

Doo The Right Thing

Despite names such as Love Me Doo, Doody Calls, Beyond the Call of Doody, and Queen Scoopers, and tag lines such as, "If your dog can poop it, we can scoop it," dog waste removal services aren't all fun and games. In fact, there's serious money to be made. Debbie Conn, who lives north of Longmont in Carter Lake, bought Scoopy Doo's 10 years ago so she could have a flexible schedule to help balance work with family. As her own boss, she could set her own hours and still make a decent living.

Which is not to say Conn doesn't have a sense of humor about what she does for a living, as her personalized "No Crap" license plates attest. She's already decided that if she ever expands her business and adds another truck, its license plates will say "D Crap R."

Her "No Crap" plates have proven to be one of the best marketing tools she's found yet. "Those plates have given me more attention than any of the signs I've put up. People will drive by and honk and give me a thumbs up. My friends told me I'd never be allowed to get the plates, but I sent the DMV my business card, a newsletter, and wrote a letter describing what I do for a living, and I had no problem at all."

Before Conn bought the business, she was working long hours selling cars. "I stunk at it and I was away from home for long stretches. I was looking for something that I could do so I could be there for my family. That's when I saw an ad in the paper for the business. It was the best investment I ever made."

The only people who ever gave Conn a hard time about what she does for a living are her two sons, who were 7 and 11 at the time she launched her business.

"The kids always hated it. They complained about how embarrassing it was." Conn jokes that when her kids misbehaved, she would threaten to tell all their classmates what their mother did for a living if they didn't shape up.

Though her job may be unusual, like any entrepreneur, Conn faces the challenges of receiving payment from delinquent customers, market-



Debbie Conn

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ing her company, and considering whether to take on the headaches of expansion.

Conn says she could make more money if she had more cutthroat business practices – she knows people in the same business who make as much as \$100,000 a year. But Conn likes to charge reasonable rates (\$5 per yard) and doesn't want to expend her energy making angry phone calls or charging late fees. "I count on people to be honest." If people don't pay, she'll eventually stop giving service. "My best customers are hard-working, busy people."

As a dog lover with four dogs, Conn doesn't

mind canines' odoriferous contributions to society. Every day, she takes the fruits of her labor to Colorado Recycling, where it gets mixed with grass clippings and leaves to make compost.

As for future ambitions, Conn thinks she would make a great spokesperson for Glad bags. "These bags can really hold the shit!" she demonstrates. She is also ready to be a pitchman for handiwipes, another important tool of the dog-waste removal trade.

— Theresa Alan
For more information about Scoopy Doo's, contact Debbie Conn at 303-678-8860.