

CHUCK TERPSTRA – HOUSE CLEANING BIZ 101 CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Chuck Terpstra purchased the House Cleaning Biz 101 program in January 2004 and started his business three months later in New Port Richey, Florida near Tampa. His rapid and successful growth was featured in the January 2006 ARCP News published monthly by the Association of Residential Cleaning Professionals, the only trade publication devoted exclusively to the house cleaning industry. We're very proud of Chuck and his wife Sandy; when you read the following ARCP article you'll see why.



How does a start-up residential cleaning company achieve revenues of \$500,000 dollars a year in less than two years? Lofty goals backed up by a good business plan...that's what Chuck Terpstra, owners of The Cleaning Pros in New Port Richey, FL will tell you!

Chuck and wife Sandy started their business in April 2004 when Chuck, with a background in senior management in high tech of Laser Optics, was "re-engineered" out of his high tech position.

Chuck initially decided he wanted to go into business for himself. He and Sandy had their minds set on entering the fast food world. When a franchise broker suggested the residential cleaning

industry, at first Chuck said, "No way. I am not doing that." After taking a closer look and running the numbers, he decided he should look more closely into the idea. After looking at franchise models and nearly signing, he decided to make a go at it as an independent start-up.

Over the past 21 months, The Cleaning Pros has experienced tremendous growth. They currently perform over 400 cleanings a month. Chuck attributes their quick success to taking more time in planning on the front end, studying the market, deciding who his target customer was, how many of them were in his area, and exactly how to reach them.

His business plan is a tool he uses to constantly monitor where he is with his business. It also helped him tremendously in the beginning even with insurance issues such as worker's comp. He regularly refers to the plan to see where the business is, "I look at the plan to evaluate where we are. When we are not on track with the plan, I use it to gauge and perhaps readjust. Are we here or there? Are we better or worse, or no different?", Chuck says.

Chuck has learned a lot in the few months he has been in business. He was warned of the woes associated with employees, but like many new business owners said, "Nah, I won't have those problems". Even though operating a home cleaning service is a labor intensive business, Chuck has great ideas for keeping good workers. He says, "It is not always about the pay. I always take the time to listen to what they have to say. I do not treat them as 'maids'. Listen to them. Let them know you care. Yeah my name is on the door and I own the place, but it is the employees that make the business. I make them feel wanted. They are important to me and to the customer. I have learned to work hard to keep the ones [employees] that I want and let the ones I don't go."

In addition to working from a sound business plan, a sharp professional image doesn't hurt either. The Cleaning Pros recently won an ARCP Image Award at the 2005 Convention in Las Vegas for Best Marketing Piece. Chuck knew early on that image was very important to the success of his business. "Customers always know they are dealing with a professional company when they do business with us. Everything from the brochures we produce, invoices, and correspondence to how we answer the phone is done professionally.



Many start-ups in the residential cleaning business can enjoy a lot of success in a short amount of time, but it takes a business plan and sound business practices to enjoy long-term success. Both of which are in good supply at The Cleaning Pros!