



Cary couple brings pet grooming to your home

[By Jameel Naqvi](#) | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 3/3/2010

John and Pam Plyler have both found success in the corporate world.

But especially in light of the recent roller coaster ride of the American economy, the Cary couple knows that nothing is certain - and they couldn't count on their corporate careers sustaining them forever.

"We're both very satisfied in our current corporate jobs, but we both know we don't want to be doing this until we're 65," John Plyler said. "We wanted to expand our horizons a little bit. When you own a business, you do everything."

So in late 2007, the Plylers decided to diversify. They approached a consultant for help launching a business that could earn them a measure of financial security and perhaps an early retirement.

Both of them love animals. Both love customer service. So they settled on a business that would combine their affinity for pets with their business skills: a mobile pet grooming business.

Fortunately, the Plylers didn't have to reinvent the wheel. Aussie Pet Mobile, created in 1996 in Sydney, Australia, already had a business model that worked: friendly, personable groomers who come to your door in customized vans and offer full-service pet grooming right at your doorstep.

In December 2007, the Plylers opened up the newest Chicago-area franchise of Aussie Pet Mobile. At first, business was slow, but over the years they have built a loyal customer base, mainly through referrals and a marketing campaign that stressed the personal touch they provide.

"It's comparable to when doctors used to make house calls," said Loraine Wilder, the first groomer the Plylers hired. "We give (pet owners) a full report. It gives them a comfort level they don't get when they go into a shop. That makes us unique compared to everyone else out there."

Along the way, the husband and wife team expanded the area they serve, added a second van and hired three trained groomers to handle the growing number of appointments.

Now, their service area stretches from Huntley in the west to Long Grove in the east and from Woodstock in the north to Dundee Township in the south.

"The higher quality of care you provide for your dog minimizes health issues, improves the quality of their lives," Pam says. "The customers that use our service - once they use us once and they feel the difference in quality, they say I will never go back to a groom shop."

Still, John says they're not where they wanted to be by now. Times are tough, and people have cut back on luxuries like pet grooming.

But the Plylers see growth in their future. They hope to get a third van soon. Eventually, they'd like to double the geographic territory they cover and earn enough to replace one of their incomes.

For now, they're enjoying the personal relationships they've made with their customers and groomers and the satisfaction of earning money from something they love.

"They're very passionate about animals," Wilder said of her employers. "They love the business. They love what they're doing."

To schedule an appointment with a local groomer, call 1-800-PETMOBILE or visit aussiepetmobile.com.

