

# **10 Steps to Sustainability:**

**GROWING YOUR PET CARE BUSINESS  
& TAKING HOME A 6 FIGURE PAYCHECK**



By The Dog Gurus





Now that your dream of owning a pet care business has come true it's time for a reality check.

- Are you making the money you need and expected?
- Are you finding time to enjoy your own pets, family and friends?
- Are you training your team so you can trust them to operate the business without you?
- Are you seeing more competition in your market and wondering how to stand out in the crowd?

Everyone's journey in operating a business will vary along with your goals. However, there are 10 Steps to Sustainability that most all business owners pass through along the way. Understanding exactly where you are in your journey and focusing on key action steps will keep you from getting stuck.

Moving your business forward and achieving consistent results requires sound systems. Getting there is hard work and we want to help you know where to start and how to create the business that operates well without your constant oversight.

The Dog Gurus want to help pet business owners earn a six figure salary from their business and the key is knowing where you are in the 10 Steps to Sustainability. We'll meet you where you are and provide the tools and resources you need to truly enjoy your business and exit on your terms.



## Step 1: Plan for Annual Revenue Growth

If you find that your expenses always seem to keep pace with revenue growth and you can't figure out how to make more money, the solutions are there in your numbers. We know the numbers stuff can be frustrating...maybe you don't like spending time in numbers and data, maybe you find the numbers confusing, or maybe you just don't have time to focus on the numbers! Well, we have good news and bad news. The bad news is...you will need to focus on your numbers in order to get through Step 1. The good news is...it truly doesn't have to be hard, scary, or confusing! You just need help pulling the numbers together in a way that makes sense to you so you have confidence in your rates and can create a growth plan for your specific situation.

The keys to passing through this stage quickly include:

- Understanding your chart of accounts
- Understanding the costs associated with each service you provide
- Setting rates for each service based on your costs
- Creating simple financial templates that allow you to understand and review your numbers monthly
- Clarifying your business mission and values
- Identifying your market niche and differentiating your brand

Now that your business is making more money including growing profits, it's time to move to the next step.



## Step 2: Pay Yourself an Owner's Salary

We aren't saying you should be making six figures yet, but you should be paying yourself a salary each month. Your goal is to stop putting money into the business and earn a salary that contributes to your household needs, leisure activities and savings. You've focused on your clients, pets, and employees. Now it's time to take care of yourself. The risk of ignoring this critical step is the resentment that begins to build in you toward your own business.

The key items to sustainability in this step include:

- Operating from a realistic budget that includes budgeting increasing pay for you
- Creating a sales culture that benefits pets and raises the value of your services (which means you can charge more)
- Discovering low cost marketing strategies
- Building a team of pet care professionals with careers versus jobs
- Finding time for self-care and fun – away from your business!

Now that you are paying yourself well, have a stable team and can take some time away from the business it's time to move to the next step.



### **Step 3: Prioritize “Working On” Your Business Using Productive Work Habits & Delegation**

You realize that no matter how hard you work the “to do list” just keeps growing. You are passionate about excellent pet care so you want to stay active in the daily operations to ensure everything is done right! You love that work, but know you need help with consistency in your operations. You also know that to continue to grow your business and own pay that you need to be spending more time on the business than pet care operations. If only you could clone yourself.

There is no magic wand to fix everything, but the keys to moving through this step include

- Working smarter and not harder with personal work habits and delegation
- Identifying your “owner duties” that have priority in moving your business forward
- Identifying the things that someone else can (and should be) doing
- Holding staff accountable for doing their jobs
- Outsourcing support system roles

Once your time is focused on the business and you have a team you can trust it's time to move to the next step.



#### **Step 4: Implement Standardized Processes and Systems that Save Time and Lead to Consistent Results**

Your business is growing and so are the demands from clients and your team. Staff turnover and drama is really taking its toll on everyone including the quality of care that is your brand's hallmark. You know that productivity should improve, but there's just not enough time with all the new staff training to make the improvements needed. You need some short cuts to getting work done so you aren't re-inventing the wheel every time you have to teach something to a new staff member.

The key to not staying stuck in this phase is to be disciplined to:

- Formalize your staff training program
- Reduce turnover through better hiring and teamwork
- Document operational processes for consistency in work performance and quality care
- Make all team members accountable for great customer service

The hard work in systemizing your operations and staff processes pays off when you move on to the last step in resolving your business growing pains.



## Step 5: Build and Nurture a High Performing Team that Works Well Together

You love everything about your business but one thing...the constant staff turnover! It is frustrating when you find good employees that they don't stay. You really want to invest in more staff training, but it's so expensive when staff quit. Your efforts to improve teamwork and create a positive environment have helped, but there is still a few toxic staff on the bus. You wonder if hiring a manager would help to finally get the right people on the bus and in the right seats.

Getting this step right is critical in taking your business to the next level of potential so the keys to success include:

- Creating a positive team culture
- Implementing a system of communication that allows everyone to work better together without confusion or conflict
- Making an honest assessment of the leadership skills of yourself as well as your management team and improving soft skills for everyone

The self-reflection of this step is hard work and at times painful. The hard work on personal growth pays off as you finally transition out of the growth phase. You are ready to focus on maximizing profits and exploring the full potential of the brand you have created.



## Step 6: Create a Strategy for Double-Digit Profit Increase

Your hard work through the first 5 stages has paid off and your business is growing. Now you have time to focus on cutting expenses and increasing the bottom line. It's time to take a hard look at your budget and opportunities in your business to achieve double digit profit increases. You know that a six-figure salary is not out of the realm of possibility.

To get that six-figure salary you need a strong focus on details and a business plan to grow even bigger by:

- Creating a strategic growth plan for the next 3-5 years
- Tracking metrics that clearly show where you get your clients and how well you convert new leads into paying customers
- Finding sales strategies that increase your potential client base, conversions and sales to each client
- Discovering creative marketing that sets your brand apart
- Focusing on the details that remove financial waste and improves productivity without negatively impacting quality care or teamwork

The hard work and focus in this step really pays off as you move to the next step where your entrepreneur dream becomes a reality.





## **Step 7: Achieve a More Balanced Lifestyle with Personal Time off and “Real” Vacations**

Now it is time to live the good life! You know your six-figure paycheck is realistic so now you can take time-off and benefit from the financial rewards. You can enjoy the freedom of owning your own business.

In this step you are fine-tuning your accountability and reporting systems. You trust your team to handle daily operations, but need assurance that you’ll know right away if anything veers off-track.

Your focus in this stage is on:

- Creating clarity in decision-making by your team that is in alignment with your mission and values
- Establishing a high level business report card snapshot of key indicators as an early warning if anything is off-track
- Training and empowering staff to make decisions and track KPIs that are included in your business report card
- Staying off-line and truly trusting the team to operate the business without you

Once you’ve mastered this step then the sky truly is the limit. Have you thought about taking your brand to yet another level? With great success comes great opportunity. That opportunity awaits you when you are ready to move onto Step 8. It’s also okay to just spend some time enjoying your freedom; you’ll know when it’s time to take that next step.



## Step 8: Become an Industry-Leading Brand

Congratulations - You are a pet industry influencer! All the hard work has resulted in you being recognized as a leader and expert in pet care. You have the opportunity to maximize on this expertise by taking your brand to the next level or personally using your expertise to help others.

During this step you have decisions to make on your next moves:

- Building brand recognition in the industry
- Expanding your brand to serve more pets and clients
- Establishing yourself as an industry expert through speaking and consulting

You have choices on next steps and for many entrepreneurs the reward is in the creation. If you have visions of scaling your brand and having a big impact then move on to step 9.



## **Step 9: Leverage Your Brand to Maximize Opportunities to Scale Your Business**

You have choices on scaling your business so in this phase you can focus on weighing your business and life goals. All options have pros and cons so really spend time assessing the best choice for you personally and professionally.

Assess how you want to serve more by focusing on the pros and cons of:

- Expanding your current location
- Operating multiple locations
- Franchising your brand
- Growing a consulting business

Take time to really reflect on your life goals, as not every entrepreneur wants to scale their business. The key is to enjoy your life and exit on your terms. It's best if you plan your exit three years in advance so when you are ready, move on to step 10.



## Step 10: Create an Exit Strategy

It is important to plan for your business exit to maximize financial rewards and your personal transition. Even though your business has a very high value to you from all the time, sweat and tears invested, that does not translate to what a potential buyer will pay.

In this step you need to understand how your business will be valued and plan in advance for your exit. It is important that you prepare for the following:

- Three years of business tax returns
- Not have revenue dependent on your involvement in the business (e.g., provider of services like grooming or dog training)
- Business operates without your daily involvement
- Make smart decisions on spending money on capital improvements

You should be proud of the business you created. Reflect for a moment on the number of lives you positively impacted by providing great care and careers in the pet industry. You've earned this retirement or financial reward and we congratulate you on successfully completing the 10 Steps to Sustainability! Enjoy!!!