give them some of your own. When you refer a customer to them, be sure that the customer mentions your name. They will remember this, and if they get enough referrals, they will start referring detail work to you, as they get requests for a good detailer all the time.

### **Car Clubs**

Attend as many car shows as possible. Wear your uniform. Introduce yourself to car owners and give them your card. Compliment their car. Many of them use professional detailers for shows and competitions. They use those same detailers on their other cars as well. If you can get just one or two of them as customers, they tend to talk and recommend you to friends as much as any customer group you'll service.

### **Body Shops**

A lot of body shops don't offer detailing services or contract the work out. You won't know until you introduce yourself. Again, use the same tactics as you used with mechanics. Let them know that you're looking for a good shop to refer your many customers to, and that you'll be handing out their cards. Give them cards of your own and they may use your services onsite or refer you out to their customers.

Always be looking for offline opportunities to market. Keep hundreds of business cards in your car and at least five in your wallet at all times. Everyone you know should know that you own a detail shop and do great work. Your family should know that you own a detail shop. Your neighbors...everyone. Be a resource for them. If can't get stains out of their carpet, give them some advice. If their wheels have heavy brake dust, let them know how the pros clean it.

Thank the businesses that refer business to you by sending business back to them. Thank them in person. Introduce yourself to as many people in the automotive business as possible.

### **Walk Ups**

When I was mobile, this was one of my top resources for new business. You will attract attention when you work! If you're in a particularly busy area, you may get as many as two people per hour approach you for a business card. Be ready for them. Wear a uniform, tuck in your shirt, don't play your music too loud, and always have business cards in your pocket. Make small talk with them and ask why they need a detail. If it's

pet hair, water spots, dull paint, etc. explain that you know exactly the fix for their problem, that a detail will cost about \$X, and you have openings on X, Y, Z.

## **Marketing Online**

When I owned my detail shop, about 65% of my new customers came to me from the Internet. When talking to other detail shop owners, I found that the average shop got about 15% of its new customers from online. **My ability to attract new customers from my website and other online efforts was the most influential factor in my shop's success because online marketing requires the smallest investment of time and money when compared to print advertising, radio advertising, flyers, and investing in a high rent facility on a busy road.**

Here, I'll share with you ways to dominate your competition in the search for customers from the ever-growing source of the Internet.

## **Craigslist**

**Note:** The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> includes **this full color craigslist ad with instructions to post it to the top of the list each morning:**



ABC Detail  
555-555-1212  
[abcdetail@gmail.com](mailto:abcdetail@gmail.com)

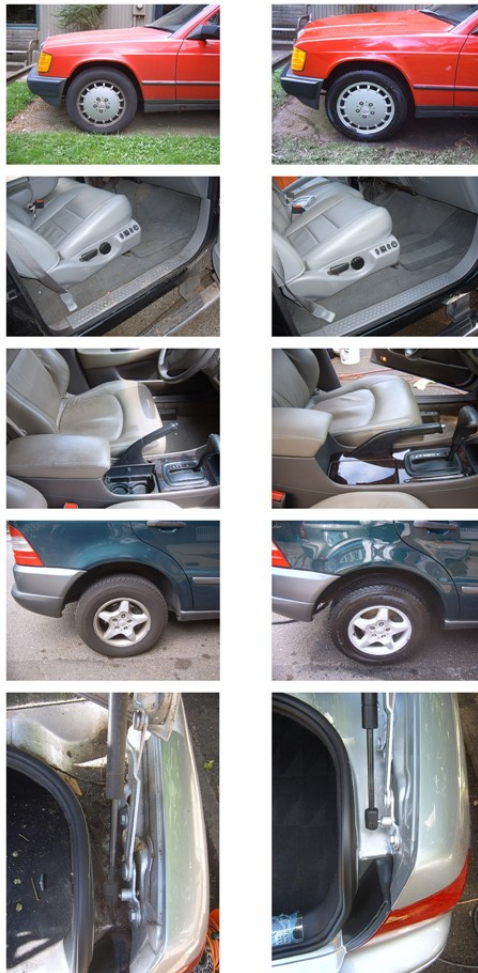
We are not a budget service. We cut no corners. no wax on your trim, no wet carpets, no crumbs under your seats...nothing overlooked. We show up on time and clean up after ourselves too. Pay a little extra and get a lot more!

Full details start at \$140, done at your home or office. Give us a call now to describe your car and its needs. We'll let you know when and how much. Happy motoring!

**Our Process:**

- Secure customer's personal(s) (boose change, sunglasses, pens, notepads, etc.) in Zip Loc bags and set aside.
- Pre-treat door jambs, wheel wells, trunk jambs, frame rails, and grill with mild degreaser/cleaner.
- Pressure wash all door jambs, wheel wells, trunk jambs, frame rails, grill, window seals, door seals, emblems, key holes, door handles, gas filler area.
- Wash car by hand with clean wash mitt and mild car wash detergent. Scrub license plates clean with appropriate brushes and cleaners.
- Hand clean wheels with industrial strength wheel cleaner and assorted brushes and degreasers. Pressure wash wheels and wheel well with 1500 psi of water.
- Remove large deposits of road tar, bugs, and tree sap using multiple applications of bug and tar remover. In some cases, lacquer thinner must be used to remove exceptionally embedded contaminants.
- Hand dry vehicle with damp chamois towel. Door seals, window seals, trim pieces, trunk jambs, emblems, and external mirrors must be "blasted" dry with 90 psi of compressed air.
- Polish and wax all painted surfaces with Cyclo polisher, mild compounding/polishing foam pad, and high gloss Meguiar's wax. Minor surface scratches are removed, paint achieves a reflection superior to new condition, and the embedded wax provides approximately 12 weeks of protection from dust, water spotting, and UV fade if vehicle is washed by hand every 10-14 days.
- Dress tires and wheel wells with water based and high-silicone rubber/plastic dressing.
- Remove floor mats from interior. Shampoo clean. Dry.
- Using compressed air gun (90 psi), "blast" dust from vents, console, dash, under seats, between seats, upholstery seams, in crevices and hard to reach places, between seat cushions, into map pockets, into cockpit switches and controls, steering wheel gaps, trim pieces... anywhere fingers cannot clean. Vacuum out resulting dust and dirt.
- Clean headliner stains
- Clean upper trim parts (upper seat belt anchors, plastic pillar facades) with appropriate cleaners and degreasers.
- Clean leather seats and head rests with appropriate brushes and cleaners. Be sure to clean deep in seams, creases, along piping, and in map pockets. Apply leather conditioner when dry.
- Shampoo and dry cloth seats.
- Clean all surfaces in trunk area. Remove spot stains as necessary from trunk liner. Lift trunk liner and vacuum/clean spare tire. Push seats forward to vacuum crease where rear seats meet trunk. Wipe clean trunk jambs and decklid.
- Clean lower trim parts (door sills, lower seat sections, foot wells, door panels, map pockets, ash trays, door handles, door pulls, window switches with appropriate cleaners and degreasers.
- Scrub clutch, brake, and gas pedals clean with appropriate cleaners and degreasers.
- Shampoo and dry all carpeted surfaces. Clean exterior and interior glass using glass-specific microfber towels and Stoner's Invisible Glass glass cleaner. Repeat 2-3 times to remove all hazing and streaks. Remove glue, tree sap, and stickers when necessary using lubricated razor and adhesive remover.
- Return customer's personal items to car.

**Examples:**



Get your craigslist ad online ASAP. Of all the online and offline resources, craigslist offers the very best return on investment: it's free and gets hundreds to thousands of clicks per month!

Yes, craigslist is crowded and yes the prices are low there. But there is plenty of money to be made still. Do not get in a price competition—you can't win. Get in a **quality** competition. Do the small things that establish yourself as a high quality service that people can trust: place photos, describe your processes, link to a website, use proper spelling and grammar, include testimonials, and post an ad that is graphically attractive. The kind of customers you want do not trust the \$95 detailers on craigslist. Their prices are suspiciously low and their presentation is so poor that they are worried to hand their keys over to the "company." There are lots of customers willing to pay \$175+ on craigslist, and if you present yourself professionally, they will be calling you.

### **Website Creation**

**Note:** The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> includes **this full color craigslist ad with instructions to post it to the top of the list each morning:**

Mobile Auto Detailing Services in Your Town, USA

"We Come To You"



**Our Detailing Process:**

- Secure customer's personals (loose change, sunglasses, pens, notepads, etc.) in Zip Loc bags and set aside.
- Pre-treat door jambs, wheel wells, trunk jambs, frame rails, and grill with mild degreaser/cleaner.
- Pressure wash all door jambs, wheel wells, trunk jambs, frame rails, grill, window seals, door seals, emblems, key holes, door handles, gas filler area.
- Wash car by hand with clean wash mitt and mild car wash detergent. Scrub license plates clean with appropriate brushes and cleaners.
- Hand clean wheels with industrial strength wheel cleaner and assorted brushes and degreasers. Pressure wash wheels and wheel well with 1500 psi of water.
- Remove large deposits of road tar, bugs, and tree sap using multiple applications of bug and tar remover. In some cases, lacquer thinner must be used to remove exceptionally embedded contaminants.
- Hand dry vehicle with damp chamois towel. Door seals, window seals, trim pieces, trunk jambs, emblems, and external mirrors must be "blasted" dry with 90 psi of compressed air.
- Polish and wax all painted surfaces with Cyclo polisher, mild compounding/polishing foam pad, and high gloss Megular's wax. Minor surface scratches are removed, paint achieves a reflection superior to new condition, and the embedded wax provides approximately 12 weeks of protection from dust, water spotting, and UV fade if vehicle is washed by hand every 10-14 days.
- Dress tires and wheel wells with water-based and high-silicone rubber/plastic dressing.
- Remove floor mats from interior. Shampoo clean. Dry.
- Using compressed air gun (90 psi), "blast" dust from vents, console, dash, under seats, between seats, upholstery seams, in crevices and hard to reach places, between seat cushions, into map pockets, into cockpit switches and controls, steering wheel gaps, trim pieces... anywhere fingers cannot clean. Vacuum out resulting dust and dirt.
- Clean headliner stains.
- Clean upper trim parts (upper seat belt anchors, plastic pillar facades) with appropriate cleaners and degreasers.
- Clean leather seats and head rests with appropriate brushes and cleaners. Be sure to clean deep in seams, creases, along piping, and in map pockets. Apply leather conditioner when dry.
- Shampoo and dry cloth seats.
- Clean all surfaces in trunk area. Remove spot stains as necessary from trunk liner. Lift trunk liner and vacuum/clean spare tire. Push seats forward to vacuum crease where rear seats meet trunk. Wipe clean trunk jambs and decklid.
- Clean lower trim parts (door sills, lower seal sections, foot wells, door panels, map pockets, ash trays, door handles, door pulls, windows switches with appropriate cleaners and degreasers.
- Scrub clutch, brake, and gas pedals clean with appropriate cleaners and degreasers.
- Shampoo and dry all carpeted surfaces. Clean exterior and interior glass using glass-specific microfiber towels and Stoner's Invisible Glass glass cleaner. Repeat 2-3 times to remove all hazing and streaks. Remove glue, tree sap, and stickers when necessary using lubricated razor and adhesive remover.
- Return customer's personal items to car.

**Prices**

	Cars/Wagons	SUVs/Trucks/Vans
Full Detail (Interior/Exterior)*:	\$160-\$220	\$180-\$240
Interior Only Detail*:	\$100-\$160	\$120-\$180
Exterior Only Detail*:	\$100-\$160	\$120-\$180

\*Final price is determined by vehicle condition (general dirt, water spots, carpet stains, pet hair, odor, food spills, etc.) Give us a call, describe your car, and we can give you a more accurate estimate.

You will receive the above website with the purchase of this ebook. Read the directions and get your website online as soon as possible. It includes lots of pictures, descriptions of your processes, your prices, and your contact information. Put your website address on your tshirts, business cards, and even your work vehicle. Link to your website from your craigslist ad.

You will want to get as much traffic as possible to your website. Here are some effective methods that worked well for me:

**Google AdWords**

This is paid advertising on Google for terms like “Miami Auto Detailing” or “Mobile Detailing in Denver.” It might cost 50 cents to a dollar per click, but I found that the investment is well worth it. On average, I would spend about \$10 in clicks until I got a paying customer. The average paying customer paid me about \$180. My materials cost on the job including gasoline was about \$25. My advertising cost was \$10, obviously, so my profit was  $\$180 - \$35 = \$145$ . **Spending \$10 to make \$145 is a no-brainer, and a good reason you should fund a Google Ad Words campaign.**

Go to <http://google.com/adwords> and follow the directions there to start your campaign. You will want to select the following keywords:

Auto detailing  
Car detailing  
[your city] detailing  
[your city] auto detailing  
[your city] car detailing  
[your city] mobile detailing  
[your city] mobile auto detailing  
[your city] mobile car detailing

Consider all the cities in your service area (generally you should be willing to drive about 30 minutes from your home to any customer) and advertise for all of those cities. You may find that you are advertising for as many as 20 keywords after you have selected all your cities.

Set a budget of about \$10 per day and supply a credit card or bank account that will fund your campaign. When you bid on each individual keyword, be sure that you are paying enough per keyword (50 cents - \$1 or even higher) to be on the first page.

And put some thought into the ads that you write. Here’s a suggestion:

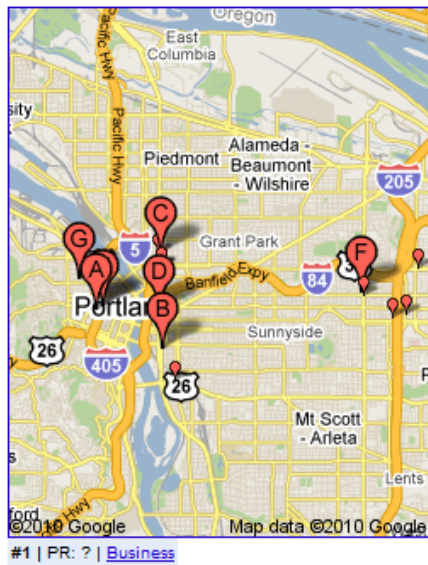
Pro Mobile Detailing  
Interior and exterior service  
See website for photos  
<http://yoursite.com>

### **Google Local Business**

Google actually offers a free spot to businesses that sometimes ends up on the first page...for free. Most detail shops don’t know about this. But the ones that do get lots of free leads.

The section is called the Google Local Box. Have a look:

## Local business results for car detailing near Portland, OR



- A** [Uptown Auto Detail](#)  
maps.google.com - (503) 222-7378 - [10 reviews](#)
  - B** [Details By Mark - Auto Detailing Portland](#)  
www.detailsbymark.com - (503) 231-4945 - [21 reviews](#)
  - C** ["Autobella" Auto Detailing Since 1982](#)  
www.autobellausa.com - (503) 233-1511 - [66 reviews](#)
  - D** [Wentworth Chevrolet Subaru](#)  
www.wentworthsubaru.com - (503) 232-2000 - [38 reviews](#)
  - E** [Pacific Pearl Auto Detailing](#)  
maps.google.com - (503) 806-1908 - [9 reviews](#)
  - F** [Leif's Auto Collision Center](#)  
www.leifs.com - (503) 254-0409 - [21 reviews](#)
  - G** [Collision Rebuilders Inc](#)  
www.collisionrebuilders.net - (503) 226-6311 - [11 reviews](#)
- [More results near Portland, OR »](#)

This map and business listings appears when one searches "Portland Auto Detailing." Look at the business with 66 reviews. That listing probably gets clicked on 100s of times a month, and the owner pays nothing for it.

Listings are free. Just follow these instructions to create your Google Local entry:  
<http://www.google.com/local/add>

If you live in a medium to large sized city, you probably will not get immediately listed on the first page. There are probably 20+ detail companies already established there. Encourage your customers to post reviews on google and you will climb the listings. If they mention that they found you on google, email them the following day asking for an honest review of your service. Reviews are extremely effective in attracting clicks and you should do everything to encourage your customers to post them.

### Online Business Directories

There are many free directories that allow free listings. Putting your site in these directories helps your search engine rankings and creates more websites where your customers will find your link:

- <http://yelp.com>
- <http://local.yahoo.com>
- <http://merchantcircle.com>
- <http://yellowpages.com>

Go to each of these sites and follow the directions to add your business. Each entry takes about 5 minutes.

You should be asking your customers where they found you (from a friend, yahoo.com, google.com, etc.). If they mention that they found you on any of the above directories,

ask them to fill out an honest review of your company for the directory. Reviews are critical for success in free directories. The companies with the most reviews get the most clicks.

## **Angieslist.com**

About 25% of my customers came from angieslist.com. It provided me with the highest income, highest paying customers with the nicest cars. My customers liked my service enough to give me 60+ reviews that propelled me to the top of the list in my city.

Create an entry for your detailing service here:

<https://company.angieslist.com/Registration/Registration.aspx>

Angies List is a \$40 a year service that allows its members to access a directory of businesses trusted by the Angies List community. Only paying members can post reviews, so there's no faking

When a customer mentions he/she found you on Angies List, give your very best service because they may post a review to the List about you.

Once you get some momentum with Angies List customers, you will have a reliable source of high quality customers that you can depend on all year long.

## **Customer Service**

Providing a great detailing service is ultimately your product, but if you don't provide great customer service you won't be getting the referrals and positive online reviews that will grow your business.

Always give your customers the best experience possible from beginning to end. Answer emails quickly. Always answer the phone (new customers don't leave voicemails...they just call your competitors when you don't answer). But if you do get a voicemail, answer it immediately. Show up early. But if you're late, call to let them know why and when you will be arriving. Shake their hand. Make small talk. Befriend them. Write down all their specific concerns. At the end of the detail, ask them if they have questions about keeping their car clean and answer their specific questions about brake dust, carpet stains, waxing routines, etc.. Thank them for their business. You are offering them a luxury service that they don't need, but it's something they are rewarding themselves with, so be appreciative.

## **Phone Calls**

Answer all phone calls like this:

“[State your business name], this is [Your name].” For example: “Super Shine Mobile Detailing, this is Mark.”

Sound positive and eager to begin a conversation.

The most common question you will get is: “How much to detail my car.” Be very careful about your answer, because every car is different and should be priced differently. And you should have your price menu memorized, as you will be asked on the spot for this information daily. Here’s the order of questions you should be asking:

(omitted)

**Note: The full startup guide at <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> contains the phone script you will use to accurately provide price quotes and maximize the % of callers you convert into customers.**

You will need to keep your schedule and a pen with you at all times. If you have a smartphone, keep your schedule there and add reminders 30 minutes before each appointment. Otherwise get a small pocket scheduler from a general store. People will call you at home, while eating, while driving...at all times of the day. You must keep your schedule with you. Be willing to work on Saturdays because many of your customers can’t be without their car during the week or work Monday through Friday and don’t have electrical/water outlets at work. Saturdays, I have found, fill up quicker than any other day of the week.

### **Emails**

Answer emails as soon as possible. A lot of customers will send the same email requesting pricing, availability, etc. to multiple detailing companies. The company that responds first usually gets the business. Have all of your emails forwarded to your cell phone to improve your response times.

Every email response should have this format:

“Thanks for contacting us, [customer name].

[email response]

Joe Smith  
Super Shine Detail  
555-555-1212  
<http://supershinedetail.com>”

Always thank them for the message in your first sentence and always have your “signature” at the bottom of your emails that contains your name, company name, phone number, and website address.

### **Final Notes: Putting It All Together**

Let's review the steps to getting your detailing business off the ground:

1. Get your business license and checking account.
2. Buy supplies. I've indicated every piece of equipment you'll need and where to buy it.
3. Practice, practice, practice how to detail. Practice on your friends cars, your family's cars, etc. until you are confident you can do a detailed, professional job. And don't just have them drop off their car at your home. Pack your equipment, go to their home, set up your equipment, and perform the detail on their property just as you would a real customer. Time yourself. Note things that you can improve on (windows, carpets, trim, wheels, etc.) and make an effort to master these problem areas.
4. Print business cards and distribute to automotive businesses and car dealers in your area.
5. Get your craigslist ad online.
6. Get your website online.
7. Detail, detail, detail. You'll become a better detailer and marketer with practice.

Within 2 weeks, you are ready to take your skills to the public. I can't tell you that it's all good times out there...there's a lot of hard work involved. But persistent, detail-oriented detailers that provide top quality customer service grow their businesses year after year and make a great income working on their passion...cars.

**Click <http://startacardetailingbusiness.com> to buy the full startup guide and start your detail business right now. Your success is guaranteed by our 60 day money back policy!**

Good luck out there!

**Bob Keppel**

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<http://startacardetailingbusiness.com>