

Business Plan Example
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Paw Print Post

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Executive summary

Paw Print Post is a sole proprietorship that sells customized greeting cards featuring a pet's unique paw print, and all customers need to do is send in a digital image of their pet's paw. It offers high-end greeting cards to fill a niche in the market serving pet owners who don't want the mess of a traditionally-captured paw print, which usually involves ink or plaster.

Paw Print Post's ideal customer is a woman who owns a cat or a dog, and considers herself a "dog mom" or a "cat mom." Given the importance people in North America place on their pets, and that the pet industry generates \$100 billion a year globally, there's a market not only for traditional customized cards for major holidays, but also a line of cards recognizing milestones like a pet's adoption or birthday.

Given that the cards are customized and produced in North America, they're priced as a premium card, with volume discounts for larger orders. Paw Print Post will promote its products through a mix of industry trade shows, partnerships with established pet products, and digital advertising.

Paw Print Post is pre-launch currently, and projects earning over \$1,000 a month within 3 months of launch. The business is run by Jane Matthews, founder, who has extensive experience in the pet industry and formal training as a graphic designer.

Company overview

Business structure

Paw Print Post will operate as a sole proprietorship run by the owner, Jane Matthews.

Nature of the business

Paw Print Post sells unique, one-of-a-kind digitally printed cards that are customized with a pet's unique paw prints.

Industry

Paw Print Post operates in the pet industry primarily, and sells goods that could also be categorized as part of the greeting card industry.

Background information

Jane Matthews, the founder of Paw Print Post, has a long history in the pet industry and working with animals, and was recently trained as a graphic designer. She's combining those two loves to capture a niche in the market: unique greeting cards customized with a pet's paw prints, without needing to resort to the traditional (and messy) options of casting your pet's prints in plaster or using pet-safe ink to have them stamp their "signature."

Business objectives

Jane will have Paw Print Post ready to launch at the Big Important Pet Expo in Toronto, to get the word out among industry players and consumers alike. After two years in business, Jane aims to drive \$150,000 in annual revenue from the sale of Paw Print Post's signature greeting cards, and have expanded into two new product categories.

Team

Jane Matthews is the sole full-time employee of Paw Print Post, but hires contractors as needed to support her workflow and fill gaps in her skill set. Notably, Paw Print Post has a standing contract for 5 hours a week of virtual assistant support with Virtual Assistants Pro.

Market analysis

Market size

Research about the market for Paw Print Post showed that Americans will [spend more than \\$70 billion on their pets in 2018](#), and the global pet market is \$100 billion annually. While this includes basics like food and vet care, the market is also expanding in pet tech and other auxiliary pet products, which is where Paw Print Post fits in the market.

Additionally, [7 billion greeting cards are purchased every year](#), with retail sales estimated at \$7.5 billion globally. Sales are driven by women, and while the average price is between \$2 to \$4, the full price range spans from under \$1 to \$10.

SWOT analysis

	Positive	Negative
Internal	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong experience with the pet industry and understanding of customer profile - Formal graphic design training - Existing connections in the industry for potential partnerships 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No experience in logistics or fulfillment
External	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong growth in pet market - Millennials are investing more in their pets 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly competitive market - Low barriers to entry

Competitive analysis

Paw Print Post has competitors in each of the two markets it intersects.

Greeting cards

While there are no greeting card companies offering customization based on paw prints, there are artists who sell greeting cards customized with artwork of your pet, although they're typically at a very high price point given the labor-intensive process of creating custom art. Beyond that, one of the biggest competitive forces in the greeting card industry for Paw Print Post is the

convenience factor. Pet lovers may decide too late that they'd like a custom card, and opt for a card they can buy in person instead.

Paw print mementos

Additionally, there are several products in the market that help pet owners immortalize their pet's paw prints. These include kits to create a cast of your pet's print in plaster, and kits to create an ink paw print on paper. Many of these options are time-intensive and can be messy, especially as it involves extended cooperation from your pet.

Differentiation

Paw Print Post will primarily rely on differentiation to stand out in the market, with segmentation as a secondary strategy. While there are multiple categories of competitors and substitutes for their product, Paw Print Post has a much more convenient and unique offer for pet lovers. Paw Print Post will not compete on price, and will focus on owning its initial product category before expanding.

Products and services

Paw Print Post's flagship product is a line of greeting cards that are customized with a pet's unique footprint, with no ink or messy crafting required. Instead, customers send a digital image of their pet's paw to Paw Print Post, and the image is processed to isolate and add contrast to the paw print. That isolated print is then added to the front or the interior of several different card options, including traditional calendar celebrations and pet-specific moments like:

- Welcoming a new pet
- Condolences for the loss of a pet
- Pet birthdays
- Pet adoption milestones
- Finishing a training course
- Starting work as a service pet

As the custom paw prints can be placed inside or outside the card, they can serve as artwork on the card, or a way for pet lovers to send a card "from" their pet using their paw print as a signature.

Customer segmentation

Paw Print Post's ideal customer is a woman who has a cat or a dog and lives in North America. She's between the ages of 25 and 55, doesn't have children, and is comfortable buying products online, ordering at least once a week from online vendors. She has a university-level degree and earns over \$50,000 a year. She values her time highly, and isn't opposed to calling herself a "cat mom" or "dog mom," and has friends who feel the same.

Marketing plan

Based on Paw Print Post's ideal customer, here's an overview of the marketing plan.

Price

Given that the greeting cards from Paw Print Post are customized, and that they save the significant time and effort of capturing a paw print using more traditional methods, they're priced at the higher end of the market. A single card costs \$9.50, while bundles of identical cards reduce the price, with three for \$20 and six for \$30.

Product

Paw Print Post's greeting cards are solving a specific problem—pet owners want custom, high-end products featuring their pet, and a paw print is a unique and affordable way to do so. Since pet owners only need to take a digital image of their pet's paw, it's a lower-effort way to customize cards than what exists in the market currently.

Promotion

Paw Print Post will rely on three main promotional strategies. Given Jane Matthew's experience in the pet industry, she has identified multiple leading trade shows that would be worth the investment to get the word out about her business. Additionally, her existing relationships give her several opportunities to pursue partner promotions with established products. Finally, digital ads on both Facebook and Instagram will help her reach Paw Print Post's ideal customers.

Place

Paw Print Post will be run as an online store, given the nature of the card-creation process and the need for digital images. Customers can place their orders at pawprintpost.ca, and will receive their orders at their home after the relevant shipping windows.

Logistics and operations plan

The logistics of creating and shipping Paw Print Post's products are a crucial differentiator for the business.

Suppliers

Jane has connected with several local print shops to gather prices for one-off prints, and given that each item needs to be made to order, sourcing cheaper options offshore in bulk is not an option for Paw Print Post.

Production

Once a customer sends their digital image, it takes about five minutes to fully process the image using a preset in Adobe Lightroom and further editing in Photoshop, and the local print shops offer a 1-to-2 day turnaround for custom orders. Each custom card will cost \$2 for set-up and \$0.75 for each print, so the costs for each bundle offered are:

- One card: \$2.75 (Price: \$9.50, Margin: \$6.75)
- Three cards: \$4.25 (Price: \$20.00, Margin: \$15.75)
- Six cards: \$6.50 (Price: \$30.00, Margin: \$23.50)

Facilities

Jane works out of her home office to process the images and ship orders, and all contractors maintain their own office facilities.

Equipment

While Paw Print Post already owns the required software and hardware to process the images, it's crucial to the business that both are maintained. In the case of a breakdown, both would need to be replaced immediately.

Shipping and fulfilment

Paw Print Post will fulfill orders using Shopify Shipping for the foreseeable future, and may look into local fulfillment options or contractors to help scale if orders take off, or during busy seasons.

Inventory

Given the custom nature of the cards, Paw Print Post does not hold inventory and all orders are created as they come in.

Financial plan

Paw Print Post has not yet completed their financial projections, but when they do they'll be filling out this [spreadsheet template](#) to create an income statement, balance sheet, and cash-flow statement.