

HOME BUSINESS® START-UP GUIDE

HOME BUSINESS

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Going Above and Beyond the Call of Doody

Husband and Wife Team Expand Pet Waste Removal Franchise

By Sandy Larson

Dogs are loveable companions that curl up to you on cold nights, excitedly greet you at the door after you've returned from the grocery store, willingly play fetch with your kids at a moment's notice, and make you feel safe when you're home alone. It's no wonder they make the perfect additions to any family. If only they didn't poop so much!

Jacob and Susan D'Aniello, of Charlottesville, Virginia, started a home-based business in 2000 to address this very problem. Their company, DoodyCalls (www.DoodyCalls.com), provides professional pet waste removal services to residential yards, apartment communities, and Home Owner Associations (HOA).

"We knew that there was a huge untapped market for pet waste removal services," says Jacob, who previously worked as a technology consultant. "Forty percent of households have

dogs, and none of them enjoy picking up after them."

Jacob and Susan, a former nurse, got their start cleaning properties in Northern Virginia and Maryland in the evenings and on weekends, after they both got home from work. As business picked up, they both left their full-time jobs and started hiring employees, purchasing trucks, and advertising heavily.

By 2003, the company expanded into Massachusetts, and in 2004, the D'Aniellos sold their first franchise. Currently, DoodyCalls has two company-owned units and four franchised units operating in 16 territories. The franchise serves over 3,000 dogs weekly, and Jacob and Susan expect to reach one million dollars in sales this year.

Jacob is thrilled with the company's success, although not surprised. "Pet care spending has



Jacob and Susan D'Aniello run a pet waste removal business.

doubled in the past decade, and Americans have less and less time to spend taking care of their pets," reports Jacob. "They'd rather play with their dogs and let someone else clean up. That's where we come in."

The company hopes to establish 100 territories by 2011. In the meantime, Jacob and Susan will continue to recruit and train franchisees and build a strong corporate identity. "We will turn DoodyCalls into a household name," states Jacob. "Through effective service and brand promotion, we expect the majority of dog owners to eventually ask DoodyCalls to help them keep their yards clean." **HBM**