

Start your own diet and weight loss business!

FabJob Guide to
**Become a
Weight Loss
Center Owner**



PAMELA WHITE

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1. Introduction

Congratulations on taking the first step to creating your successful career as a weight loss center owner.

Since you are reading this guide, it's easy to guess that you are someone who has either succeeded in a weight loss program yourself or you have spent time helping others to make the journey from overweight to healthy and active. You may be a nutritionist or dietitian, or simply have an interest in helping others in their weight loss efforts.

Setting up your own business as a weight loss center owner will allow you to help many different people of varying ages, all whose well-being may be dependent on your work with them. You don't have to be a reg-

istered dietitian or medical doctor to own and operate your own weight loss center. By following the steps outlined in this FabJob guide, you will be able to create a center that will make the most of your own gifts, skills and talents, and pull together a staff that will complement your own abilities.

There are many ways you can set up your weight loss center which we'll cover in subsequent chapters. By following the advice of those who have succeeded in the business upon which you are now embarking, you will be ready to compete in the billion dollar weight loss industry on your own terms, bringing health and energy to others.

1.1 A Growth Industry

Obesity is literally a huge problem for everyone from toddlers to the elderly. These people, your neighbors and friends, need someone who cares enough to tell them they deserve to be healthy, strong and active.

According to a study quoted at the Weight-control Information Network or WIN (<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics/index.htm>), about two-thirds of all Americans over the age of 20 are overweight or obese (defined as having a BMI >25). Between 1960 and 2004 when the study was carried out, the incidence of overweight and obesity more than doubled.

Despite recent efforts to increase acceptance of all body types, such as the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty (www.campaignforrealbeauty.com), dieting remains big business. A 2006 Gallup Poll found 56% of Americans (49% of men and 63% of women) said they want to lose weight, including 18% who want to lose "a lot" of weight.

According to IBIS World Industry Reports on Weight Loss Businesses there are nearly 71,000 individual diet and weight loss centers in the United States, and the number is growing each year. Why? Look at the number of news reports covering our daily battle with food, as we try to choose better nutrition over the junk foods we have become accustomed to snack on.

Magazines aimed at families and those geared toward women's interests are filled with ads for diet products like shakes, prepared frozen

meals, light desserts and other centers who are selling their services and products to dieters everywhere. All those persuasive ads filled with smiling thin models sell over 60 billion dollars worth of diet aids, diet counseling and fad diets each year. The desire to lose weight is out there, and with your weight loss center you will be able to guide and support others to successfully lose excess pounds and trade overeating for healthy activities.

1.2 Benefits of Being a Weight Loss Center Owner

Financial Security

With all the money that today's population is spending on looking good and discovering well-being, you will easily be able to capture a portion of the 60 billion dollars spent annually on weight loss. Offering a medically-recommended eating program plus providing the support of you and your staff will keep your clients returning for your products and your services. Plus, it's the type of business where you can watch your income and following increase every year.

Opportunity to Grow

Whether you start your center in a large office in a medical building or run it out of your studio apartment, you can expect to watch your business grow. You can open a weight loss center with only one or two part-time employees and grow the business at your own pace. Certainly, you can add on clients as you expand your networking and promotion efforts, but the time may come when you will want to, maybe even need to, open a second, third or fourth location to serve your clients. Weight loss counseling is a business that offers many opportunities to expand your services, products and the number of locations you'll need to serve your community.

Start Anywhere

Worried that you might need a big storefront to open a nutritional counseling and diet coaching business? Not so. This is one business you may be able to start online or in your home. All you need is a place for

your clients to sit, a scale for weigh-ins and a phone or email account for your phone and online consultations. If you need to send a client for lab tests, you can send her to your preferred medical lab or to her own doctor's office.

Help Others

Is there any greater joy than to know that you have helped someone to live her life to the fullest? Or helped her to live longer? Teaching others how to eat well and exercise for optimum health is a joy. You will get to watch your clients find their own path to health and will know that you've played a part in helping them realize their dreams. This will keep you focused on growing your business.

Keep Yourself Healthy

If you've battled your own bulge at one time (or maybe more than one time), you will be inspired daily by your clients. This will keep you thinking about what you eat and how often you work out. After all, you will want to be an example of healthy living so that you inspire your clients, as well.

Gain Respect

As you become the example of healthful living in your community, people will look to you for advice. Yes, they can come to your weight loss center for private or group coaching and counseling. You can also position yourself as the expert on emerging diet trends, obesity concerns and what diets to avoid. As the expert, you may be called by newspaper and television reporters seeking input on local news stories. You may also be contacted by national news agencies, all of which will raise your and your weight loss center's profile.

Be an Inspiration

If you've gone through your own weight loss journey, then you know what it takes to be successful. As the leader of your weight loss center, you will get to use that experience on a daily basis to inspire large numbers of people, many of whom will need different approaches to succeed at weight loss.

Network with VIPs

You will get to network with professionals all over your area. Businesses often allow employees to set up groups and programs to help each other lose weight and keep it off, and need someone to guide the group or help someone else get it going. Doctors will want to find trusted diet coaches to refer their patients to for extra help in losing weight. Joining local chambers of commerce and offering to make speeches to groups will get you noticed, and will allow you to get to know interesting and influential individuals in your town. You may even land a celebrity client or two!

1.3 Inside This Guide

Chapter 2 (*“Weight Loss Center Basics”*) describes different types of weight loss centers, and explains the many services and products you can offer. You can start small with one service and no products, or a few services and a selection of products to sell. You’ll also discover what the job of weight loss center owner involves on a daily basis, and the roles of other weight loss center personnel.

Chapter 3 (*“Getting Ready”*) will show you ways to get the experience and learn the skills you need to open a successful weight loss center. You may be surprised to find that you don’t have to leave home to take classes, do research and set up your first diet group. You’ll also find ways to check out the competition and model what they do right and revise what they don’t do as well. You will find out about groups you can join to learn about nutrition and dieting, and find other weight loss center owners to network with.

Chapter 4 (*“Starting Your Weight Loss Center”*) offers the information you need to actually set up your weight loss center. It gives advice on choosing your niche in the weight loss industry, explores options for starting your business (including buying an existing business, franchising, or starting a brand new business), how to choose a name for your new business, and investigates legal matters such as choosing a business legal structure and other important legal considerations. In this chapter you will also find the information you need to write a business plan and work out the financial aspects of your business, including financial planning and where to find financing for your new business venture.

Chapter 5 (“*Setting Up Your Weight Loss Center*”) takes you through finding the perfect location, understanding your lease, and how to lay out the weight loss center. You’ll also discover ways to display merchandise for sale, how to create window displays, and more. We’ll also walk you through the types of equipment you’ll need for your weight loss center and where to buy it. Finally, we’ll look at where to find merchandise you can sell and where to find your inventory.

Chapter 6 (“*Running Your Business*”) covers all you need to know about creating a procedures manual that will keep your staff up-to-date on how you want the business to operate. You will also find resources for tracking clients and your inventory of products. We explore some pricing concepts in the chapter, including formulas and guidelines for pricing your services and products. You’ll also learn some basic financial management concepts and when and how to hire the right people to help you grow your weight loss center.

Chapter 7 (“*Getting and Keeping Customers*”) offers practical, and often inexpensive, ways to attract weight loss clients and keep them coming back. You’ll learn how to get referrals, ways to get noticed fast and how to promote your business through a variety of techniques including advertising, events, and free publicity. Finally, we’ll look at customer service and what you need to do to keep those clients coming back.

By following the steps in this guide, you will be well on your way to living your dream of opening your own successful weight loss center.