

Grooming with Grace



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We thought we had everything it takes: skills, education, a great name, funding sources and real enthusiasm. What were we missing? The know-how. We were getting closer to realizing our dream of a mobile pet grooming business but didn't know what to do next. We felt we were floundering in a sea of opinions, unreliable advice, and paperwork.

The breakthrough we needed to start our small business, Grooming with Grace, was meeting [Bernard Ferret](#) of the [George Mason University Small Business Development Center](#). After envisioning and planning for almost three years, we had our business up and running in less than 6 months after consulting with GMU SBDC

Some of the invaluable advice we were given included information on insurance, timelines, step by step processes, time management, the value of our services, how to get a business license, and so much more. Bernard even knew about vehicles and was able to give us advice when it came to selecting a grooming van.

There were a number of things about the SBDC which made it perfect for our needs:

- It was a "one-stop-shop" that gave us assistance on a wide variety of issues, from financial to staffing, to marketing, to licensing and much more.
- Bernard and the SBDC stayed with us throughout the journey, giving us long-term support as we were planning and taking crucial decisions.
- No question was too small, and Bernard was willing to do research to help with our enquiries.
- Starting a venture of this nature can be trying and stressful. It was great to know that we had Bernard's calming influence of a cool head and confident experience as we navigated uncharted waters.



- Scheduling meetings was easy and flexible. We were able to meet for as long as we needed to get information and make decisions.
- SBDC services were both invaluable and free. As first-time business owners, we would never have access to something of this caliber otherwise.

The outcome of our working with the SBDC has been outstanding. Despite starting our business in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, economic downturn, and a plethora of other national and local difficulties, we have been very successful. After only three months in business, we are fully booked three months into the future and have advance bookings well into 2022.

There is absolutely no doubt that this would not have been possible without Bernard and the SBDC.

Would we recommend the SBDC to others? We already have, and those two people are benefiting from their services now. Our one regret: Bernard does not have a dog so we can't thank him with a free groom!

Grace McCarthy
Owner / Groomer
www.groomingwithgrace.com/

