



Who's new in business: NoDryerFire.com

Sunday, August 31, 2008

NoDryerFire.com

Owner: Kevin O'Leary.

Product or service: Dryer vent and cleaning service.

Location: Thousand Oaks.

Date established: June 2008.

Hours open: By appointment.

Telephone: 300-0944.

E-mail: stopfire@NoDryerFire.net.

Web site: <http://nodryerfire.com>.

Employees: Owner-operated.

Startup capital: \$3,000.

Estimated annual gross revenue: \$25,000.

Questions to Kevin O'Leary: What prompted you to start your own business? After working for 25 years at a university, I decided I wanted to work with my hands. I started the business because I retired.

What is your educational and career background? I graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in political science and I hold a Master of Arts from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash., in organizational leadership and development. I worked in higher education at senior management levels, including the senior associate director of financial aid at CSU Northridge. I also write computer manuals.

How much research did you do before starting your business? I thought doing a nasty job that many homeowners dislike, or worse, ignore, might be an entrepreneurial opportunity. I researched fire protection issues in reference to dryer fires. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, clothes dryers were involved in an estimated annual 15,600 structure fires, 15 deaths, 400 injuries and \$99 million in direct property damage between 2002-04. The leading cause of clothes dryer fires was lack of maintenance — lint buildup in the exhaust system. Also, inefficient cleaning: the "tired dryer" costs far more money to operate than the clean version. I noticed national firms like Coit offer air vent cleaning,

but not specific dryer vent specialty protection.

What were the most helpful sources, including Web sites? The most helpful sources of information on dryer fires I found were building and safety journal Web sites, including, http://www.dryerbox.com/news_articles/dryer_fire_potential.pdf and appliance failure information found at http://www.dryerbox.com/news_articles/appliance06.pdf.

When were you the most discouraged? I was not discouraged as I opened this business. It felt wonderful to work for myself, set my own appointments, share a few laughs with my customers and perform a needed service.

What company or individual do you admire? I admire the individuals who wake up each morning to raise a family, cut a lawn, go to school or work in an office or serve in our armed forces. I admire this country where a retired person who worked for years in a white-collar job can now find contentment and earn a few bucks covered in lint.

What will make your business stand out from competitors? NoDryerFire.com is work I do with pride and with little concern for how long a job takes. I love the fresh floors and the eco-friendly product smell of the washer-dryer area after a cleaning. I know customers appreciate the low cost (a flat \$90 per job) with no hidden fees. The dirtier I am, the happier I am.

Who is your target client/customer base? Homeowners in the Conejo Valley, Simi Valley and East Valley areas with "tired dryers."

— *Businesses less than a year old can be profiled in Who's New in Business. Businesses older than 1 year can be profiled in Company Spotlight. Those owning franchises can be profiled in Franchise Focus. Only businesses that have never been profiled in The Star may participate. For details or the questionnaire, call 437-0239.*



© 2008 Ventura County Star