

SERVICE SUCCESS

15 great service businesses to start right now.

Service businesses to continue to profit as Americans continue their love affair with time and convenience. Consumers simply don't have the time to take on all of life's challenges and tasks and are willing to pay companies to help them get the job done. We've rounded up 15 service oriented businesses we predict will do very well in this economy and beyond. Take a look. You might find exactly what you've been searching for in terms of a startup.

FITNESS FUN ON WHEELS

After 18 months of successful operation in New Jersey's Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, Mercer and Union Counties, Fun Bus USA (formerly Fun Bus) decided to take the franchise route. That was last August and the company is rolling along.

The franchise focuses on "fitness fun on wheels" and is targeted to stay-at-home moms, retirees, former teachers and other individuals desiring to augment their household incomes with a part-time business that offers a flexible schedule.

Fun Bus is the brainchild of mother-and-daughter team Dawn McGarry, a businesswoman, and Kari Denton, a certified teacher. Seeking to add a new dimension to their day care center, the duo decided to get a school bus, refurbish it with fitness and athletic equipment and use it to hold 30-minute fitness fun sessions for students. The concept rapidly caught on with area day care operators, houses of worship, family-oriented organizations, as well as with parents who wanted to hold unique birthday parties for their children.

For several months, McGarry and Denton continued to operate their own day care center, as well as to fulfill burgeoning requests to bring the Fun Bus to other day care facilities, day camps, parties and special events.

Eventually, however, the new venture had grown to a point that they decided to sell the day care center in June 2001 and focus solely on the Fun Bus. After reaching full booking on the first bus they acquired a second vehicle in May 2002.

To date, upwards of 15 day care operators have contracted with Fun Bus to service their facilities weekly, with some absorbing the cost themselves and the remainder promoting classes to their clientele as an optional extracurricular activity.



Fun Bus philosophy is to enhance classroom learning experiences via a highly entertaining, hands-on approach to fitness. Designed for use by children ages 2 to 7, each vehicle had its seats removed and its walls and floors padded.

Equipment, which varies based on lesson plans and the age of the children present, includes tumbling mats, parallel bars, tunnels, trampolines, barrels, ladders, climbing shapes, balance beams, slides, a rock-climbing wall, basketball hoops and a ball pit. Rings, climbing ropes, swings, punching bags and a "zip line" that glides from wall to wall are suspended from the ceiling.

The Fun Bus program also features age-appropriate manipulative equipment and music. Buses park in customer's driveways, nearby parking lots or safe spots on the street, remaining entirely stationary whenever youngsters are on board.

Protected Fun Bus territories will be divided into areas of several square miles apiece. Multiple franchises are available in all New Jersey counties, including those in which the business already operates.

"With more than 4000 day care centers in New Jersey and other opportunities available within churches, special events, parties and other places where children gather, we aren't limiting individual counties to single operators," McGarry said.

In addition to a protected territory, a franchise fee of \$25,000 covers all training needed to set up a Fun Bus venture, manage employees and maintain service quality. The franchise fee also includes all rights to the Fun Bus name, slogans and other related intellectual property.

Franchises also receive advertising support and an operations manual with specific information on the bus activities, marketing strategies, personnel management and record keeping. Assistance in sourcing buses and locating the necessary equipment is available, and an artist has been commissioned to decorate vehicle exteriors for consistency. The total investment for each territory ranges from \$48,000 to \$78,000. That figure does include the bus and equipment.

Denton noted that no related experience or particular skills are required to operate a Fun Bus franchise.

For more information on the franchise opportunity, contact Fun Bus USA by calling 732-225-2649. The company is located at 22 Thistle Court, Fords, New Jersey 08863.