

Items To Consider When Starting A Home Watch Business

- Decide upon the name of your business (disclaimer: I am not an attorney nor is this information intended to be legal advice)
 - Check SunBiz.org to ensure the name is available in the state of Florida
 - Decide if you want it to be an S Corp, LLC or Sole Proprietorship
 - S Corp or LLC you can file online with the state at SunBiz.org OR contact an attorney for help
 - Sole proprietor: file an online "fictitious name" request OR if you use your name in your business such as Jeff Harris Home Watch there is no need for a "fictitious name" filing.
 - I suggest filing one anyway as people WILL search to see if you are a legitimate business using SunBiz.org.
- Once you have landed on a name and made your filing you will have a 3-12 day wait for the state to get the paperwork finalized. During this time you can order business cards and the minimal tools necessary to do your business.
 - Take this period of time to begin/outline/finalize the following suggestions (and more):
 - Develop your business plan & business model
 - Short term goals for your business (write them down)
 - When will I be ready to hang my "Open For Business" sign mentally as we really don't have a sticks and bricks office generally?
 - When will I have my first client and provide my first home watch service call?
 - When will I have a 10 client base?
 - Long term goal(s) for your business (write them down)
 - What is my idea of the perfect sized client base I want to achieve 30, 40, 50 or more?
 - When will I achieve that number?
 - What income do I want to have from my business and when?
 - What is the perfect sized client base to achieve 30, 40, 50 or more?
 - Will I offer other services besides home watch to my clients?
 - What frequency of services will I offer?
 - Weekly, every other week, etc.
 - What will I charge for my services?
 - Define your target market and ways to reach them.
 - Snowbirds, real estate investors, banks with foreclosures or a mix.
 - What other value-added services will I offer?
 - Weed pulling, driving autos or golf carts, light cleaning, concierge services, etc.
 - Begin thoughts about a creating referral system/program.

- If you have a business partner (wife, relative or friend) make sure you have a partnership agreement and an operational business agreement.
 - Operational Business Agreement will outline:
 - Who handles the day-to-day scheduling?
 - Who will handle the day-to-day accounting?
 - Who will provide the in the field sales presentations?
 - Make sure you or your account completes a BOI form to the government.
 - [Beneficial Ownership Information](#) report which is part of the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA).
- Decide what platform of reporting you will use:
 - Phone call reporting (not advised as there is no paper trail)
 - Hard copy paper reports sent by USPS
 - Reports scanned generating a PDF file to be emailed
 - Home watch software reporting system (HomeWatchSoftware.com)
- Once your filing has been registered and posted on SunBiz.org you will need to get an [EIN Number with the IRS](#).
 - If you have organized your company as a Fictitious Name and you are using your social security number because you are a sole proprietor, this will not be necessary.
 - Check with your tax accounting or business attorney for guidance.
- At this point you are ready to get a bank account setup
- You should also apply for liability insurance and theft bond coverage.
 - Both are necessary to protect you and your client base, but are also required as members of the FHWA.
 - If you need help with insurance call Mechelle Sein at [Gifford-Heiden Insurance](#) in Venice, FL (941) 484-0681.
- Also seek out an accountant if you are not comfortable doing the accounting tasks that will be required.
 - Having your own business requires special tax filings that you may not be familiar with and a professional can get you off on the right foot then keep you heading in the best direction.
- Join the Florida Home Watch Association
 - This will add visibility for your company on our highly ranked website
 - This will add credibility to your business.
 - You may also decide to meet with or call members, especially in your area, to learn from those within the same business you are attempting to launch.
- There are also other association you may want to consider as well:
 - The National Home Watch Association and International Home Watch Alliance to name a few.
- Once you have your Liability Insurance & Bonding process completed you are actually ready to seek out and begin building your client base.
 - Set up a [Google Ads](#) account to begin online advertising

- I suggest focusing on Google as my primary online advertising outlet.
 - While there are others such as FaceBook, Instagram and others, most of your target market will first turn to Google search.
 - These other formats are general related page or topic driven impression advertising which I believe are less effective.
- Begin to talk to neighbors, friends, and relatives. Do not be afraid to ask them for help spreading the word for you.
 - Many will feel they are imposing or forcing these people surrounding your life, but the truth is they will be more than willing to help you just need to ask them.
 - It is important to ask each by saying "I **need** your help, will **you help me** grow my business?"
- Discuss your new business with the “decision makers” at businesses you patronize.
 - Be sure to swap cards and begin a reciprocating business referral process with them.
 - It is important to ask each by saying "I **need** your help, will **you help me** grow my business?"
 - Reach out and begin to meet/develop new centers of influence within your community.
 - This will take time so do not lean too heavily on this type of developing strategy but ALWAYS take a few minutes to meet with one or two businesses a week.
 - Homeowner insurance agents/agencies
 - Mortgage lenders
 - Realtors & Brokers (never pay to be on their list of providers)
 - Title Agencies
 - Real Estate attorneys
 - Moving companies
 - Lawn mowing services
 - Mom & pop pest control companies
 - Pool companies
 - Handyman services
 - Always approach another business with the idea “**let’s help each other out**”
 - I would suggest you set a strategic plan of action rather than hitting every door you see.
 - Maybe one month you focus on highly visible businesses that lend money to newcomers to your area. Then next month you focus on title agencies, and so on.

- For most, this will be the most difficult way to build their business as there is guaranteed to be a lot rejection associated with “cold calling” method. Do it at your own pace but do it to help you develop a thicker skin.
 - Believe me when I tell you negativity can sink your dreams, I don't care WHAT dream it is other people's NOs can kill the best (and the worst) dreams.
 - Stick with it in doses you can handle, there are many other things you can do to build your business, but you will have to meet NEW people int this business.
 - Finding one or two centers of influence providing good quality leads will pay off in the long run I promise.
- Join local business related organizations that foster business development such as BNI (Business Network International) and the chamber of commerce.
 - Before joining try to investigate if the organization has a strong track record of business development assistance or is it a coffee clutch.
 - Is the membership fee worth the possible referrals?
- Training, Accreditation & Certifications
 - You can never really have enough training but there may come a time when you will “cherry pick” your training classes.
 - When you first get started take advantage of as many opportunities as you can to learn about the home watch business.
 - Ask people already in the business you may know questions you may have.
 - Practice home watch service calls on your house, your neighbor's house, friend's house or a relative's house.
 - Lean on the training from those home watch organizations that you may have joined.
 - Shadow someone in the business on a few of their service calls.
 - Accreditation from an organization like the Florida Home Watch Association can go a long way in showing prospective clients or those people you have approached to help get the news out about your business.
 - This sets you apart from other businesses too, and shows that you have an organization the believes in you and your business.
 - It shows you have a commitment to professionalism.
 - You can discuss with these people that you are or have been in training to improve your services to the public.
 - Certifications show you have completed various levels of training within your industry and have reached the pinnacle of professionalism within that industry.

- Your service will offer the very best possible home watch service within the industry, which should put your clients or potential clients at ease knowing you have developed these skills.
- Practice becoming comfortable in a sales presentation detailing your business to prospective clients.
 - Develop a presentation outline.
 - Opening, middle, Q&A and a close.
 - The opening should be your story (personal story), your qualifications and your promise to them should they decide to hire your service.
 - The middle should contain what services you will provide during the service call and how you will notify them the service has been completed. Also include what will you do if there is a concern about their home that you found during the service call.
 - Q&A – ask them what questions they may still have for you.
 - Close – ask them for their business.
 - It can be as simple as, “I think you will agree my service is a very comprehensive program, when will you be leaving for the summer and when should I start my service?”
 - If you never ask you may never get the order.
 - If you ask and they have any reservations, you will be back in the Q&A session. Resolve their question and ask them for their business, again.

Now it is time to roll up your sleeves because now the work begins!

Call me with any questions, comments or if you would simply like to talk more about the home watch business.

If I am not able to talk right then, we can schedule a phone appointment that is convenient for all of us.

Bill Wright

President & Founder

Florida Home Watch Association, LLC

<https://FloridaHomeWatchAssociation.org>

Call/Text: 941.875.5149

We recommend [HWSoft™ Home Watch Software](#) for the true home watch professional. "You will gain and retain more clients because you offer something your competitors do not!!"

The information presented in this document is not intended to constitute legal, insurance, or accounting advice. It is recommended to consult with the appropriate professionals for guidance.

