

HOW TO START A DATING and ESCORT SERVICE

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HOW TO START A DATING and ESCORT SERVICE

Starting and operating a successful Dating and Escort Service can bring in \$60,000 or more per year for the sharp, aggressive, imaginative business person. The secret to success with a business of this kind is advertising that presents your services with a "show business" flair - while still maintaining good taste.

Most successful Escort Services are natural expansions of businesses begun originally as Introduction and Dating Services.

To get started, you need an impressive looking application form. Research into a number of successful operations seems to indicate that a four-page application works well.

This should be typeset with an attractive letterhead or company masthead on 11 by 17 inch paper, folded in half to give the impression of a "personnel file." Your best paper colors are either pale blue or ivory. The better paper stock you can afford, the more impressive your application will be - giving a greater aura of credibility to your business, and thus to prospective clients.

In addition to the usual questions such as name, address, telephone number, marital status, place of employment, hobbies, likes and dislikes, your application should contain:

- **** A short personality test which can be obtained with a bit of research at your public library. For ideas, samples, and even tests you can use intact, be sure to check some of the modern women's magazines. And don't discount the idea of registering at an already established business of this type; or possibly you can see their application form without actually involving yourself any further. Or inquire among friends and acquaintances who have registered with a dating or escort service.
- **** Near the end of the application, you should include a short paragraph pointing up the fact that your organization, in addition to bringing people together as a dating service, also provides an escort service for out-of-town visitors and local non-members. You then pose the question: "Would you be interested in these kinds of dates, which would include all expenses, and a minimum fee of \$25 for what usually amounts to a very delightful time with an interesting person. Your only obligation ever is to be your usual charming self, and enjoy."
- **** Just before or above the blank for your applicant's signature, include a legal disclaimer to any responsibilities or promises implied and/or not specifically stated within the application.

The building in which you locate: For this one, you'll need a store-front office, and it should be in a better part of the business district in your city. Try to select a site that is upbeat and attractive without being "jivey" - one that would appeal to the more conservative or mature as well as the younger generation. Many of your clients are going to be mature, and be reminded, the mature, intelligent sector of our society is "getting younger" and more vigorous, "still

interested in life" more than in years past. In other words, the section where you locate should reflect a modern attitude, but with solid values.

The reception area of your office should be large and comfortable, with as expensive a look as you can manage. Your receptionist is very important - very. She should be attractive, with a vivacious and outgoing personality. She should be able to quickly put your prospective clients at ease, and generally make them feel that belonging to your group is going to be the beginning of happier times, fun, and lasting friendships.

You should have at least two expensive looking picture scrapbooks on the coffee table in your reception room. These you can fill with portrait or candid shots of your members and clients. These pictures can pose a problem for you while you are in the beginning stages - so don't hesitate to gather pictures of various relatives, friends who are not necessarily located in your area - or even visit a nearby campus and ask if you can take pictures of some of their best looking men and women. You will need to get a release signed by each one, and you simply explain that you are putting together a picture display book of terrific looking people in the area for the promotion of your business, and their names and any other information will not be publicized or released.

After your prospective client has filled out the application, the next step is a personal interview. Your office should be cozy and comfortable, but business-like, and you should arrange for uninterrupted time in complete privacy with each person.

You should use the interview to go over the application, answer any questions, and close the membership sale. You also use this interview as the basis of your estimate of the kind of person most likely to match this client. Be empathetic with your clients; you are going to meet people who are tired of the "dating game" as it is usually played out in singles bars and unproductive groups they had joined before. You might get added help in the area of interviewing by writing for advertising material and brochures from similar services in other areas, adapting any techniques you like to your own interviewing process.

Most escort services we looked into publish a monthly newsletter with tidbits of information and gossip about members. Who's doing what; job changing; who's travelling where; plus a listing of upcoming events and activities. Listing the names of new members is also a good idea, and quotes from members who are active and enjoying the service. Some of these newsletters feature "girl and guy of the month," with lots of pictures - "on the town," involved in hobbies at home, and candid shots in everyday life. Usually, the escort service itself will sponsor an "all membership" party about once every three months to introduce other members and project a sense of "family" and belonging.

As we said earlier, advertising is the key to your success with this project. A small classified ad, run for about a week in the "Personals" column of your area newspaper, should start the ball rolling for you. Some ideas for pulling inquiries from men might read like this: "Career woman, new to area, seeking dates with honest, fun-loving guys. Call Barbara 123-4567;" or, "Young recent divorcee ready to start dating again. Call Linda at 234-5678."

And for attracting inquiries from women: "Young business executive wants to meet eligible ladies. Call Ron at 345-6789;" or, "Active and ambitious young man wants to meet wholesome, All-American kind of girl. Call Brian at 456-7890."

At the time you have an ad of this type running, you'll want to have bulletin board ads and notices on all the college campuses, in as many company newspapers as you can get into, and wherever people are most likely to take notice. This ad should be a straight advertisement inviting people to "get out of the rat race" of the singles game by joining your organization. You'll of course emphasize confidentiality, respectability, and the fact you deal only with people who are really serious about meeting new friends and forming lasting relationships.

Your ads soliciting new members should tell readers you'll help them meet new friends and enjoy dates with people especially matched to their own likes and dislikes. A sense of fun and excitement should be conveyed, but at the same time, honesty, respectability and trust. You cannot use flashy headlines or pictures of models that give a connotation of an invitation into the bedroom. Write your ads from the point of view of the people you want to sell to - build from what you believe to be their special wants, and visualize their thinking. Put yourself in the place of a prospective new member, and understand that it takes a great deal of nerve, we might even call it COURAGE, to make that move to ask for help in dating. (It is generally easier to just let things slide along - stay in that same old "lonesome rut" than to ask for help - and risk disappointment.)

You'll have to have a "planned explanation" when people call in answer to your ads. Quickly get the name and phone number, ask a few questions, then set up an appointment for him or her to come into your office. When you are in the interview, be bright, inviting, but factual and brief - and don't lose control of the conversation. Best to have your questions and answers written out in the order that works best to pull the prospect into your office, and then follow it to the letter.

When you're ready to expand with Escort Services, get the word out to all the likely places where people wanting these services will see your ads or hear about you in friend-to-friend conversation. Have some interesting posters made up inviting people to call asking about your good-looking, friendly and charming escorts for every occasion - dinner dates, banquets, parties, theater dates, dancing, special occasions. Try to get one of these up on the wall at the airport, train and bus stations, and in the better hotel and motel lobbies in your area - anywhere else that travelers are likely to notice them.

Run a regular ad in your Thursday and Friday papers, and also in the yellow pages of your telephone directory. Pass out business cards to all the car rental agencies and the restaurants near the travel centers and to anyone and everyone having any thing to do with convention or tourist arrangements in your area.

You will have to experiment and test to determine the right fee to charge for providing an escort, but with most escort services, the minimum is \$50, plus all expenses.

This is a business that will provide pleasure and profit to a person who is out-going, fun-loving, gregarious, but who is sensitive to the needs of others, and enjoys seeing people "get a new start," or seeing more reserved ones "come out of their shells." It takes more to get started in this business than it does for some other endeavors, but this is one that can start small and grow, improve, and even spread to franchising size.