START AND RUN A SUCCESSFUL DOG BREEDING BUSINESS

THE DOG BREEDER'S HANDBOOK
WHAT’S IN THE BOX?

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Each chapter and section is filled with sub-sections pinpointing precise matters with practical information, advice and solutions. Where relevant, it is illustrated with a table, drawing or flowchart.

BONUS Kindly note that some sections are only available for those who purchased the Barking Edition and the Pack Leader Edition of The Dog Breeder’s Handbook.
So many things on a dog breeder’s head when he decides to go all in with his passion and activity. You might quickly become overwhelmed with the behemotic number of items on your to-do list, from websites to accounting to legal.

But not to worry; we’ve broken down this startup checklist into the primary tasks you need to do now, and those that you can defer until later.

Track your progress as you go with this dog breeding business startup checklist and make sure you do it all!
Determine the viability of your business idea, be harshly honest with yourself. No one cares if you like your own idea. It has to be loved by potential customers.

Find a business name that will be easily memorized by your target audience.

Buy the matching domain name *(yourkennel.com or yourkennel.co.uk or else.)* and get your business email address *(name@yourkennel.com)*: a Yahoo! email address or a website with free hosting and a name like mykennel.wordpress.com looks like (a) you are not running a real business or (b) you don’t plan to be around long.

Create your dog breeding business’ website to put yourself out there in the world and show what you are doing, how you are doing it and why you are doing it. It will be, in most cases, a decisive step with customers. See our article to create your own website in 3 steps and less than 5 minutes.

Register your social media profiles using your business name rather than your personal accounts. For dog breeding, Facebook and Google+ are great platforms. You can also use Twitter to give regular and frequent updates to your audience. Use the service called KnowEm.com to find if your business names are available on hundreds of social medias platforms.

Start your revenue stream as soon as possible: money is worth too much to waste time.

Write a solid business plan to outline your business goals, operating procedures, competitors, as well as the funding and financial analysis.

Figure out your financial needs once your business plan is written. If you need financing and external funds for the business start investigating as soon as possible: family, friends, banks, private investors, associations, etc.
SET UP YOUR COMPANY

1. Decide on a legal structure and register your company by incorporating your business or forming an LLC (Limited Liability Company). It secures the owner’s personal assets from liabilities of the company. Otherwise, some countries offer sole trader legal structures.

2. Comply with any necessary post-incorporation formalities.

3. Get your tax identification number (also called employer identification number or EIN in the United States). It’s used to identify your business for taxation purposes.

4. Dog breeding business are regulated in the United Kingdom and in most of America’s states. If you want to legally execute your activity, you need to obtain the necessary business licenses and/or permits. These licenses can sometimes take a few weeks, so start the procedure as soon as possible. In the United States, a license may be required by your city, municipality, county and/or state. Make sure you meet these all of the requirements.

5. Many dog breeders, at this stage, want to turn to an accountant and attorney to seek advice when starting out. If not, you should shortlist some of them in your area so you know who to contact if, at any stage of your business life, you realise that you need a legal or financial answer. Indeed, the binding contracts should be carefully written.

6. Obtain a business bank account at your preferred bank and the business credit card that goes along with it. Always visit them before you start your business so you know what paperwork they require and you can make sure you have any piece of information they need before opening your bank account.

7. Set up your business accounting and bookkeeping. Prepare yourself to account for all expenses, reimbursements, payments received, invoices, accounts receivable, accounts payable, etc. Many tools and softwares can help you.

8. If you have little cash available at all times, it can be a good idea to set up your line of credit. It will reduce the number of times your business must prepay for products and services. It is also playing in your favour of your Credit History.
SET UP YOUR COMPANY

- **Get a business insurance**, and go over your specific industry and needs with your insurer to make sure both parts are happy with the type and amount of insurance.

- **Comply with governmental requirements** such as tax requirements on payroll, self-employment taxes, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, etc.

- If your business is home-based: **check zoning and local requirements**, if it is located elsewhere: **lease your dog breeding space**, design your kennel and and obtain the necessary furniture, equipment and supplies.

- **Prepare templates** of contracts, terms and conditions, invoices, and service agreements so you can easily and promptly track payments, bill customers and keep records of any activity.

- **Develop your branding and identity**: design your logo, your letterhead, your envelopes, your leaflets, print your final business cards, etc.

- **Shape an aggressive marketing strategy** to promote your breeding business to your target market: this is how success will come.
Use our Excel Template to precisely generate your spreadsheets and analyze your financial plan.
When starting a breeding program, there is an important block that requires a lot of reading and understanding before even have your own opinion -- it is the chunky block of the different styles and methods of breeding dogs. They are diverse and each will be suitable to certain situations and being a reputable and successful dog breeder means being able to juggle with those methods and get the best out of them all. Because they can be difficult to understand and master, the next pages will try to explain each strategy clearly and without overcomplicating the matter.
While evaluating your breeding program, keep in mind that most traits you are looking for cannot be altered, fixed or created in a single generation. It takes a few generations to arrive at your ideal specimen but you should be able to see improvements at every litter.

Tens of thousands of genes come to play within a single dog, each gene comes as a pair. Each offset inherits one copy of the gene from the mother and another copy from the father to form a new pair (genotype). There are three states for a genotype: normal (BB), carrier (Bb) or affected (bb).

If the pair inherited from both parents is the same, this pair is called homozygous (BB or bb). Conversely, if the inherited pair is different, the pair is called heterozygous (Bb).

To reproduce at 100% one trait, you will need a Sire with the corresponding homozygous gene (BB) and a Dam with the very same homozygous gene (BB). Every single descendant (= offset) will be affected and become BB itself.

Sometimes (often), one parent may be the way you want (BB) but the other is not at all (bb) or is only a carrier (Bb). This reduces the probabilities of passing on the BB to the offset but chances are still substantial, especially that unlike humans, dogs have several puppies per litter so your chances to get at least one puppy being the way you want rise.

A purebred dog (also called true breeding), such as Boxer, only produces puppies with Boxer characteristics because their ancestors were inbred until they were homozygous for all of the genes that produce the physical characteristics and temperament associated with the Boxer breed.

It may sound complicated but it is just fancy words wrapped around common sense (ie. two dogs both having genes defining their black robe should have black coated puppies.)
Inbreeding is the breed of closely related dogs, especially over many generations, for example father to daughter, brother to sister, half-brother to half-sister, mother to son, etc. Inbreeding is a process that intensifies the animal’s traits and characteristics, both good and bad, at each and every generation. The ultimate goal of inbreeding is to fix and preserve the traits that the breeder is looking for by increasing homozygosity in the dog’s genetic pool.

In some situations, inbreeding is required for example, to create a new breed or to re-create a nearly extinct breed. Indeed, in both cases the very few specimens available at start will need to mate together several times to grow the number of specimens within the breed. Because dog breeding is mainly assortative breeding, without the sorting of individuals by trait, a breed could not be established, nor could poor genetic material be removed.

The more sound the bloodline the more successful inbreeding will be, this is why the parents and their ancestors must be as void of structural faults and health problems as possible to avoid (randomly) fixing the wrong genes and fixing and preserving hereditary diseases. Before starting an inbreeding plan, you will need to study as many generations as possible before mating the dogs to make sure the bloodline is genetically sound. It will take time to research so many generations but you will have to go through this process to avoid accidents.

The BBC produced two documentary’s on dog inbreeding titled Pedigree Dogs Exposed and Pedigree Dogs Exposed - Three Years On that document the negative health consequences of excessive inbreeding. They give the example of a Cavalier King Charles part of a breed where the direction is to reinforce the small size of the dog but as a result of such an intensive assortative breeding, the skull’s size of some dogs became too small for their brain, resulting in severe neurological conditions.

This type of breeding is not recommended to novice breeders and newcomers in a breed. Before starting such an enterprise, you will need to seek advices from your Kennel Club, other breeders and breed’s specialists such as show judges. You will end up having the worse bloodline if you start with a poor brood stock and inbreed them. Most issues will appear years after birth of the puppies and your reputation will be broken, so are the lives of the puppies you produced.
INBREEDING COEFFICIENT

The coefficient of inbreeding is an equation which expresses the expected percentage of homozygosity arising from a given Sire and Dam, meaning, the probability of how genetically similar they are.

To perform this equation, the breeder needs a fully documented pedigree over as many generations as possible.

The UK Kennel Club offers a page where you can provide the Sire's and Dam's name to find out what is the degree of inbreeding. You can also find a few calculators online where you can quickly find out the result of a breeding, PedScope is a software for Windows and OS X users offering a free trial.

Those tools offer accurate pedigree analysis through various and complex mathematical functions (Wright's equation, for example), assisting you with various measures of genetic diversity, statistics for groups of individuals, relationship matrices, reports and many other metrics. They are not required in order to inbreed as nothing replaces you very own knowledge of the bloodlines involved and the study of the pedigrees mating.
Back breeding is another form of inbreeding where one dog (S) is mating with another specimen (D) to then mate with the strongest from that new generation (D1). And again, the original dog (S) will mate with the strongest from that newest generation (D2), etc.

In the illustration, we can see an intensive form of back-breeding where an individual S is mated to his daughter D1, granddaughter D2 and so on, in order to maximise the percentage of S's genes in the offspring. 87.5% of D3's genes would come from S, while D4 would receive 93.75% of their genes from S.

Back breeding is an amazing method when for example you have a huge champion stud and want to fix its traits to its descendants until litters become more homogenous. To put it differently and use the terms we reviewed in the last pages, back breeding can be a mixed use of inbreeding for the first stage followed by linebreeding for the next generations.
GET THE FULL EBOOK RIGHT NOW
WHILE IT’S ON OFFER
BREEDINGBUSINESS.COM/HANDBOOK
Most dog hereditary conditions are minor and cause very little trouble to dogs victim of these. However, some inherited medical conditions happen to be extremely painful and life threatening.

This is why all dog breeders should work towards reducing those risks by understanding the genetics behind dog breeding and set themselves healthy dog breeding as main goal.
What makes everybody’s task more complicated is that, unlike what we do for human beings, dogs do not have a central medical record that could help fighting these commonly inherited genetic conditions.

Here are examples of inherited diseases that are commonly found in particular dog breeds:

- hip dysplasia
- cancer
- cataract
- skin complaints
- diabetes
- central retinal atrophy
- heart disease
- deafness
- epilepsy
- retinal detachment
- glaucoma leading to blindness
- seborrhea causing chronic waxy ear

**SURGE IN HEREDITARY CONDITIONS IN PUREBREDS**

Every animal has genetic conditions and these will affect more and more specimen if the genetic pool decreases in diversity: this is exactly what is currently happening for dogs and it has started when purebred dogs appeared and became the standard.

Pedigree dog breeding rules and showing standards mean that dogs within a breed have been genetically separated from the rest of the canine species over many generations: German Shepherds Dogs should be bred to german Shepherd Dogs according to the official Kennel Club’s ruling. As a result, not only the positive features develop, but also the genetically inherited diseases.

Each dog breed started by, what we call, dog inbreeding, which is the mating of close relatives in order to fix traits and characteristics we want from this particular new breed. This is what causes many problems as after decades, medical conditions are appeared in more and more dogs, that we kept breeding together to respect the standards and official register our dogs, which has given a huge boost to these negative genetic traits, called inherited diseases.
WHICH BREEDS SUFFER FROM WHICH DISEASES?

Unfortunately, nobody has exact statistics and analytics about the number of dogs of different breeds suffering from every disease. Several websites may help you know which medical conditions, inherited or not, should be closely monitored and regularly checked.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY’S INHERITED DISEASES IN DOGS DATABASE

Their database contains an up-to-date guide to diseases and medical conditions of pure bred dogs which are likely to be transmitted wholly or partly through genetic mechanisms. The Inherited Diseases in Dogs Database is compiled by David Sargan.

DOG BREED HEALTH WEBSITE

A clear and simple information about the genetic health problems associated with a particular dog breed. The website is full of knowledgeable articles and information: a must for all dog breeders and buyers.

UFAW GENETIC WELFARE PROBLEMS OF DOGS

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare is offering a breed-by-breed list of common genetic welfare problems found in our favourite companion dogs.

DOG GENOME PROJECT AT THE NATIONAL HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Formerly at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, the Dog Genome Project develops resources necessary to clone and map canine genes in an effort to utilise dogs as a model system for genetics and cancer research.
TACKLE INHERITED DOG DISEASES?

There are no other way to solve this growing issue than simply perform DNA tests and medical checks of each dogs you are planning to breed with. A reputable and responsible dog breeder knows when to say no and pass on what at first seemed like a promising breeding.

Once the results are known, you need to decide if this precise dog is genetically sound enough to be bred. It should not be based on your gut feelings or your love for this dog but rather on the results you receive and what they mean and represent for the breed.

There are three outcomes possible once the results are known and none of them is a disaster for your dog nor it should be for you and your dog breeding business.
HEREDITARY CONDITIONS

1. YOUR DOG IS CLEAR OF HEREDITARY CONDITIONS

Happy days! You can find a suitable, clear partner, to breed your dog with and the litter will be improved grandly in terms of genetic soundness. Nothing is perfect, especially within the domain of genetics, but you will improve the breed that way, by eliminating the negative traits from this particular breed’s genetic pool. It literally works the same way other traits have been fixed such as black and tan german shepherds or the small size of chihuahuas. Nature doesn’t differentiate good and bad characteristics so it goes through the same process and lucky for us, we understand how it works: it is every breeder’s duty to breed clear dogs only.

2. YOUR DOG CARRIES RECESSIVE ALLELES OF HEREDITARY CONDITIONS

Some traits can be carried by a specimen but not expressed: they are called recessive traits. In diseases associated with recessive genes, both parents—although disease free themselves—carry one normal gene and one recessive gene. Mathematically, each puppy has one chance in four of inheriting two recessive genes and developing the disorder, one chance in four of inheriting two normal genes, and two chances in four of being a carrier like both of the parents and being able to transmit the disease to their own puppies.

Ideally, the breeding of dogs carrying recessive negative traits should be avoided to be cautious. Realistically, some breeders will go ahead and breed these dogs if they offer incredible positive traits and characteristics. If you do breed such a dog, you have to make sure that the partner is compatible and clear of the condition your dog is a carrier of. Remember that the next generation should be an improvement.

3. YOUR DOG IS AFFECTED BY ONE OR SEVERAL INHERITED DISEASES

This is a red light: you should not breed this dog. As sad as it can be, you should not breed such a dog, under no circumstances. The reason is simple, the dog will 100% of the time pass on the disease to the next litter, hence, spread the hereditary condition to its filiation. This is exactly what ethical breeders want to avoid the the breed’s sake.

Because a dog should not be bred does not mean you should savagely get rid of the dog. Please don’t. Don't be one of these irresponsible dog breeders. It is still a forever companion needing love and care on every single day of its life.

Perhaps find him a suitable home, or participate in minor dog shows and competitions to build your reputation thanks to this dog, etc.
THE ECHO CHAMBER

Social Sharing
Pickups in Medias
Mentioned by Blogs & Influencers
Reviews

BUYING ATTENTION

Pay Per Click
Paid Influencers
Display Ads
Social Media Ads

1. EARNED MEDIA
Propel sharing & engagement with paid promotion

2. PAID MEDIA
Gain exposure for your web properties with SEO & PPC

3. OWNED MEDIA
SEO & brand content drive earned media shares & traffic

YOUR MARKETING ASSETS
Your Website & Blog
Facebook Page
Other Social Media Accounts
Email List

THE DIGITAL MARKETING TRIFECTA
BY BREEDINGBUSINESS.COM
OWNED MEDIAS

Owned media assets (or properties) are the different channels you create and control yourself. This could be your company website, your YouTube channel, your Facebook and Twitter accounts, for example. Even though you don’t strictly “own” your YouTube or Facebook account, you do have full control on them.

Most dog breeders focus all their efforts on their owned medias because they see them as cheap if not free and think it is the best way to generate sustainable revenue. Wrong.

By improving your website, writing articles for your blog, finding beautiful infographics and YouTube videos to illustrate your posts, posting Facebook and Twitter updates — or paying for a digital creative agency to do all of that — you are going to invest a lot of time, effort and perhaps money. It is not free.

HOW TO PERFORM ON OWNED MEDIAS?

Successful owned media strategy leads to the spread of your breeder’s name and reputation across several platforms. For dog breeders, the target is the own website, a Facebook Page and a Twitter account.

People are not succeeding because they write one article about their litter on their website, then copy and paste it on Facebook and then on a classified Ads website. This is a huge mistake.

Each platform has its very own ecosystem, you should develop a plan to promote your dogs and content in a unique, platform-native way across all of these assets.

- **Website**: you can go in-depth, explain all the details, provide all the copies of pedigrees and certificate, illustrate your article, give different prices, etc.

- **Facebook**: you should post a daily picture of your dogs, let people see you as a friend, post useful information about the dog breed, etc.

- **Twitter**: the short format forces you to go straight to the point, tweet short updates about your dogs’ lives, how the dog show you’re in is going and perhaps some dog quotes.
GOOGLE ANALYTICS

WWW.GOOGLE.COM/ANALYTICS

A service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about a website's traffic and traffic sources and measures conversions and sales.

It's the most widely used website statistics service and to this day, the most accurate and detailed.

All dog professionals should add this completely free tool on their website to know who their audience is, where do they come from and what are they doing once they surf the website.

SOCIAL MENTION

WWW.SOCIALMENTION.COM

A free real-time social media search and analysis tool that scrapes user generated content across the internet for any given company, product, or search term. In a single stream, this tool will give you the most recent relevant results, metrics on unique authors, reach, frequency of mentions and top keywords. This tool should be on every social media manager's shortlist.
THE KEYS TO ENHANCING YOUR SOCIAL ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Search engine optimisation & marketing requires years of experience to be mastered and even though, the standards keep changing and staying up to date is a daily effort.

That being said, there are SEO basics that every website owner can put into practice with very little knowledge of the complex mechanisms acting behind these huge machines that search engines are.

The most popular Search Engines are Google, Bing and Yahoo. To keep their visitors happy, these search engines spend millions every year to keep their algorithm relevant to the always-increasing quantity of online informations (websites, ebooks, social medias, etc.) Because webmaster always try to outsmart search engines using dodgy techniques, the search engines need to stay on top of their game and constantly change the way they “rate” a page, a website and the position they will give it when a user searches for specific keywords.

Once upon a time, search ranking positions were almost fully based on the amount of pages linking to your website and the anchors (clickable words used on the other site.) Then, people started creating fake blog full of links for their own real website. Then search engines corrected this and have more semantic algorithms that understand the meaning of a page and all its subtitles, the quality of the paragraphs within that page and will also punish whoever is judged as attempting to cheat.

What does that mean to you? It means that if you want to be discovered on the Web, yesterday’s SEO techniques aren’t good enough anymore. Links to your website are still extremely important but Google will also look at how your brand is liked on Google+, Facebook and Twitter. It will look at how long your articles are, how qualitative is your work, and so on.
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