

# Ten Tips For The New Home Care Agency

A Generations white paper



Thinking about opening your own agency? Perhaps you see a need in your community for home care services, or you've had an experience with family or friends that interested you in the home care field. In either case, there's no doubt you're a people person who is passionate about helping others – these traits will go a long way in ensuring your success! The ten tips below can take you a few steps further.

## Think About Your History—And Your Future

Know who you are, and where you want to go – whether literally, like a trip to Spain, or figuratively, as in “I want to serve my community.” This new business will be a reflection of who you are as an individual. What are your strengths and weaknesses? How can you capitalize on the strengths, and minimize the weaknesses? Spend some time visualizing what you want the business to look like in the future. Setting goals now will help you mark out a path to get you where you want to be.

## Do Your Research

How much do you know about the home care industry? Do you follow the trends or know what the 'latest' news is? It is also very important to do your market research and know what services are available in your immediate area. Determine if there are any areas of service that are lacking – perhaps some specialty services that are not offered elsewhere. Find your niche! Also, you should also know the business side before you open for business. Join a national organization (and the state chapter of that organization) to learn more about the business. We recommend:

- National Private Duty Association [www.private-duty-homecare.org](http://www.private-duty-homecare.org)
- National Association for Homecare and Hospice [www.nahc.org](http://www.nahc.org)
- Your local Chamber of Commerce

## What Do You Do?

There are two types of home care agencies; some agencies provide private duty services while others are certified by Medicare. Do your research. What type of services will you provide? What will you charge for those services? What rates will you pay your caregivers for performing those services? Visiting websites of other home care agencies will show you the services that they provide, and perhaps you can find a specialty service not provided by anyone else in your community.

## Take Care Of Business

Take care of your business so your business can take care of you. Before you open, take the time to create a business plan. Put pencil to paper and know your capital costs. Think about business structure – will your business be a sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or corporation? Look carefully at your state requirements for starting a home care agency and follow those guidelines strictly. Will you join a franchise or not? You'll need a sound foundation in order to meet all of your goals.

## Think About Your Name

Deciding on a business name is crucial. Search online to make sure that the name you've chosen isn't already being used. Ensure that your business name is easy for people to remember. Register it with the clerk of the county where you will be conducting business, and wait on ordering stationary, advertising or opening that business checking account until the registration is complete. A website is an important consideration, too, so register your domain name as soon as possible.

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## **Policies And Procedures**

Be sure to write a policies and procedures manual. You can get samples of policy manuals online, hire a consultant to help you write a manual, or you can create one of your own. Manuals go a long way to ensuring that the business is run in an efficient, consistent, and professional manner. Update your manual on a regular basis and make sure that every employee gets a copy of the manual.

## **Where Are You At?**

Where are you going to run this business from? Some people choose to open a home care agency in their own home, and while this is certainly an option, you might consider a different location. Some states prohibit home care agencies run out of residences, so make sure you are aware of any state requirements. If your business will be run out of your home, have a plan to separate work and family life; additionally, do you have adequate space to interview and train caregivers? As you speculate on location consider the following things: is it near public transportation? Is it near the community that you wish to provide service to? Does it allow access to high-speed internet? Review what your market research shows, and use that to help you determine where to locate your business.

## **Get Good People**

The home care business is all about people, and you should do everything in your power to hire the best people you possibly can – before you get clients. Yes, that's right. Hire the best people before you have clients. Think about what you want to accomplish with your agency, and surround yourself with the people that will help you achieve that goal. Build your team with people who share the same passion for people and quality care that you have, and you'll be on your way!

## **Get Your Name Out There**

Now that you've got a great business plan and name, it's time to get your name out there. Start by developing a marketing plan. What do the experts have to say? If you're not sure where to start, do some more research; there are many marketing ideas online. Determine what audience you wish to target, and then develop a strategy to reach that target. Focus on what sets your service apart from all the rest. Use every outgoing piece of paper and every email as promotion for your business. Think about press releases, and definitely consider a website. If you do choose to establish a website, make sure it looks professionally developed and maintained.

## **Use Technology Wisely**

Before you get clients, have a great infrastructure ready to roll. Just like good people, the right technology will support you, your staff, and your clients. Technology will help you respond quickly in an emergency situation. Technology can alert you when a caregiver does not show up for a job, and allows you to manage the client and caregiver information without paper confusion. Whether you need to see gross profits for the past month, billing for next month, or scheduled shifts for today, technology puts the important business information at your fingertips.

## **About Generations Home Care Systems**

Generations is a leading provider of home care software. The program manages your clients, caregivers, and scheduling, and also interfaces with QuickBooks seamlessly for billing and payroll. To find out more about how Generations can help you with your home care business needs, contact us today via phone (989) 546-4512, e-mail [info@idb-sys.com](mailto:info@idb-sys.com), or web at [www.homecaresoftware.com](http://www.homecaresoftware.com).