



Raining Cats & Dogs

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Arizona Commerce Authority
1700 W. Washington St.
Executive Tower Ste. 600
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Arizona Commerce Authority:

The team here at Raining Cats & Dogs was delighted to receive your letter informing us that we are eligible to apply for your \$5,000 customized job training grant for contributing to the state's Job Training Fund.

Now we would like to take this opportunity to educate you on how our company could use this grant to grow as a business.

Background

Raining Cats & Dogs began as a small brick-and-mortar natural pet supply shop in the suburbs of New York in 2015. When the pandemic hit in 2020, we realized that we needed to expand our business online so that customers could place orders for pick up or delivery. We found this to be a booming success, and as our online business grows, our customers have been making requests for online customer service options. Receiving this grant would allow us to train our employees in both online etiquette as well as online chat software for customer service.

Our company has been hoping to expand to include online chat support, but we have been unable to fund the training for our employees. This grant would allow us to purchase a training course for our employees and broaden our horizons as a business. In order to stay competitive in the market, adding online chat support would help maintain our business while also allowing room for new growth.

Proposed Training Plan

We here at Raining Cats & Dogs have purchased online chat software from XYZ Company to expand our online business in a new direction. XYZ Company offers a training program for businesses that are new to their software, and we would like to utilize the custom training option that they have made available to us. Unfortunately, the training program from XYZ company only includes enough employees to train the number of staff requested, and it is



our responsibility to rent a facility, purchase materials, rent training equipment, and pay for the three employees' wages.

The custom training program that is available consists of four days of training, for two rounds of employees so that we do not need to close our business for the day to complete training. Three employees from XYZ Company then come to our rented facility to work with our employees to master the use of the online chat software that we purchased. One of XYZ Company's employees leads the course while the other two employees walk the room and assist with any issues that may arise during the training process. Employees are given binders full of printed materials to follow along with throughout the course and then to keep in case they need a 'refresher' at any point while working with or troubleshooting the software in the future.

Included in the customized training program is a section on online etiquette, or 'netiquette'. This will teach our employees how to use proper tone and voice when writing to our customers online. Accessing employee accounts in the system, booting up and running the software, and safely closing out of the program are demonstrated via roleplaying with the staff from XYZ company. The training program also includes troubleshooting information, should our employees run into any technical difficulties when working with the software or one of our customers.

Post-Training Plan

Following our training event, we will roll out the software as soon as we are able to get it installed and running on all of our computers at the shop, estimated timeframe being 2-3 weeks. On our first day of software roll-out, XYZ Company will send an employee to our shop to assist with any technical difficulties or bugs that arise. For now, we will have only on-site employees working the chat software, so our live-chat service will be available between the hours of 9am and 9pm each day of the week. In the future, we would like to allow employees working the chat software to work remotely if they choose to do so. This could expand our hours of availability as employees could work outside of normal shop hours. Select above-average performing employees will be selected to train future employees on the chat software when onboarding with the company.

When implementing WebEx into our company a few months back, we ran into some issues with employees using the software in a tone that was more casual than professional. In order to correct this, we have had a company meeting to address professionalism and 'netiquette'. We will be hosting regular meetings to follow up on this and make sure no corrective actions need to be taken in the future or with our new chat software.

Qualifications

Here at Raining Cats & Dogs, our employees undergo customer service training before they start working directly with customers. Initially, employees are trained in face-to-face customer service before then being trained to work with customers via the telephone. This training program would allow us to certify our employees in online customer service



interactions, since there are key differences in working with people face-to-face, over the telephone, and over a live-chat service. Employees are also used to working with technology since we implemented WebEx several months ago and use it exclusively for work communications.

Costs

To prepare for this training course, we would like to purchase 26 binders to fill with printed training materials. This will include one binder for each employee being trained, and one copy to keep behind the register at the shop. We will also be purchasing copy paper for training materials, highlighters, pens, and sticky notes. Additionally, we will also be renting 15 laptops for the training course as employees will be training over the course of two days and will not all be in the same cohort. Due to the size of the group, we do not have room to host the training course at the shop and will need to rent a conference room with technological capabilities. This is all in addition to the course fee we will be paying along with the XYZ Company's employees' wages.

Below you will find a table addressing the allocation of funds for our training program should our business receive this generous grant.

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
Training Materials & Supplies	26 binders for training materials, highlighters and pens, copy paper, sticky notes.	\$500
Training Facility Rental	Conference room rental big enough for ~30 people for training to take place.	\$1000
Course Fee	Fee to pay for XYZ company's training program.	\$500
Trainer Wages	Wages for three employees from XYZ company to come train employees.	\$1500
Training Equipment Rental	Laptop rental for 25 employees to complete training course.	\$1500
Total		\$5000

This brings our estimated costs of implementing a training course and new software into the business just at the \$5,000 grant limit.

All of us here at Raining Cats & Dogs are humbled at the opportunity to apply for this customized job training grant offered by the Arizona Commerce Authority. Coming from such small beginnings, we never would have expected the growth and opportunities that have come to us in recent years. A grant such as this could help take our business to the next level and stay competitive in an extremely tight marketplace. Without this grant



money, we would have to delay the implementation of our new software by about a year before it is feasible for us to work it into our operating budget.

We have outlined our estimated expenses and plans for completing a training course but are always welcome to and receptive of outside feedback. We are very grateful for this opportunity and look forward to hearing back from those of you at the Arizona Commerce Authority.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth

Morrison

Elizabeth Morrison, CEO, Raining Cats & Dogs

