Golden Hour Salon — Business Plan

Hair salon in Phoenix, AZ · Startup plan

Executive summary

Golden Hour Salon is a new hair salon in Phoenix, AZ offering cuts and styling for women, men and kids; color, balayage and highlights; blowouts, treatments and special-occasion styling; and retail products for home care. The model is a small studio with every chair booked, online booking with deposits, rebooking at every checkout, and the owner's own full book as the foundation.

Startup budget: $53,550 across 11 items, funded from savings. Target: $18,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: Every chair booked four days a week, two stylists renting or on commission, and 60% of clients rebooking before they leave

Products and services

Golden Hour Salon's core service is cuts and styling for women, men and kids. The menu has clear prices and add-ons, long color appointments take a deposit, and every client is asked to rebook before they leave.

- Cuts and styling for women, men and kids
- Color, balayage and highlights
- Blowouts, treatments and special-occasion styling
- Retail products for home care

Market analysis

The customers are regulars who rebook every few weeks, color clients loyal to a stylist they trust, and the new residents and walk-ins who found the salon on Google and stayed.

- Regulars who rebook every four to eight weeks
- Color clients who spend more per visit and stay loyal to a stylist they trust
- Brides, grads and event bookings
- New residents and walk-ins who found the salon on Google

Marketing strategy

Most new clients will find Golden Hour Salon on Google Maps and through word of mouth — a friend's color, a review, an Instagram before-and-after. The Google Business Profile, a website with services, prices from and online booking, and reminder messages turn that into a booked chair.

- Google Business Profile and Google Maps — “hair salon near me” and “balayage” plus your city
- Word of mouth and referrals — the stylist's chair sells itself
- Instagram for before-and-after work and openings
- Rebooking at the chair and reminder messages before the next appointment
- A website with services, prices from, the team and online booking

Operations plan

The owner cuts and colors full-time in year one and runs the salon around the chair: online booking, light retail, weekly product restock, and stylists added on written booth-rent or commission terms only when the book is full.

- Online booking with deposits for long color appointments to cut no-shows
- A service menu with clear prices and add-ons
- Rebooking asked at every checkout — it's the cheapest marketing there is
- Retail stocked lightly and sold as home-care advice, not a pitch
- Stylists on booth rent or commission, with the split written down

Startup costs

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

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Lease deposit and first months' rent	$7,500
Build-out: shampoo stations, plumbing, electrical and finishes	$22,500
Chairs, stations, mirrors, dryers and tools	$9,000
Opening color, product and retail inventory	$3,250
Salon license, inspections and business registration	$850
Insurance (first year)	$1,300
POS and payment hardware	$900
Website with online booking and Google Business Profile	$0
Booking, reminders and payments software (first year)	$0
Signage and branding	$1,750
Working capital (first two months)	$6,500
Total	**$53,550**

Typical range to start a hair salon in the US: $17,100–$92,900. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website with online booking and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website with online booking and walks you through your Google Business Profile — a designer typically charges $2,000 or more to build one. Booking, reminders and payments software (first year): Your Zarla plan includes online booking, invoicing and a client list with your website — no separate booking subscription.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a small salon in the US. Product cost is low and margins are strong per chair; rent and empty chairs are the risk, which is why many owners start by renting a chair.

Typical monthly operating costs for a hair salon: $2,250–$17,770 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At $18,000 in monthly sales, Golden Hour Salon would clear $230–$15,750 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the $53,550 startup budget in roughly 4 months if costs stay near the low end of the typical range — far longer at the high end, where the margin is thin, so pin your real monthly costs down first.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Rent and utilities	$1,500–$6,000
Color, product and retail restock	$500–$2,500
Insurance	$50–$170
Booking and payments software (included with Zarla)	$0–$100
Marketing	$100–$600
Towels, laundry, cleaning and disposables	$100–$400
Stylist commissions or wages (once you add chairs)	$0–$8,000

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 hair salon plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Golden Hour Salon, the real risks are:

- Empty chairs cost rent every day — the lease is the bet, and the book fills slowly
- Stylists leave and take clients with them; the salon's own brand and rebooking habits are the defense
- No-shows on long color appointments are lost income unless you take deposits
- It's physical, on-your-feet work; the owner cutting full-time and running the business is the year-one reality
- Trends and pricing move; standing still on the service menu loses the younger clients

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Golden Hour Salon 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.

- Cosmetology license — Required in every US state for anyone cutting or coloring hair — state board exam, renewed on a cycle.
- Salon or establishment license — The salon itself is licensed and inspected by the state board in most states.
- Business registration and EIN — Most owners form an LLC; register a DBA if the salon trades under another name.
- Local business license and permits — City or county license, plus building and signage permits for a build-out.
- Sales tax permit — Retail product sales are taxable in most states; some states tax the services too.
- Insurance — General and professional liability at a minimum; workers' compensation once you have employees.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Golden Hour Salon, in order:

- Confirm your cosmetology license is current and check the state's salon-license steps
- Decide the route: rent a chair to start, or lease a space — and price both
- Register the business, get an EIN and open a business bank account
- Get insurance quotes and apply for the salon license and any build-out permits
- Write the service menu with prices from real costs and local rates
- Set up a free Google Business Profile and put a website with online booking live
- Tell every client you've ever had where you are now and open online booking
- Rebook every client at checkout and ask the happy ones for a Google review

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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 that shows how the chairs fill
- Your cosmetology license, the salon license status and proof of insurance
- The lease or letter of intent, and quotes for the build-out and equipment
- Your current client list and rebooking rate if you're already cutting
- Your credit report and anything you can offer as collateral