



How to start a tanning salon business: Free Advice

Sunbeds & solariums in tanning salons offer highly regulated doses of Ultra Violet light that can be tailored for any particular skin type. Health & safety, as you'd expect, should be the first premise of thought, originating in the mind of a 'How do I start my own Tanning Salon' dream.

Initial steps to a new business startup: where to begin

The most important consideration of all and first thing to do is set goals for gathering information to create your business plan.

- Finances & budget.
- Which kinds of sunbeds & solariums.
- A physical location for your salon.
- The amount of space available will help you to determine how many sunbeds you can accommodate which will help you to determine your potential revenue.
- Visit some salons outside of your market area, see what the owners & managers can tell you about their experience.
- Visit the sunbed supplier's showroom and learn all you can about the advantages of the various models available.
- Check out local regulations, insurance requirements.
- Learn about health & safety. There are numerous hygiene books available from the library & tanning bed suppliers.
- Your local tax office will help with all the PAYE enquiries, even coming out to help you get the hang of things paperwork wise.
- The Federation of Small Businesses will help with all matters concerning employment, how to have free tax and legal advisory service.
- Kitting out the equipment & fixtures is typically £18,000-£50,000 and the trend upwards. Theme based salon design is increasing which can increase the costs. What is important to your market? Plain or fancy?
- Major ongoing costs are for staff, perhaps 2-5 part-time. Sunbed salons need to be open for long hours to catch all the different times people will be able to use your facilities.
- Minimum 2-3 years effort before you get your money back generally, but some have been known to do this in the first year.
- Start-up financing sources.
- Your own funds.
- Funds from your own family
- Banks.

- Partnership investing.

You can make a significant profit with sunbeds but you must know what you are doing in order to make a success of it with minimal risk.

Do your homework

Do not underestimate the demands of starting up your own business.

Some successful new salons (names supplied upon request) have researched their venture thoroughly for 2 years before starting up. Research does pay off.

There is a wealth of info on starting your own salon if you look around & ask.

Sunbed & solarium salons : tips & considerations for sunbeds

Sunbeds are relatively inexpensive compared to the money they can make if fully utilized.

A busy sunbed can pay for itself in months. Running costs are low for re-tubing, cleaning & electricity. Total annual maintenance costs should be around 10% of takings.

Renewing lamps in beds on time is essential. There is a false economy to leave old lamps in use longer as their tanning power fades. And, so do your customers!

Location, location & location

Spend a lot of time choosing the site you want & the area & think about the passing trade. After word of mouth this is one of the most important ways to advertise your Salon.

The additional cost of a high visibility location may be well worth the money compared to the ongoing expense of advertising.

A prime location will most likely bring you walk in traffic that you might not ever get from advertising. This is a challenging decision because the initial expense starts from the very beginning. Talk to other salon owners about the importance of location for a new salon.

Good planning is key to success for your tanning salon business

Don't be put off with the large amount of information you need to explore, this too will take a couple of years to fully understand, integrate, utilize & internalise.

Produce cash flow forecasts & profit flow forecasts to use as working tools.

Make sure you have the right insurance & understand both the risk coverage & the costs involved. Insurance for the building if you own it, fire insurance, contents insurance. If you are leasing space, these may or may not come with the lease.

Insurance can be expensive. Get three quotes. Also look at requirements for Employers Liability Insurance, Public Liability Insurance, Personal Accident Insurance, Sickness, & Options Insurances.

When conducting your research by visiting other Salons in the area, (at least three or four), find out their strengths & weaknesses before signing your leases.

Find out which brand lotions your competition uses as the sales of tanning lotions will likely represent 50% of your income.

Talk to sunbed suppliers, tanning lotion suppliers, any other suppliers. If in doubt get advice - most people are really helpful.

Remember - everything is negotiable up to a point. Never assume.

Some do fail, usually due to bad planning, bad business choices & bad management. Don't rush into things. Proper planning prevents poor profits.

Visit trade shows. Talk to people, get advice & learn about the business. Risks can be minimised with good planning.

Work your plan

Those with the greatest success in this business truly enjoy what they do. A friendly warm helpful personality brings customers in. A high degree of attention to keeping a very clean salon & maintaining proper hygiene is critical.

Quality equipment makes for satisfied customers. Proper maintenance keeps them satisfied. Properly maintained equipment tans well.

Product education is important for you, your staff & your customers.

Become an expert in the field so that you can offer the best possible advice on tanning & skincare lotions. Word will get round. Your customers will appreciate your expert advice. Be professional. Be aware of people, how and what they need. Be open. Be yourself & enjoy.

Then, make sure your staff has good product knowledge & good communication skills, so teach them what you know. Your staff is a total reflection of you to your customers when you are not available. An educated & happy crew sails the ship in the right direction when the captain is not on deck.

Legacy Group, 22 Portland Buildings, Portland Road, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 8PP
Tel: 0870 3308234 / Fax: 0870 3308235