

Bark Busters – dog training franchise

Thinking of buying a puppy? Bothered by a barking dog? Want your dog to be better trained? Who will you call? Bark Busters!

Bark Busters Pty Ltd pioneered a unique method of dog training in the home. As specialists in dog training and animal behavioural psychology the owners now have 40 offices in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom and United States.

Bark Busters began in 1989 and grew out of ten year's experience with the RSPCA in Wollongong, NSW where the owners saw first hand the problems people had in handling their dogs. Their experience led to the development of a technique for training dogs that worked very quickly and was extremely effective. They provide in home training for dogs and their owners and a "life of the dog guarantee".

In addition to their unique product, Bark Busters has adopted a professional approach to their business including the development of a business plan, training manuals, videos and marketing strategies. Marketing strategies include marketing through pet related outlets, developing close relationships with veterinarians and developing a professional telephone answering script for booking lessons. They also encourage on-going evaluation of the service through client response forms.

By 1994 the business had grown so much that the owners began to franchise to other states in Australia and then overseas. The annual turnover is now \$1.5 million with four full time employees, a national manager and a franchisees/licenses representative. There are franchises in every state of Australia as well as in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, United States, Canada and Japan. Currently one third of turnover comes from overseas, but this is expected to grow rapidly to an anticipated 85 per cent due to the size of overseas markets, especially the United States and Japan.

Bark Busters began to export by locating people overseas with the necessary skills and enthusiasm who were prepared to become Bark Busters franchisees. Overseas Master Franchisees are given a stake in the company and encouraged to attend Australian conferences and training programs. In New Zealand the current Master Franchisee began their relationship with Bark Busters as a client. They were so impressed with the results of the training program that they established their own franchise and eventually became the Master Franchisee for New Zealand. Bark Busters NZ have responded to a recent anti dog problem, caused by dog attacks on people, by providing educational and public awareness campaigns at shows, child care centres and schools.

As Bark Busters entered overseas markets they made some modifications to meet the different conditions. In the United States, for example, the Master Franchisee is paid a lower percentage of the earnings (8 per cent compared to 13 per cent in Australia), which is in keeping with the local market. This is acceptable to the Master Franchisee as the higher population should offset their smaller of percentage. The business anticipates that the overseas market will continue to expand as more and more dog owners discover the unique and effective training methods offered by Bark Busters. www.barkbusters.com.au.