

# Lawn & Landscaping Business Marketing Plan

## Greens Manicure Service

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

Greens Manicure Service (Greens) is a residential lawn care service. Greens will be targeting suburban middle class homes with larger yards. A large grouping of this demographic is located in Steve's neighborhood. Steve will leverage his connection to the neighborhood to sign up customers. Having a basis in the neighborhood helps create a trust bond that will be leveraged when Steve is trying to develop the customer base.

Greens Manicure Service's mission is to provide the customer with professional lawn care. We exist to attract and maintain customers. When we adhere to this maxim, everything else will fall into place. Our services will exceed the expectations of our customers.

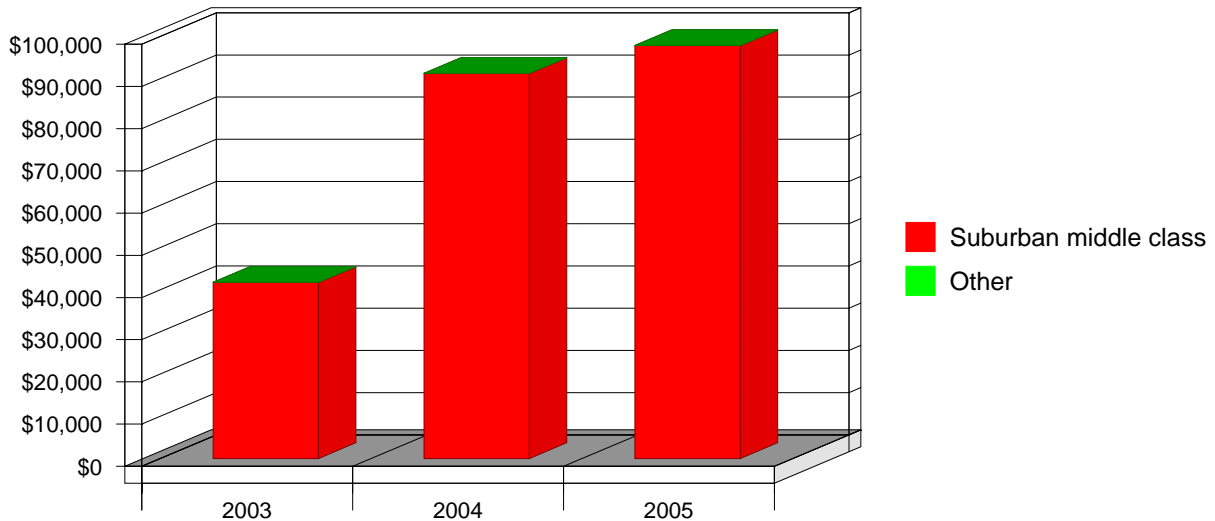
Greens Manicure Service is a seasonal business. All revenue activity occurs from April through the November. Greens Manicure Service will be targeting one specific group of customers, the suburban middle class. Greens is targeting middle-aged homemakers as they are more likely to rely on a lawn service. Younger homemakers tend to be more likely to do their lawn themselves. Greens will also be targeting homes that do not have teenage children to help out with the lawn.

The median income is \$60-\$120k, just enough to have disposable income for the care of their lawn. Greens Manicure Service will be targeting larger lawns, from 4,000-7,000 square feet. This is done because the margins are higher with larger lawns once you factor in transportation time and costs. Lastly, white-collar families will be targeted instead of blue collar families as the blue collar families are more likely to do the lawn themselves.

For year one, Steve will have one employee in addition to himself. This will create one two-person work crew. By year two Steve will purchase a second vehicle, more equipment, and hire two new employees to form a second work crew.

Greens Manicure Service is projected to reach profitability by month six and will have profits of \$13,000 by the end of the third year season.

### Annual Sales Forecast



## 2.0 Situation Analysis

Greens Manicure Service is entering its first year of operation. Steve recognizes that marketing will be critical to develop a sufficiently large customer base. Greens Manicure offers residential lawn care with an eye for detail. The basic market need is a lawn care service that is reliable and professional.

## 2.1 Market Summary

Greens Manicure possesses good information about the market and has comprehensive information about the ideal customer. This information will be leveraged to better understand who is served, their specific needs, and how Greens can better communicate with them.

**Table 2.1: Target Market Forecast**

Target Market Forecast	Growth	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	CAGR
Potential Customers							
Suburban middle class	12%	325	364	408	457	512	12.03%
Other	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Total	12.03%	325	364	408	457	512	12.03%

### 2.1.1 Market Demographics

The profile for Greens' customer consists of the following geographic, demographic, and behavior factors.

#### Geographics

- The immediate geographic target is the city of Bedford, OH with a population of 67,000.
- A five mile geographic area is in need of the services.
- The total targeted population is 525.

#### Demographics

- Primarily families.
- Ages 34 - 56.
- Have a household income of at least \$60,000.
- 75% have at least a college degree.
- 54% have a graduate degree.

#### Behavior Factors

- Are more than happy to pay for services that they would prefer not to do themselves.
- Appreciate the aesthetics of a well-cared for lawn.

## 2.1.2 Market Needs

Greens Manicure Service is providing the market with a professional, reliable, lawn care service. Greens is able to offer customers flexible service offerings, meeting whatever needs they may have. Greens seeks to fulfill the following benefits that are important to customers.

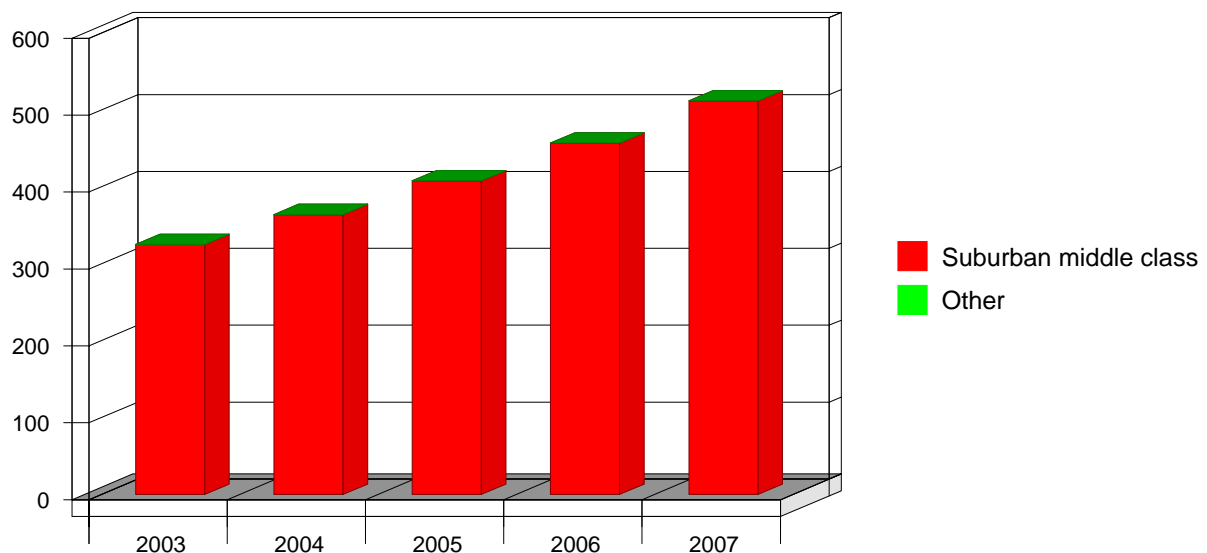
- **Professionalism:** The targeted customer is accustomed to interacting with professional service providers. The lawn care industry is not known for its professionalism, so Greens' professionalism should stand out.
- **Reliability:** People that are willing to have their lawns cared for like the reliability of knowing that each week their lawn will be done. Many of the competitors are less reliable and the customer is uncertain exactly when they might show up.
- **Quality Work:** When people pay for a service that they could conceivably do themselves, they want to be impressed with the work product. This will always be the case with Greens Manicure Service.

## 2.1.3 Market Trends

The market trend for lawn care has been a movement toward specialization. Five to 10 years ago, many of the residential lawns were serviced by a large landscaping/lawn service company that typically provided landscape design, tree and shrub installation and sometimes underground sprinkler installation. The typical company serviced both residential as well as commercial properties.

Recently however, the industry had undergone a focus on specific customers. It has become more unusual for companies to serve both residential and commercial properties. Additionally, the companies have also specialized on their service offerings in addition to specialization of target customers.

### Market Forecast



## 2.1.4 Market Growth

The lawn care industry has grown at a consistent 4% for the last eight years. This industry has generated over \$986 million in revenue in the U.S. last year. Growth is forecasted to continue at approximately the same rate for the next three years.

There is high confidence in the forecasts for several reasons:

- Grass continues to grow. Growth is less during a drought, but grass grows fairly regularly. Even in a drought, many people water their lawn, promoting growth.
- There appears to always be people who are unwilling to be personally responsible for the care of their lawn, but are required to maintain a particular aesthetic dictated by city ordinances.

## 2.2 SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis captures the key strengths and weaknesses within the company and describes the opportunities and threats facing Greens Manicure Service.

### 2.2.1 Strengths

- Strong experiential knowledge of the lawn care industry.
- A solid foundation with a highly desirable community of prospective customers.
- Low overhead.

### 2.2.2 Weaknesses

- The lack of brand equity.
- Initially only one employee to help generate revenue.
- A limited marketing budget to develop brand awareness.

### 2.2.3 Opportunities

- A market that is generally resistant to economic downturns primarily because most the prospective customers view lawn care as a necessity and are unwilling to do it themselves.
- The ability to find competent employees.
- Repeat business.

## 2.2.4 Threats

- Competition from the larger, established landscapers.
- Future competition from a similar, entrepreneur-spirited individual.
- Seasonal business is not sufficient to carry the business through the off-season.

## 2.3 Competition

The lawn care business can be divided into two types, residential and commercial. As a smaller company or start up, it is much easier to enter into the residential market compared with the commercial market. The commercial market is dominated by larger, established companies.

Within the residential market, there are two competitors: full-scale landscaping companies and basic lawn care services. The full-scale landscaping companies will generally be handling jobs outside of Green's range. They are servicing even larger homes that require other landscaping activities that need more equipment and higher-skilled employees. The margins are therefore larger for the full-scale companies because they can charge more for the higher-skilled work. The other competitor is the basic lawn care services, not unlike Greens Manicure Service. Within most markets, including Greens, the competition is not overwhelming and often lacks basic quality and professionalism.

More often than not, residential customers make purchasing decisions based on referrals and perceived professionalism and quality.

## 2.4 Services

Greens Manicure Service will provide residential lawn care service that includes lawn cutting, edging and trimming. Optional services will include hedge trimming. The service is typically offered once a week in season, but Greens can create a custom schedule for clients.

## 2.5 Keys to Success

- Generate repeat business.
- Generate referrals.
- Professionalism.

## 2.6 Critical Issues

Greens Manicure Service is still in the speculative stages as a start-up operation. Its critical issues are:

- Take a modest fiscal approach to expansion. Expand not for the sake of expansion in itself, but because it is necessary to service the clients.
- Establish Greens as a well respected, community service provider.



## 3.0 Marketing Strategy

Greens Manicure Service's segment will be initially targeted by canvassing the neighborhood and offering a free estimate and cut. Steve will be basing the business out of his parent's home, right in the middle of a target neighborhood. Steve will walk the neighborhood and leverage his relationship in the community to gain a foothold. Although some people are put off by solicitors, Steve is their neighbor and they will recognize him so he will generally be able to make his spiel.

Steve will also run advertisements in the local community paper to gain a foothold in different neighborhoods.

## 3.1 Mission

Greens Manicure Service's mission is to provide the customer with professional lawn care. We exist to attract and maintain customers. When we adhere to this maxim, everything else will fall into place. Our services will exceed the expectations of our customers.

## 3.2 Marketing Objectives

- Increase repeat customers by 15% per season.
- Decrease customer acquisition costs by 8% per season.
- Increase brand equity evidenced by unsolicited service requests.

## 3.3 Financial Objectives

- Reach profitability by the first season.
- Decrease the labor hours to complete a benchmarked job by 5% a year.
- Generate sufficient revenues to maintain the seasonal nature of the business.

## 3.4 Target Marketing

Greens Manicure Service will be targeting one specific group of customers, the suburban middle class. Greens is targeting middle-aged homemakers as they are more likely to rely on a lawn service. Younger homemakers are more likely to do their lawn themselves. Greens will also be targeting homes that do not have teenage children likely to help out with the lawn.

The median income is \$60-\$120k, just enough to have disposable income for the care of their lawn. Greens Manicure Service will be targeting larger size lawns, from 4,000-7,000 square feet. This is done because the margins are higher with larger lawns once you factor in transportation time and costs. Lastly, white-collar families will be targeted instead of blue collar families as the blue collar families are more likely to do the lawn themselves.

## 3.5 Positioning

Greens will position themselves as a local, residential lawn care service. In order to achieve the desired positioning, Greens will leverage its competitive edges:

- Greens Manicure Service's competitive edge will be based on quality of professionalism. During the first year Steve will be doing all of the lawns with only one other employee. This provides him with direct supervision of the employee and direct involvement with the job. This will ensure customers receive a quality job. Steve knows what quality work is, based on previous experiences to be detailed under the Management section.
- Greens' second competitive edge is professionalism. Steve will ensure that all interactions with the customer ooze professionalism.

Steve truly believes that professionalism and quality are the factors that attract and maintain customers. Consequently, Steve will be truly vigilant in ensuring that his competitive edges are always apparent to the customer as his livelihood is dependant on this.

## 3.6 Strategy Pyramids

The single objective is to position Greens as the premier residential lawn care service. The marketing strategy will seek to first create customer awareness regarding services offered, then develop the customer base, and finally work toward building customer loyalty and referrals.

The message Greens seeks to communicate is that it offers professional, flexible residential lawn care services. This message will be communicated through a variety of different methods. The first method will be a networking/canvassing campaign. Steve will cover the neighborhood and introduce his neighbors to his new lawn care service.

Steve will also rely on advertisements in the local community newspaper to increase visibility for Greens.

## 3.7 Marketing Mix

Greens' marketing mix is comprised of the following approaches to pricing, distribution, advertising and promotion, and customer service.

- **Pricing:** Greens will be able to offer competitive prices because of a low overhead structure.
- **Distribution:** Services will be offered within a five-mile radius.
- **Advertising and Promotion:** A combination of networking and advertisements will be used to develop a customer base and build brand equity.
- **Customer Service:** 100% customer satisfaction will be targeted for every transaction. This will be instrumental in developing repeat customers and referrals.

## 3.8 Marketing Research

While in the process of writing both the business and marketing plan, Steve circulated a questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to solicit the thoughts and perspectives of various typical customers. Steve handed out a total of 100 questionnaires and had a return rate of 40%. The high return rate was a function of the fact that Steve distributed the questionnaires by hand and included a coupon for his service.

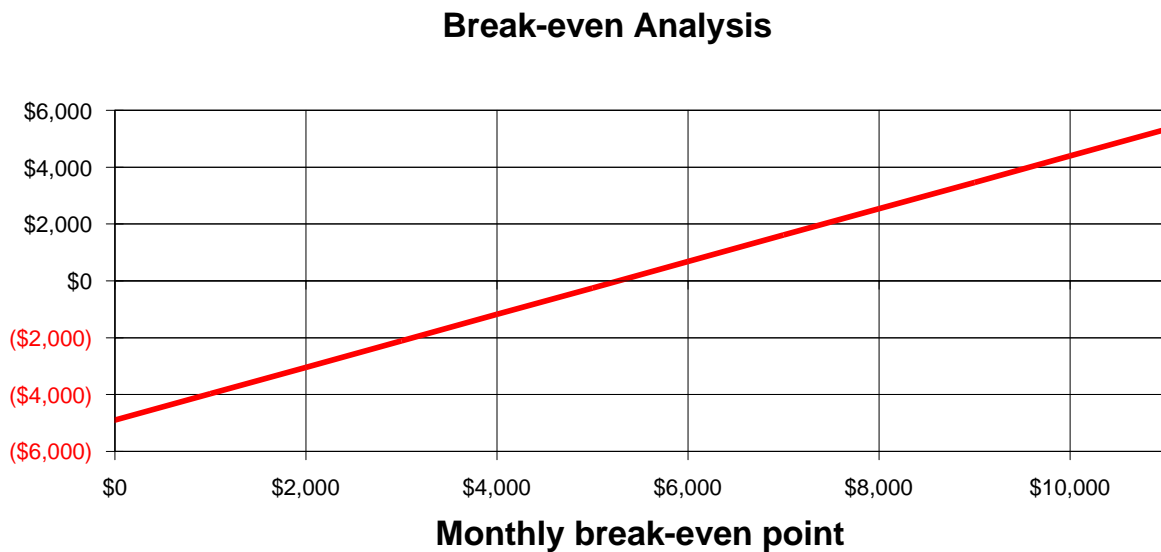
The questionnaires provided Greens with a wealth of information. Some of the information were assumptions already held, while other information were things that Steve did not previously have any insight into.

## 4.0 Financials, Budgets, and Forecasts

This section will offer a financial overview of Greens as it relates to its marketing activities. Greens will address break-even analysis, sales forecasts, and how they link to the marketing strategy.

### 4.1 Break-even Analysis

The break-even analysis indicates that \$5,269 is needed in monthly revenue to reach the break-even point.



Break-even point = where line intersects with 0

**Table 4.1: Break-even Analysis**

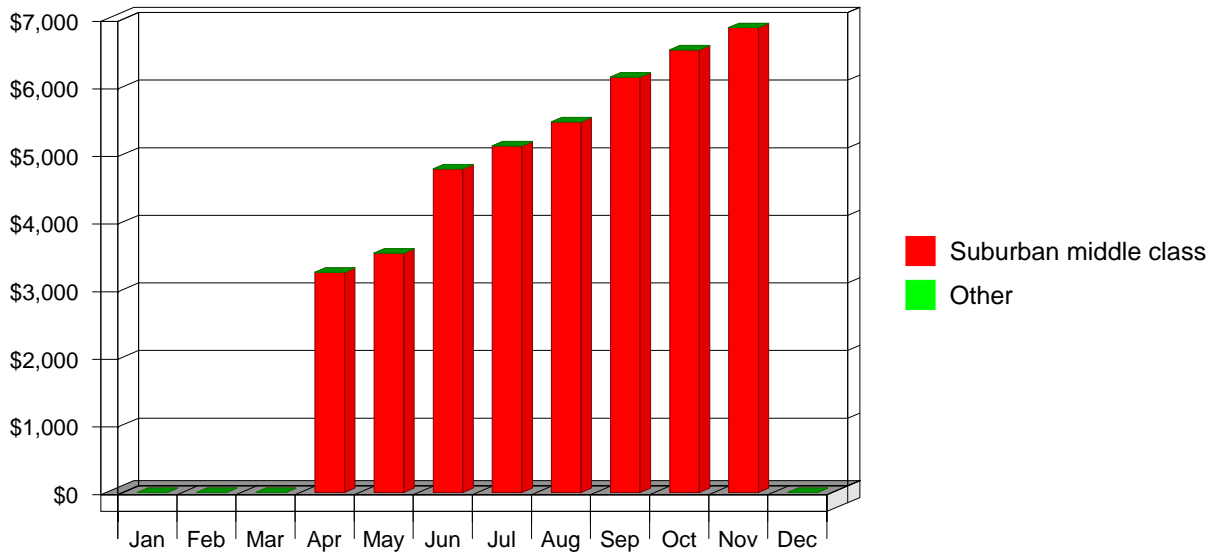
Break-even Analysis:	
Monthly Units Break-even	21
Monthly Sales Break-even	\$5,269
Assumptions:	
Average Per-Unit Revenue	\$250.00
Average Per-Unit Variable Cost	\$17.50
Estimated Monthly Fixed Cost	\$4,900

## 4.2 Sales Forecast

The first month will be used to set up the office, purchase the necessary lawn care equipment, and hire and train an employee. Additionally, during the last two weeks of the month, Steve will be canvassing the neighborhood to build a customer list.

Month four will see some business and the business will continue to grow as Steve increases the number of jobs that he has. Months four through ten will see a steady rise in revenues. Business will pick up again in April of year two. From February through April of year two Steve will be working hard on generating new customers and will bring on two additional employees to service the new customers.

**Monthly Sales Forecast**



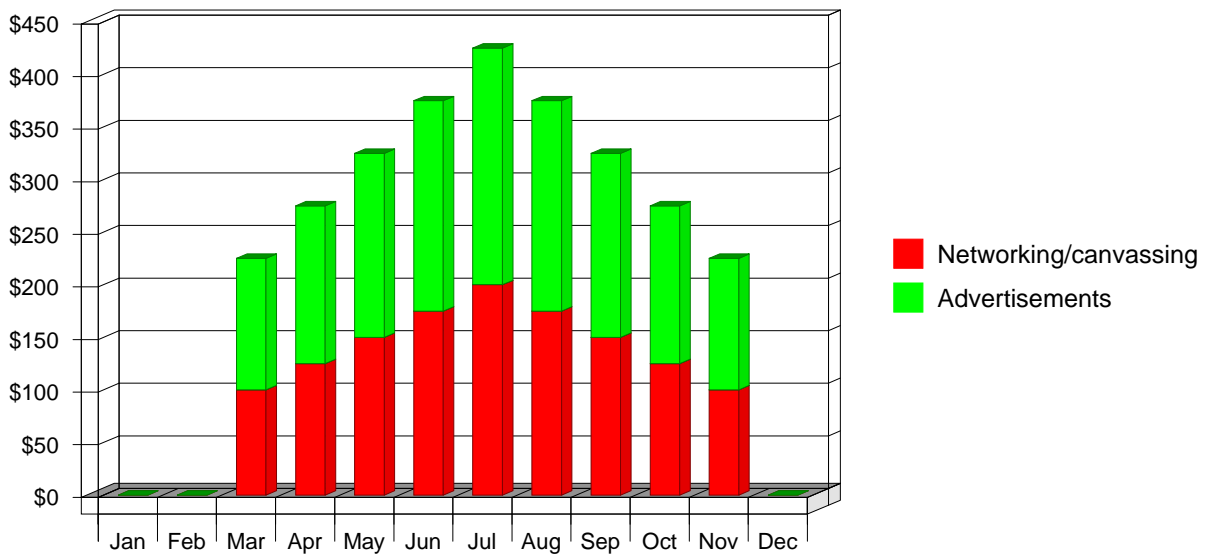
**Table 4.2: Sales Forecast**

Sales Forecast			
Sales	2003	2004	2005
Suburban middle class	\$41,748	\$91,254	\$97,854
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>\$41,748</b>	<b>\$91,254</b>	<b>\$97,854</b>
Direct Cost of Sales			
Suburban middle class	2003	2004	2005
	\$2,695	\$6,388	\$6,850
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Cost of Sales</b>	<b>\$2,695</b>	<b>\$6,388</b>	<b>\$6,850</b>

### 4.3 Expense Forecast

The marketing expenses for Greens will be high during the first few months of operation to raise visibility for the organization. As the season gets close to the end, marketing expenses will decrease as a recognition that there is less opportunity generate new customers.

#### Monthly Expense Budget



**Table 4.3: Marketing Expense Budget**

	2003	2004	2005
Marketing Expense Budget			
Networking/canvassing	\$1,300	\$1,500	\$1,700
Advertisements	\$1,525	\$1,700	\$2,000
	-----	-----	-----
Total Sales and Marketing Expenses	\$2,825	\$3,200	\$3,700
Percent of Sales	6.77%	3.51%	3.78%
Contribution Margin	\$36,228	\$81,666	\$87,304
Contribution Margin / Sales	86.78%	89.49%	89.22%

## 5.0 Controls

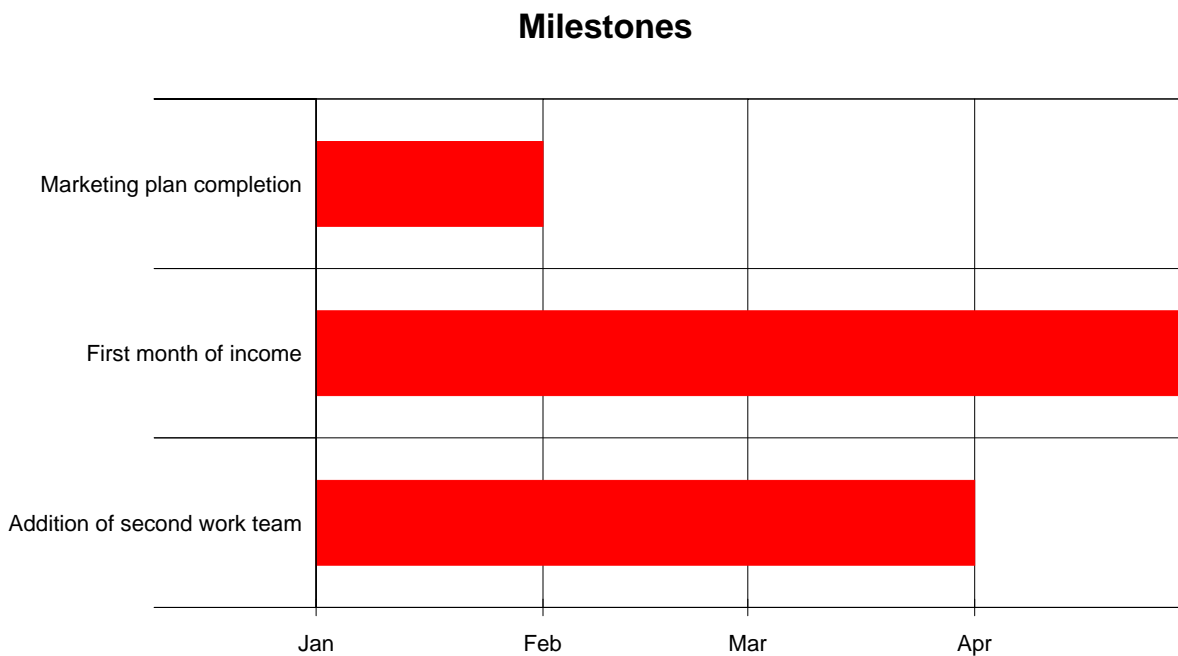
The purpose of Greens' marketing plan is to serve as a guide for the organization. This guide will allow the company to periodically refer to the plan to benchmark progress that has been made and determine what else needs to be accomplished.

The following areas will be monitored to gauge performance:

- Revenue: monthly and annual.
- Expenses: monthly and annual.
- Customer satisfaction.
- Repeat business.

## 5.1 Implementation Milestones

The following milestones identify the key marketing programs. It is important to accomplish each one on time and on budget.



**Table 5.1: Milestones**

Milestones	Plan					
Milestone	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Manager	Department	
Marketing plan completion	1/1/03	2/1/03		Steve		
First month of income	1/1/03	4/30/03		Steve		
Addition of second work team	1/1/03	4/1/03		Steve		
Totals			\$0			

## 5.2 Marketing Organization

Steve will be responsible for the marketing activities, but will rely on an outside agency for the production of the advertisements.

## 5.3 Contingency Planning

### Difficulties and Risks

- Difficulty switching clients from their current service provider to Greens.
- The inability to convince people to try Greens, a new comer with little experience.

### Worst Case Risks May Include

- Determining that the business cannot support itself.
- Having to liquidate equipment to cover liabilities.



## Appendix: Greens Manicure Service

**Table 4.2 Sales Forecast**

Sales Forecast	Plan											
Sales	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Suburban middle class	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,254	\$3,541	\$4,785	\$5,124	\$5,478	\$6,145	\$6,547	\$6,874	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,254</b>	<b>\$3,541</b>	<b>\$4,785</b>	<b>\$5,124</b>	<b>\$5,478</b>	<b>\$6,145</b>	<b>\$6,547</b>	<b>\$6,874</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Direct Cost of Sales	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Suburban middle class	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$248	\$335	\$359	\$383	\$430	\$458	\$481	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal Cost of Sales</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$248</b>	<b>\$335</b>	<b>\$359</b>	<b>\$383</b>	<b>\$430</b>	<b>\$458</b>	<b>\$481</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## Appendix: Greens Manicure Service

**Table 4.3 Marketing Expense Budget**

Marketing Expense Budget	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Networking/canvassing	\$0	\$0	\$100	\$125	\$150	\$175	\$200	\$175	\$150	\$125	\$100	\$0
Advertisements	\$0	\$0	\$125	\$150	\$175	\$200	\$225	\$200	\$175	\$150	\$125	\$0
<b>Total Sales and Marketing Expenses</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$225</b>	<b>\$275</b>	<b>\$325</b>	<b>\$375</b>	<b>\$425</b>	<b>\$375</b>	<b>\$325</b>	<b>\$275</b>	<b>\$225</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Percent of Sales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.45%	9.18%	7.84%	8.29%	6.85%	5.29%	4.20%	3.27%	0.00%
Contribution Margin	\$0	\$0	(\$225)	\$2,979	\$2,968	\$4,075	\$4,340	\$4,720	\$5,390	\$5,814	\$6,168	\$0
Contribution Margin / Sales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	91.55%	83.82%	85.16%	84.71%	86.15%	87.71%	88.80%	89.73%	0.00%