

How to Start Up a Windshield Repair Business

The Opportunity of Windshield Repair

It is estimated that 7 out of 10 vehicles on the road today receive some type of windshield damage, usually from a small stone hitting the windshield while driving. With the average cost of a repair being between \$45.00 to \$65.00 for the first repair and as much as \$10.00 to \$25.00 for each additional repair, that could turn into a sale of \$115 in less than 45 minutes! With cost of goods of less than \$1.00 at an average sale price of \$55.00 per repair, that equates to a great return on investment!



The windshield repair industry is quickly becoming the one of the largest growing automotive service markets in the United States. WindShield Repair is, indeed, a lucrative industry!

WSR has virtually no barriers to entry - no education or licensing. Considering the low investment cost, it's one of the best investments you can make whether you are planning on supplementing your current income or striking out on your own and creating a new business venture. Here's some observations and benefits of a WSR Business:

- **Low initial investment** and minimal monthly business operating overhead
- **Home-based business** opportunity, flexible business hours, virtually no inventory
- **High consumer demand** - everyone owns a vehicle
- Can be a part time or full time venture - Holidays off, **flexible schedule**
- **No regulations or licensing requirements** and a **very short learning curve**
- It is a low cost, high visibility automotive repair that is **easy to sell**
- Inexpensive and **readily available business equipment** that requires practically no maintenance.
- **Potential to grow your business** by hiring employees or independent contractors
- **A high percent of cash sales**
- **Simple business model that you can easily expand** into additional related services such as headlight repair, detailing or accessories

Is it Right for You?

Whether you are looking to quit a dead end job, tired of working for 'the Man', frustrated finding a decent job, or just want to reach your full potential without any barriers, WSR could be a good fit for you. However, like any employment opportunity, you need to make sure you are suited for the job...



- You must be a **self-starter and confident** that *you* can make it happen - not afraid to take risks
- **Able to work alone**, without support - posses a **strong work ethic**
- **Willing to learn new things** and commit to a course of action - able to 'think outside the box'
- Have blocks of **time that you can devote to your venture**
- **Ability to prioritize**, be **flexible** and the ability to **make quick decisions**
- **Physically and mentally healthy** - able to keep focused when you are not feeling the best
- An **honest, sincere desire to help others** and love working with people
- **Possess mechanical ability**, a strong **attention to detail** and good **organizing skills**
- **Suited well to working outside** in any weather condition
- **A competitive spirit, goal driven** and have the ability to shake off emotions
- **Good at managing and budgeting money**, strong **communication skills** and a **neat appearance**
- **Investment money for tools/supplies**, marketing, business expenses and short term income. [starting your business part time, can provide money from sales which can be invested back into your business]

There is no doubt that if you possess the attributes mentioned above, you can start and grow a successful WSR business!

The Competition - Pricing and Challenges

The first thing you will want to accomplish is **a full inventory of WSR service providers in your area**. Check online and see who is listed. Note - many larger glass shops will show a presence in markets that they actually do not service, so don't assume that they are a competitor without follow up investigating. Look for advertising flyers, ask automotive parts and repair shops, insurance offices, rental car agencies, trucking companies, fleet owners and dealerships - new and used. Get the company names and phone numbers and then call these WSR shops to get their prices - cash and insurance price and find out if they are local, out-of-town, mobile or a shop based business.



Don't become disillusioned. If you have, what appears to be, stiff competitors in your area...it just means that you will need to **differentiate yourself** from them in a way that will win clients. Your charm, sincerity, work ethic, promptness, appearance, pricing, quality and a sincere desire to serve others can make you stand head and shoulders above even well entrenched competitors!

Once you have evaluated your competition and have an idea of what you can charge in your market, you will be well on your way to take the plunge. You will be armed with the facts of what you are up against. Remember, knowledge is power! **BE the competition others will tremble at when they see you doing a repair**....not because you are a price-gouging low quality technician/owner, but because you present yourself and your company well... you are a confident, but appreciative, business person.

Conceiving and Organizing Your Business

Based on the information in the two sections above, **picture in your mind what kind of business model you see**. Do you have a building, shop or garage to work out of or do you have a small, fuel efficient car that would be perfect for doing on-site repairs? Do you see plans of growing your business or someday selling a successful on-going business? Do you just want a part time business to supplement your income? Do you envision a Sole Proprietor or an LLC (Limited Liability Corporation)?



Are you able to manage your books or do you feel more comfortable having a bookkeeper or accountant handling some of **accounting functions**?

Do you want to create an **office space** in your home or would you rather work from a library, or coffee shop so that you can be free from family distractions when you need to do administrative work?

Find a person who is capable and willing to **mentor** you in this process. Preferably a business person... someone you trust and respect.

What will be the **name of your business**? A recommendations; avoid using your name - it's usually not perceived as professional and if you ever want to sell you business...you'll regret it. Be careful if you include the name of your town or city - unless it is large and you do not envision growing into other markets. Be creative and choose a name that will lend itself to a simple logo.

Logos are a great way to say a lot in a split second. If you are not a graphic artist, find someone who is - *the image that represents your business is one of the most important marketing choices you will make*. Keep it simple, and makes sure it will work visually, as a black and white image and as a color image. Also, choose a logo that will lend itself to a dark or light background.



What You Will Need

- **Windshield repair kit** - professional quality
- **A clean, reliable vehicle - magnetic signage**
- **Cell phone / Computer**
- **\$5000,000 in business liability insurance** - See your insurance agent or shop online
- **State sales tax permit** - available online - You will need to collect and pay sales tax
- **EIN** - Employer Identification Number available online
- **Uniform shirt** with your company name/logo on it
- **Business Documents** such as a Damage Waiver and Warranty
- **Business Cards** (search Google images for ideas), notepads or pens with your phone number
- **Website** - www.wix.com is low cost and easy to learn - **Website address**
- **Pop up tent with banner** signage - see our banner at www.autoglassolutions.com or check eBay
- **Accounting Software** such as QuickBooks and, if you want to bill insurance companies, a partnership with a Third Party Administrator (TPA) - we recommend **eDirectGlass** - see in 'Billing', below

Choosing a Kit

There are plenty of WSR kits and resins to choose from. Sorting out the best values can be tricky. Here are some things to look for:

- **Affordability**
- **Attachment device style**
- **User-friendliness** - Efficiency of switching between vacuum and pressure
- **Durability**
- **Gauge** that shows amount of vacuum and pressure being applied - indicates leaks in the set up
- **Aesthetic appeal** - does your equipment look professional to your clients
- **Quality of components - warranty**
- **Training options:** Video, phone email and text support, on-site training
- **Remote units** - with a hose between the pump and injector - allows greater observation and control, great in cold climates.
- **Self-contained units** - compact and can be more affordable
- **Three important results:** The repair system, which includes the resin, must achieve:
 - A **strong, long lasting, non yellowing repair**
 - The repair must be **clear and completely filled with resin**
 - You should be able to quickly achieve **high quality results**

Note - See our full line up of WSR Kits at www.autoglassolutions.com

Training

The key to learning WSR is to have **a kit that is easy to learn and a resin that easily wicks** (flows) into the break. Beyond that, your training can take on a few basic forms:

Training Videos can be a great way to learn the basics of WSR. Our training videos cover all the basics and even some more complex solutions. It is a good idea to watch them again and again...as you progress, you will see things that you missed on previous viewings. Study the written operating instructions....more than once.

Phone, text and email support from your kit's manufacturer can be a great way to learn how to use your specific tool and equipment. **AutoglasSolutions** provides you with a knowledgeable staff who can help walk you through tough repairs.

Practice - Consider purchasing our **RepairDemo™** - an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of laminated safety glass with 15 easy chips for you to repair. You will learn how to set up your equipment and



gain confidence, setting you up for a successful career! -See at: www.autoglassolutions.com Then, once you have the basics down, practice on your own vehicles, even friends, relatives - anywhere you can find broken windshields.

On-Site Training may be what you are looking for if you want to fast track your learning curve and have the money to invest. **AutoglasSolutions** provides an excellent on-site training program conducted by Master Technician, Dan Polzin. **Call (515) 229-0070 for more information.**

Marketing

- **Choose a domain name and build a web site** - Here are some good sources: www.wix.com www.sitebuilder.com www.godaddy.com www.squarespace.com Make sure you choose a domain name that is easy to type and reflects your business' name
- **Social Media** - FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, etc...
- **Business cards and Flyers** - drop them off anywhere people are....beauty shops, offices, businesses of all kinds even parking lots - place on wiper. Post them on bulletin boards
- **Signage** - magnetic sign for your vehicle, banners for remote repairing at convenience stores and other businesses - offer to clean the glass on the car and look for chips on the windshield
- **Uniform** - Imprint your name and logo - pull over 'golf shirts' are more professional than t-shirts - coordinate color with your logo.
- **Local Groups** - Become a member of local social clubs such as the Chamber of Commerce, church, Kiwanis, etc....the more connections you make with people, the better
- **TPA's** - By connecting up with a Third Party Administer such as **eDirectGlass**, you will become connected to networks that may direct business your way
- **Newspaper** - don't over look this seemingly 'dated' choice. Small, free local papers or your city/county paper usually have business classified sections...have them put an image of your business card as the ad (make sure it has your name, logo, website, email address and phone number on it)
- **Car dealers, fleet owners/businesses, car rental agencies, trucking companies, insurance agencies, municipalities, law enforcement, utility companies.** Get your name out there and look professional. Develop a convincing sales pitch...keep it simple, short and honest. Be a nice person...someone people can relate to and would like to send business to. **Word of Mouth** is still the best marketing



Billing Options

- You must **handle the billing question up front** with your customer and be prepared to handle it in a manner that suits you and your customer.
- **Sell directly to your customer** and get paid in cash, check or credit card. If they want to turn in the claim, they can present your paid invoice.
- Many customers will **want you to bill the insurance company directly** because most insurance companies will waive the deductible amount on the claim - meaning that the customer will not have to pay any out of pocket expense. This is best achieved by:
- **Bill insurance companies through a TPA** (Third Party Provider). We recommend **eDirectGlass**. They are a great match for start up and small WSR business. See the Silver Package - bottom of the page at this link: <http://www.edirectglass.com/overview.html> Their system interfaces seamlessly with QuickBooks, so no re-entering details and documents! Call (480) 993-0915 ext 201 to speak to sales. You can even get a 30 day free trial at the link above.



When doing work **for local businesses, they may ask to pay you on a monthly basis** so that they can write just one check at the end of the month. Included in this list is body shops, car dealers, fleet accounts, car rental accounts, trucking companies, municipalities and any company that has multiple vehicles.