

## How to Start a Bed and Breakfast Business

There's an exciting new "down-home" kind of business springing up among homeowners all across the country. It's called Bed and Breakfast.

Basically, this is a transplant of European Hospitality, adapted and refined to the American way of doing things. To foreign visitors, it's the comfort and hospitality of home - staying overnight "with people of the land" and enjoying a hearty breakfast - without the traditional gaudiness and plastic feelings visitors get from most big cities in the United States. To U.S. citizens, it is a welcome alternative to the same old hotel/motel circuit,

Now, all it takes is a spare bedroom, a good cook and an outgoing personality. Prices per night range from a low of \$25 to \$100 or more.

If you have an extra bedroom, a large home, or extra space in your farm house, you have the necessary beginnings to start making extra income as a Bed and Breakfast Inn. One of the beautiful aspects of this idea is that so long as you're hosting "over night visitors" on a small scale, no licenses will be required. It's always best, however, to check with your local authorities just to be sure.

Naturally, your "visitors" will expect a clean, neat and comfortable home. So assuming that your home meets these prerequisites, and you have a spare bedroom, simply "doll it up" a bit. Make sure it's painted brightly, there's an outside window, lots of room, closet space and bureau, and perhaps a small writing desk, and a large comfortable bed, or twin beds.

Most foreign visitors will expect and appreciate a "quick tour" of the interesting sights in your area. However, as your particular popularity as a B & B Host grows, you'll find that a lot of American tourists and business people on the road will begin availing themselves of your hospitality. Certainly with these people, it won't always be necessary to give the "Red Carpet" visitors' treatment.

This brings us to the basic appeal of a Bed and Breakfast Inn. Travelers seem to be looking for, and appreciate a quiet "home-style" place to stay. Generally, they enjoy visiting with the people off the superhighway and want to get away from the sterilized atmosphere and sameness of hotels and motels.

Most people will either write to you ahead of time, inquiring about the possibilities of staying at your home while in your town or city. This means a bit of advertising on your part, or listing your availability with a B & B broker. Some people will check the local telephone listings and the newspaper advertisements when they arrive in a strange town. And some people will just be driving across the country, come to a town or city they think is interesting, and start driving through the residential areas looking for Bed and Breakfast Inns.

Thus, you should have a small sign posted either in your front yard or on the front of your house. This sign needn't be much more than about two feet wide by about ten inches deep. It need only state: BED AND BREAKFAST - Inquire Within or Call 555-123-4567.

For newspaper advertising, a similar listing in the personal column of your local paper, particularly on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, will be all you'll need. But when it comes to the yellow pages of your telephone and business directories, go with a small display ad that describes in greater detail the comforts and pleasures of your services.

Be sure to list your services with all the travel agencies in your area. A brochure or a short synopsis of what you offer will most assuredly give the travel agents an idea for steering visitors your way. At the same time, listing your services in a number of national travel magazines - particularly those that cater to women - will bring customers in for you.

Listing your services with a broker usually won't cost you anything up front, but they will expect a certain percentage - usually about 25% of the total bill. This same arrangement applies with travel agents.

Now, suppose you're organized and ready to receive your first customers. You greet them as host or hostess and offer to assist them in getting situated in the room or rooms you have for them. If they'd like to take a drive around your area and see the points of interest, you do that. And then in the morning, serve them a big, delicious breakfast.

You'll probably find that foreign visitors will want to stay several days. With most people of this country who are just traveling through your area, it'll be a one-night stopover. Whatever, if they want to sleep comfortably through the night, eat breakfast and be on their way, so be it. If they want to sit around after breakfast and plan an itinerary for a complete visit of your area, your assistance and help will be greatly appreciated. (Remember those recommendations)!

That's it! The complete how and why of this tremendously profitable business that's becoming more and more popular. It's called Bed & Breakfast, and it's very definitely a low investment idea. And you can parlay it into a very interesting and comfort

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