

## **Cost Cutting Measures**

Submitted by the COMM Crew

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## **Executive Summary**

This report will detail the solutions that our group “The Comm Crew” came up with. We decided to use a reflective thinking process to come up with our solutions. The reason behind using a

reflective approach vs. another kind, was to be able to come up with as many solutions as possible. The problem that we were faced with was how can you turn an unsuccessful dog walking business into a successful one.

Using our class time as effective as we could, we decided to write our problem as an open-ended question. We also used texting and e-mail to communicate with our team members outside of the class. After sorting through our proposed solutions we agreed on one that best fixed our problem.

The solution that we agreed on was to expand our dog walking business into a one stop shop for all your dogs need. We would still keep the traditional dog walking service, but we wanted something more for our customers. We decided we would add grooming services, dog training lessons, and a dog retail section at our location. By adding these new departments to our business we think it would keep our current customer base, while making way for a completely new group of customers. With a new customer base we will be able to increase our revenue and make our business a success.

## **Project Description**

We are a committee of six employees deciding how to reconstruct a dog-walking business that has failed to turn a profit in the last two years. We have formed this group in order to save our company from going bankrupt. For the past two years our dog-walking business has relied solely on its customers to relay information about our business by the “Word of mouth” advertisement scheme. The

business is a small operation consisting of 6 employees who have no other responsibilities or duties other than the walking of the dogs. In the past we have not tried to expand upon our business plan but we have also failed to reach any sort of profit. As a committee we have decided that changes must be made in order to save the business.

We created a team of six students from our COMM 1010 class in order to complete this group assignment. Our group name is "The Comm Crew." We were given the task of choosing one case study amongst a wide and varied range of tasks. We chose to do "Case study #2: Cost Cutting Measures." We chose this case study because it allowed us to be creative in our approach to solve the problem. Another reason why we chose this case study was because it is extremely relevant in today's business market. Businesses all around the world are going through of financial struggles, and getting hands on experience with one is a grand opportunity. We have reviewed, researched, and brainstormed several ideas on how to reconstruct this business. Several different viewpoints were represented in the group, ranging from large expense cuts to rapid expansion. In order to create a strong team we have conducted several effective team meetings that have allowed us to expand upon our plan. Most of our meetings were in class using the "Agenda Bell" meeting structure (Roanld, Jeanne, Kristen, 220). however we chose to conduct a lot of our communication through e-mails. By each individual doing his or her own research, and by exchanging ideas and opinions, we have reached a plan that all of us believe will be an effective strategy to solve our financial issue.

## **Methods**

The practical topic of cost cutting measures for a small dog-walking business provided us a chance to face a commercial case realistically, and to solve these conceivable problems. This challenging theme stimulated our creativity. To build up sense of belonging, we came up with a name for our group: The Comm Crew. The name was connected with the mission of course. We usually met face to face. Our leader, Brian, led us by going through the agendas step by step. We gave our opinions on different parts, then the team would decide how to proceed. Everyone had a specific role. Here are the processes we went through.

### **Part 1: Problem, stated as an open ended question**

We discussed the possible ways to work as a team and help each other in the dog walking business. As of now we will keep our original question, which is in an open ended format. We want to be able to explore all options on how we can make our business better.

### **Part 2: Analysis of the problem**

Our group is fairly diverse. The females of the group are shy and had some difficulty stating their opinions while the males seemed to mainly dominate the discussions with their ideas and were stubborn. It took awhile to figure out a balance where everybody could state their opinions and have them actually heard.

#### **A. Characteristics:**

The main areas that we need to improve are the variety of our services. Anybody can walk a dog. What can we do that will make us stand out from the pack? Another main point that the company

definitely is lacking in its proper advertising. If people don't know the company exists they won't use it. "Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising" *Mark Twain, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, 1889.*

On the other hand, our business has some advantages as well. We are already licensed for dog walking. We also have a stable supplier available. Our employees are trained and have the necessary skills for most of situations. Last, our location is ideal and easily visible.

## B. Stakeholders

Our issue only affects a certain group of people. The groups affected would be: the business owners, customers, community, and employees. The owners, investors, and employees have the most risk when it comes to the business being unsuccessful. They risk their financial future as well as financial security. Customers only face the problem of having to go somewhere else to service their needs. The community would suffer from the economic aspect of losing a business in their area.

Our solution would help all stakeholders. It would give our employees and business owners job security. It would also keep our investors, and customers happy. Our investors would be able to get a return on their investment. While our customer wouldn't have to take their business to a competitor. The community would also benefit from having a successful business in the area. The more money being made in an area helps boost the economy.

## C. History:

Dog walking business is now a one of the most desirable business that most societies are gladly accepting and many dog owners are easily getting hooked up into this business and turning it into a big company. This business has previously provided much-needed service to the pet owners within the community over the years and it is still doing a lot of profit. and the community is wanting its need.

This kind of business gets its raise during the day when the dog owners are at work, that means a brisk walk every day in the great outdoors during normal office hours, when everyone else is cooped up in their busy schedule. A much wiser approach to increase the income would be to offer a discount on costs at first and gaining a trust from the costumes and get people interested in the services and so we can gain some more experience to build our company strong.

To basically start the business in a proficient way and to expand it needs we should also think of a good exciting name for the business and maybe hire a creative designer to create a company nicest profile for the business. Having a good name along with the advertisement approach will be extremely beneficial to the business and can be used on all flyers and other eye catchy material for the company. "Some of the things that have helped previous business owners are Organization, Consistency, determination and helpfulness" (Peytone, dog care plan) Working as a team and being really helpful at the time of the need is also a basic requirement that it has helped may other previous company in the past. "An attitude of wanting to share and be helpful to others is most all of the ones who have made it 'big' on line" (Peytone, dog care plan).

#### D. Policies and politics:

Although some states have unified "Leash laws" that require all dogs to be on a leash while out in public, Utah is not one of these states (Ed. David, Utah Consolidated Dog Laws) . No leash is required at any time unless it is posted. An example of this would be a dog park that required all dogs to be leashed while attending the park. In most cases the owners of the dogs would be responsible for any harm that it caused, such as biting another person and or dog. This has been known to change in certain instances as the person supervising the dog could be liable. Specifically it is stated that anyone that owns or keeps a dog is responsible for its actions. So in operating a dog walking business one would assume all liability.

#### E. Resources

Susan LaDue "I'd always loved dogs and I wanted to start my own business. After months of networking with dog breeders, veterinarians, dog walkers, kennel owners, and dog groomers, I knew I had found the right general category; but I also knew I didn't want to follow in the footsteps of anyone I'd talked with. In every instance, their businesses involved experiences during which dogs are generally unhappy. "No, no," I kept thinking. "I want the dogs to have fun with me."

Adam Dunn "But take into account the cost of the space, the insurance costs, and the costs of running a business and the numbers don't add up as quickly as you'd expect. But it is a business where you can make plenty of money."

Justin Black "But they also have lives away from their beloved pets. And if you can help these pet owners go about their everyday lives without the stress and worry of taking the dog out or feeling guilty because he's at home, sad and lonely, you'll be able to capitalize on a growing trend of Doggie Daycare Centers."

Daniel Holzer "To operate a harmonious dog daycare with as little disruption and illness as possible, it is important to screen and carefully select clients--humans and dogs. Knowing that your clients will pay on time and be punctual in dropping off and picking up their dogs will make your life much easier. Selecting dogs that are well-behaved, in good health and that get along with other dogs at the center will make your days pass much easier as well. However, this selectivity can be very difficult for caregiver types and people who have problems with boundaries or saying "no."

### **Part 3: Criteria**

When we determined this criteria all of us submitted ideas. We then chose the ten that seemed most likely to help the company. We wanted to make sure everyone's ideas were heard.

1. apply principles of effective communication that we are learning in the class.
2. be achievable with our four week time frame.
3. cost less than \$600 a day. (Includes paying employer, utilities, supplies, etc)
4. treat every employees equally.

5. provide the best service.
6. manageable prices.
7. clean work environment.
8. be realistic profits.
9. follow policies, laws and state regulations.
10. reach all potential customers.

#### **Part 4: Brainstorming Possible Solutions**

Our group had some difficulty coming up with a large variety of ideas, most of them seemed to have very similar base ideas.

1. Dog walking all together
2. Dog CPR class
3. Grooming services
4. Retail dog walking business
5. Dog birthday and party stores
6. Have small retail for food and leash options
7. Photography services
8. Options for other animals
9. Have medicine for other animals
10. Have a running service instead of walking
11. Pet sitting at the owners house
12. House training
13. Have uniforms for employees

#### **Part 5: Solution Analysis**

##### A. List of Possible Solutions:

1. Dog walking (original business plan)
2. Dog birthday and party stores
3. Grooming services
4. Retail dog walking business
5. All ideas combined

##### B. Chart

Our group made a chart that help use choose the best plan for our company to go. We discussed what we should rank each solution. We had criteria on the side to see how the solution would fit in. We

scored them by how well each worked with the criteria.

### C. Final Solution

Our final solution was to combine several of our brainstorming idea into one, well advertised, diversified business. We chose to set up a business that had the potential to reach as many customers as possible, therein not limiting ourselves and our ability to turn a profit. On top of the original dog-walking business we are going to move into several different points of business including: dog grooming, basic training, and a retail portion in which we would provide toys, leashes, and other essential items. In hopes of creating a more profitable business we are going to broaden our customer base by offering a wider range off goods and services.

By adding a grooming portion to our existing dog-walking business we plan to include any person that owns a pet dog into our target customer base. When owning a dog it is inevitable that one would have to bathe and groom this pet eventually, and we want to be able to provide that business. Dogs get dirty, they get rained on, they dig in mud and dirt, they play out in the rain, and they engage in all sorts of behavior that would require them to be bathed. Some dogs require that their hair be trimmed several times a year, or perhaps they are shedding and require a deep thorough brushing. Opening up our business to all dog owners by providing a grooming service, while advertising our change to the community, will greatly extend our customer base.

In addition to grooming and walking we also plan on offering the community a place in which they may take their dog to receive some basic behavior training. Few things are worse than a badly trained pet, and dogs that act out and do not mind instructions are no exception. We plan on conducting dog training classes that would range from basic tricks such as sit and lay down commands to correcting behavioral issues like barking and hole-digging. Every dog needs some sort of training throughout its life and we hope to be able to provide that to some of our customers.

By expanding our business to the act of selling goods our business would be able to not only furnish a need to our existing customers, but also attract new customers that like to do things themselves but are in need of supplies. We would provide our customers with the ability to better entertain their dog by selling toys, bones, and other recreational items that any dog might need. Equally important to providing toys if not more so, would be selling necessities such as leashes, muzzles, dog beds, food dishes, or any other items that dog owners might need. By selling items we will reach parts of the community that were not available to us before.

Selling products along with providing different services will diversify our profits so that we are not solely dependent in any one area of our business therefore providing a much more stable and reliable business. In providing our customer base with not only dog-walking, but also grooming, training, and distribution of goods we will achieve groundbreaking profits and our company shall flourish like never before. By expanding our business we open up our customer base, which in turn will bring in a greater profit than our previous business scheme.

### D. Possible Negative Consequences

1. Four weeks could be seen as a short time frame in which to gather all of the supplies and completely change our business.
2. We may be putting too much value into our social media advertisement scheme, and fall short of being able to reach our full customer base.
3. Previously we were a business that did one thing extremely well. In our expansion process we could become a business that is mediocre at several things but not talented enough in one specific area to

really stand out from the competition.

Four weeks is more than enough time to expand our business into other areas. We are simply expanding upon our original business scheme, not throwing it out of the window. In providing our customers with more options that are directly related to one another, we can really pull away from our competitors. Our mission is to provide the best care possible to every dog that we encounter; we are now simply adding more ways in which we can care for them.

Advertising is something that our business lacked previously, and is an extremely important issue we need to correct if we want to be successful. We feel that we could provide a service to any dog owner in the community, therefore creating a situation in which our business nearly sells itself. We are in a position where we feel that simply informing the community that we exist, and that we have expanded recently, will attract a broader and more varied customer base.

## **Part 6: Implementation of the solution**

After deciding on adding grooming, dog training, and a retail store to the business we are ready to share the idea with the store owner and investors.

We as members of the “Comm Crew” • recommend that employees learn basic dog grooming as well as basic dog training. The employees have 4 weeks to learn these skills. We recommend they get started right away.

Aside from learning those skills we need to reach out to more customers. The way we recommend to do this is by using social media. The most popular social media sites today are Facebook and Twitter. The company should make posts about the upcoming changes to the business in an effort to get more customers.

Last but not least we need to get some money from investors, to make this all happen. We need their help to buy all the retail supplies that are going in our new section of the business. We need to promise them that they will get a profitable return from their investment with our company.

Finally once we get the investment it's time to start purchasing retail supplies. The smartest thing would be to compare prices on the internet. Once we buy the supplies we need, we will set up the new section. Employees that already work with us will help set this section up. Once it's up and our employees are trained we can open up our new business.

## **Conclusion**

The market is out there for our dog walking business. History shows that there is a very real demand for this service. We will step up our company's advertising strategies, and provide better customer service. Also we'll make sure to stay within the state regulations, so we may keep the customer, community, and employee as happy and stress free as possible. Furthermore by providing more services over our competitors the company will fit more people's needs.

## **Work Cited**

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## **Appendix 1: Comm Crew**

**Class** : Comm 1010-34

**Semester**: Spring 2013

**Date Created** : March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Team Name** The Comm Crew

**Case # and Description** #2 Cost Cutting Measures

**Location and Type** Classroom, Face-to-Face

**Team Members in Attendance**

Rajni Kunwar

Cody M McNaughton

Ho Kwo Chan

Brian D Aughey

Krysta M Jensen

Zach R Watts

## **Team Norms**

### **Relational Norms**

1. Everyone participates and gives a fair amount of feedback.
2. be respectful and listen to each members output.
3. Stay focused on task.
4. be positive and get constructive feedback.

### **Task Norms**

1. Get information from other team members if missed a meeting.
2. Come prepared to each meeting with the information discussed from the previous meeting.
3. Do your assigned task.
4. Keep on task. Contact each other if need help.

Consequences of Breaking Norms

- 1. Loses participation score.
- 2. Affects overall grade.
- 3. Needs to apologize all the team members and bring treats for everyone in the next meeting.

Consequences of Keeping Norms

- 1. Less stress on getting the job done.
- 2. Builds long lasting friendship.
- 3. Fellow members will raise that member’s participation score.

**Team Member Roles**

Task Roles:

- Leader: Brian D Aughey
- Recorder: Rajni Kunwar
- Editor: Krysta M Jensen
- Power point: Ho Kwo Chan
- Elaborator: Cody M McNaughton
- Gate Keeper: Zach R Watts

Relational Roles:

- Harmonizer: Brian D Aughey  
Ho Kwo Chan
- Sensor: Krysta M Jensen
- Tension reliever: Cody M McNaughton
- Listener: Rajni Kunwar
- Keep it together-er: Zach R Watts

**Problem Defined As:** How can we increase revenue and lower expenses for our dog walking business?

**Problem Analysis Assigned**

- Characteristics - Krysta M Jensen  
Ho Kwo Chan
- Stakeholders - Brian D Aughey
- History - Rajni Kunwar
- Policies and Practices - Cody M McNaughton
- Resources - Zach R Watts
- Other- will determine if new information comes from research

**Task #4: organize your criteria and solution into a chart.**

		Solution 1	Solution 2	Solution 3	Solution 4	Solution 5
		No change walks	Just groom	Dog birthday’s	Retail	Combo of all
Criteria 1	apply principles of effective communication	3	4	4	4	5

Criteria 2	achievable with our four week time frame.	5	4	5	4	5
Criteria 3	treat every employees equally.	5	5	5	4	5
Criteria 4	best service	5	5	5	4	5
Criteria 5	manageable prices	0	1	1	0	5
Criteria 6	clean work environment	0	2	0	3	5
Criteria 7	realistic Profits	2	2	0	3	4
Criteria 8	reach all potential customers	4	4	3	3	5
Criteria 9	Follow policies	5	2	3	4	5
Criteria 10	Cost less than 600\$ daily	0	1	0	2	5
Total		26	29	25	28	48