CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SHOOTING RANGE

WWW.NSSF.ORG/RANGES
1. Join NSSF

Get more information on becoming a member of NSSF. As a member, you will receive special offers on our range publications while having the ability to reach out to members of our Range Advisory Committee and other NSSF members, who are willing to share their experiences and knowledge with you. Take advantage of the valuable resources NSSF has to offer. Order all the Facility Development Series (FDS) publications to help you get started with your project.

2. Create Your Own Business Plan

You will find the FDS publication on “How to Write a Shooting Range Business Plan” very helpful as you begin to establish the foundation upon which you develop and manage your business to success. Look at other recreational opportunities in the area as well as any other shooting ranges. Check to see if any existing ranges have recently closed and, if so, find out why. Determine where people within the community are spending their leisure dollars.

Know your location and the population number needed to support your range

- NSSF research delivers Customized Market Reports (CMR) that are tailored specifically to your trade area. Get more information on the CMR. Contact local government traffic engineering departments and ask about high-use roads and areas.

Know your Planning and Zoning Regulations

- Planning and Zoning regulations vary throughout the country, so it’s important for you to be proactive by educating yourself on the local regulations while building your community relations by becoming friendly with the members that make up the Planning and Zoning commission as well as with local building departments and their inspectors.

Explore Models of Success

- Refer to the Five and Four Star-rated shooting facilities listed on our website. Reach out to these ranges and, if possible, visit a couple to gain further knowledge on how to best approach your business venture. Visit as many successful shooting ranges as you can to get feel for what makes them successful.

Develop Your Successful Model

- Now that you have a better idea for what you want your business to offer, it is time to develop your own successful model. Use the Five Star rating system as a tool to identify the areas in which you would like to focus your efforts while ensuring that you have covered all the important aspects of your business model. Share this model with other successful business people and get their feedback (the whys and the why nots?)

Potential Site Review and Selection

- As urbanization continues to increase, choosing the ideal site for your shooting range becomes more challenging. Before selecting any sites make sure that you look at all the potential challenges the property could face now and later. These could be environmental issues, existing neighbors of the property that do not support the idea, or future developments that could surround the property. Contact local government and community-development departments and check into their long-range building plans as well as urban service areas.

- Research your local construction costs “capital development”

3. Secure Professional Services for Review and Support

- Legal
- Accounting
- Industry
Based on the work you have done up to this point, now the time has come to decide on whether this idea is a go. Step back and make your decision from a pure business perspective and not based on your love and experience as a shooter.

When the time comes to design the layout of your range you may want to consider reaching out to some of the contacts located on the suppliers and consultants section of our website. When selecting a design, make sure you look at the pros and cons of the different range systems/products that are available (steel traps vs. rubber traps, rail vs. cable retrievers, etc). With a design now in place the time has come to promote this project to those in your community and expand your support group. Showcase the design at town meetings and ask for feedback. See if there are any local contractors in the area that can assist in building your facility. Utilize the resources in your community as much as possible and make the community feel part of the project.

Budget and plan for expansion as much as funds and demand allow, but do not overbuild your shooting range. Look at the population of your area and build accordingly.

Hire happy, outgoing people. The right attitude is more important and trainable than years of range experience.

A well-prepared policies and procedures manual will help management communicate the vision, goals and objectives of the business or organization. You will find the FDS publication on “How to Write a Policies and Procedures Manual” very helpful as you begin to create your SOPs. This is another area where members can reach out to the NSSF’s Association of Shooting Ranges’ Advisory Committee members for their feedback and for some examples of their SOPs. Areas that should be covered include:

- Business and how its conducted
- Implementing an Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP)
- Safety
- OSHA
- State and local requirements

Is your business going to be a full shooting sports retail store or do you intend to just sell targets, ammo and eye and ear protection? Is a Point of Sale inventory-management system necessary and is it part of the budget? Have you set an advertising budget? Be conservative and build your inventory as your business grows.

Soft openings are a must so you can work the bugs out! This will also be a good time to gauge how much and what inventories to carry. Plan to have a silent opening for 2 to 4 weeks before ads are announced regarding the official grand opening.

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