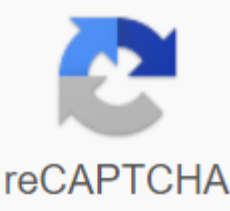




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Helms auto repair manuals

Opening a mechanic shop can be a rewarding career, especially if you want to do something with your hands. People need their cars to get around, so there's always a need to keep them running smoothly. If you want to open an auto shop in the right way, getting started will take a little bit of time, some planning and solid planning. You don't technically need any training to open an auto shop, but your business will garner some respect if your mechanics are certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence. Of course, you can always hire mechanics who followed this path, but odds are that if you are interested in opening a mechanic shop, you are a mechanic yourself. To get ASE certified, you need two years of training on the job. You can do any of this through formal education, like a business school or community college, or you can quickly track your way by taking an ASE-accredited certificate program. Once you've accumulated two years of credit, you have to pass a written test, and that's not the easiest, either. Only two-thirds of the population pass the exam on their first attempt. It's true that you can succeed as an all-around general mechanic, but stores that specialize can actually bring in more customers if they play it smart. Maybe you live in an area with heavily congested highways and confusing turn-offs. Wouldn't you want to open a mechanics store that specializes in collision in an area where collisions are likely to happen? Or maybe you notice that there are few stores that specialize in transmissions in the area. You can fill this hole. With ASE certification, you can choose a specialty from specific car manufacturers for things like truck equipment, heavy machinery and collision repair. If you want to open an auto store, know that the location is everything. Your business is unlikely to succeed if you choose to set up your business in an area with few cars or where few people drive. For example, a mechanic who opens a shop on Bald Head Island in North Carolina would surely fail unless he's in the golf car business because the island doesn't allow cars. For a traditional mechanic shop, a location near a highway or a place where people regularly break down is your best bet. Also make sure you have enough space for all the lifts you need and to park customer cars. Opening auto shops is not cheap. You'll probably spend about \$4,000 per lift and \$4,000 on related insurance each year. Your tools can cost about \$15,000 just to get started, and a diagnostics machine alone is \$5,000 to \$10,000. With all the starting costs, you can spend about \$25,000 to \$75,000 just to open your store, and it can skyrocket if you buy your instead of renting it. Overall, this is not much compared to most companies, but it is certainly not a small chunk of change. If you don't have this kind of funding funding you might consider turning to a bank or Small Business Administration for a loan. Make sure you have a solid business plan in place to get the absolute best prices. Every company must undergo the same legal hoops. You need to form a legal business unit (LLC, S Corp, etc.), register with the IRS and get an employer identification number so you can pay taxes. You must also obtain a business license from your local government and get the necessary insurance. For an auto shop, you must have a general liability plan, but you must also have workers' compensation if you plan to hire employees. Commercial car insurance is not required, but it is a good idea. This protects your business if any of your employees get into an accident while driving a customer's car around your lot. Once you have the right insurance, you can start hiring employees. Auto stores generally make most of their money from 10 popular services, which averaged out at \$144.10 per job. This includes: Oil and Lube (which accounts for about 20 jobs per week on average) Alignments Diagnostics Brake services A/C repair Refrigerant recycling/recharging Electronic engine control services Emission Control services Replacement of spark plugs Generator repair and replacement Make sure your prices remain competitive. Air conditioning services generally rake in the most at an average of \$276 per job. Brake services come in second place at an average of \$223 per job. Oil and lube are the cheapest at an average of \$30 per job. An auto shop won't succeed if no one knows it's there. Advertise your store online with services like Yelp, Google and Angie's List. Also consider calling towing companies and giving them incentives to refer customers because they are after dealing with broken down cars. Coupons for discounted services, like the \$10 oil change, will help bring in new customers who may be repeating customers. Our library of auto workshops provides contact information and consumer reviews to help you find the best local mechanics. 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