Tidewell Carpet Care — Business Plan

Carpet cleaning business in Raleigh, NC · Startup plan

Executive summary

Tidewell Carpet Care is a new carpet cleaning business in Raleigh, NC offering residential carpet cleaning, room by room; pet stain and odor treatment; upholstery cleaning: sofas, chairs and mattresses; area rug cleaning; stairs, stain protector and deodorizer add-ons; and move-out and apartment turnover cleans. The model is careful, fast-drying cleans at a clear price per room, add-ons offered on every job, and repeat customers reminded on time so each one books again without a lead fee.

Startup budget: $9,318 across 9 items, funded from savings. Target: $8,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: Three property-management accounts, half of all jobs from repeat customers, and savings set aside for a truckmount

Products and services

Tidewell Carpet Care's core service is residential carpet cleaning, room by room. Every job starts with a walk-through with the customer — stains, pets and fiber type noted, the price and any add-ons agreed — and ends with air movers set and the carpet drying in hours.

- Residential carpet cleaning, room by room
- Pet stain and odor treatment
- Upholstery cleaning: sofas, chairs and mattresses
- Area rug cleaning
- Stairs, stain protector and deodorizer add-ons
- Move-out and apartment turnover cleans

Market analysis

The customers are homeowners with pets and children, renters and landlords at move-out, the property managers and apartment communities that clean between every tenant, and the offices and small businesses that want their carpets cleaned on a schedule.

- Homeowners with pets, children or a spring clean on the calendar
- Renters and landlords at move-out, when the deposit depends on the carpet
- Property managers and apartment communities that clean between every tenant
- Offices, churches and small businesses that want carpets cleaned on a schedule

Marketing strategy

Most first jobs will come from Google — homeowners search “carpet cleaning near me” and book the cleaner whose prices, photos and reviews they trust, so the Google Business Profile and a website with online booking decide who gets the job. Word of mouth from neighbors, realtors and property managers brings the repeat work, and a reminder every six to twelve months keeps it coming.

- Google Business Profile and Google — “carpet cleaning near me” is how most homeowners find a cleaner
- Repeat customers reminded every six to twelve months, with a booking link
- Property managers and apartment communities visited with a turnover price list
- Word of mouth and reviews from neighbors, plus realtors who need a house ready to list
- A website with your prices or price ranges, before-and-after photos and online booking

Operations plan

The owner cleans and books in year one, pre-inspects every job with the customer, empties every tank into a sanitary sewer drain, keeps the machine and hoses on a service schedule, and tracks jobs per week and the average ticket — adding a truckmount and a van only when the diary is full.

- Every job quoted by the room or the square foot, with a job minimum and add-ons priced up front
- Pre-inspection with the customer before the wand touches the carpet — stains, pets and fiber type noted
- Dirty water emptied into a sanitary sewer drain, never a storm drain
- Air movers set on every job so carpets dry in hours, not days
- Every customer booked for a reminder six to twelve months out, when carpets need cleaning again
- Machine, hoses and wands serviced on a schedule — a broken extractor is a lost day

Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, funded from savings.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Working capital: fuel, solutions and your own bills for the first two months	$3,250
Portable hot-water extractor and a carpet wand	$3,000
Hoses, pre-spray sprayers and upholstery tools	$200
Two air movers to speed drying	$380
Starter stock: pre-sprays, rinses, spotters and deodorizers	$350
Insurance (first installment): general liability and commercial auto	$1,870
Website, online booking and Google Business Profile	$0
Scheduling, invoicing and customer records (first year)	$0
Business registration, LLC and EIN	$268
Total	**$9,318**

Typical range to start a carpet cleaning business in the US: $3,345–$18,390. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website, online booking and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website — prices, before-and-after photos and online booking — and walks you through your Google Business Profile; a designer typically charges $2,000 or more to build one. Scheduling, invoicing and customer records (first year): Booking, invoicing and a customer list with reminders come with your Zarla plan; accounting software is separate.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-person carpet cleaning business in the US. Insurance and fuel are the steady costs and each job's chemicals are small, so the plan turns on how many jobs a week, at what average ticket, cover them — and how many of those come from repeat customers rather than paid leads.

Typical monthly operating costs for a carpet cleaning business: $527–$1,431 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At $8,000 in monthly sales, Tidewell Carpet Care would clear $6,569–$7,473 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the $9,318 startup budget in roughly 2 months.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Insurance: general liability and commercial auto	$287–$306
Fuel	$150–$400
Cleaning solutions and pre-sprays	$50–$210
Machine and vehicle maintenance	$40–$165
Paid lead services, if you use them	$0–$300
Scheduling, invoicing and customer records (included with Zarla)	$0–$50

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them. Lines marked (included with Zarla) are what those tools cost separately — with Zarla they are part of one monthly plan.

Risks and honest downsides

Every carpet cleaning business plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Tidewell Carpet Care, the real risks are:

- Over-wetting a carpet can shrink it, brown it or grow mold — every job needs the right method for the fiber and air movers to dry it
- A slow first season while reviews build: paid leads fill the diary, but at $30–$400 a booked job they can eat the margin
- Carpet cleaning is seasonal in much of the US, busiest in spring and before the holidays, so the cash reserve carries the quiet months
- A stain promised gone that won't come out costs a review — set expectations at the pre-inspection
- One machine is one point of failure: a broken extractor or van stops the income until it's fixed
- Bending, kneeling and hauling hoses all day wears on the body, and an owner working alone has no cover for an injury

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Tidewell Carpet Care needs before it can legally trade in the US. Rules vary by state and city — confirm each item with your local licensing office and an accountant.

- Business registration, local business license and EIN — Most of the US has no license for carpet cleaning itself; you register the business with your state and, where your city or county requires one, take out a general business license. State filing fees run $35 to $500, and the EIN from the IRS is free.
- Wastewater emptied to the sanitary sewer, never a storm drain — In the US, dirty rinse water from carpet cleaning is a pollutant under the Clean Water Act and local stormwater permits: it goes down a sink, toilet or other drain connected to the sanitary sewer, never into a street storm drain or a yard. Sacramento County, California, for example, lists carpet-cleaning discharge to a storm drain as a violation.
- Sales tax on cleaning services, in the states that charge it — US states differ: Texas taxes carpet cleaning for both homes and businesses (water extraction from residential carpet is the exception), while California does not tax charges for rug and carpet cleaning. Ask your state revenue department before you set your prices.
- General liability, commercial auto and cover for rugs in your care — Insureon's median premiums for carpet and upholstery cleaners are $73 a month for general liability, $83 for a business owner's policy, $214 for commercial auto and $9 for a janitorial bond. A standard liability policy excludes property in your care, custody and control, so cleaning rugs at your own premises needs a bailee's customers endorsement, and commercial accounts will ask for the certificate before they book you.
- A mold-remediation or pesticide applicator license if you add that work — Water damage and mold work is licensed in some US states: Texas licenses mold remediation contractors ($450, with a course, an exam and $1,000,000 of liability cover), and Florida, Louisiana and New York license mold work too. Applying disinfectants and sanitizers for hire can need a pesticide applicator license — Georgia, for example, licenses antimicrobial pest control as its own category.
- No certification is required — IICRC is voluntary — In the US no law requires carpet-cleaning certification. The IICRC's Carpet Cleaning Technician course (about $325 plus an $80 exam) is the credential customers and commercial accounts recognize, and certified technicians keep it with 14 hours of continuing education every four years.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Tidewell Carpet Care, in order:

- Register the business, take the free EIN and open a business bank account
- Buy a portable hot-water extractor, a wand, two air movers and a starter stock of solutions
- Buy general liability and commercial auto cover before your first job
- Practice on your own carpets and a friend's sofa until every fiber type feels routine
- Set your prices by the room or the square foot, with a job minimum and priced add-ons
- Set up a free Google Business Profile with before-and-after photos, and put your website live with online booking
- Visit property managers, apartment communities and realtors with a turnover price list
- Ask every happy customer for a Google review, and book their reminder for six to twelve months out

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Appendix: what a lender will ask for

This plan tells the story and shows the numbers. If you take it to a bank, expect to be asked for these documents as well:

- Two years of personal tax returns and a personal financial statement
- A month-by-month 12-month cash-flow projection built from jobs per week and your average ticket
- Quotes for the extractor, truckmount or van the loan would pay for
- Insurance certificates for general liability and commercial auto
- Any letters from property managers or commercial accounts who will book you
- Your credit report

Sample plan for a fictional business, written by Zarla's free business plan generator. Every figure is a typical US range or calculated from the sample's own numbers — nothing is a market projection. Make it yours in five questions: zarla.com/business-plan-generator?industry=carpet-cleaning

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