

## Career Spotlight of the Month



**Name:** Shawn Marc Amerlinck, RVT

**Current Job:** Owner of [My Pet's Butler](#) (Professional In Home Pet Care, Dog Walking/Pet Sitting Company)

### Q&A with Shawn

**OAVT: Where did you go to school and what made you decide to take a Veterinary Technology program?**

Shawn: St. Clair College. I had chosen the program because I enjoy living on a border city. My first impression of St. Clair College was a positive one and I envisioned myself residing in Windsor long term. Windsor has a beautiful waterfront and I enjoy the multitude of events that take place throughout the year.

Of course, my passion for caring for animals and people's pets in particular gives me a sense of fulfillment. I chose a career where I could make a difference in people's lives, their pets' lives, and also educate people on knowledgeable pet care.

**OAVT: You are currently your own boss! When did you decide to open your own business?**

Shawn: I opened [My Pet's Butler](#) on Dec. 1, 2011. I knew absolute nothing about opening a business. It was an exciting venture I was about to take on, but at the same time it was a feeling of restlessness.

I researched, studied the demographics, looked at my competition and listened to the public when I was employed at the animal hospitals. I was able to figure out a niche where I knew I could make this business work, successfully thrive, and at the same time continue my passion in helping people with their pets...all in the comfort of their own home.

I chose to enroll in the SEA Program (Self-Employment Assistance Program) to further my knowledge on how to run and operate a successful business. I was one of eight that graduated from that program. The SEA program gave me all the tools, resources and knowledge to jump into the world of becoming an entrepreneur.

**OAVT: What do you love about your job?**

Shawn: Meeting new people, providing a level of service to pet owners above and beyond their expectations and “raising the bar” in the pet industry. Most of all, I very much enjoy receiving a good dose of companionship from my clients' pets on a daily basis.

**OAVT: What made you decide to go into business for yourself?**

Shawn: After being employed at two of the most reputable animal hospitals in Windsor and working with some great people, I began to listen to most of the clients during appointments and their concerns. I had been receiving personal requests from clients to perform nail trimming, grooming and other routine tasks. After having conversations with people over the years, I thought that I could bring the services a Registered Veterinary Technician could perform to them, in the comfort of their own home.

The guilty feeling most pet owners have when they leave their dog and cat for boarding was evident on their faces, so I decided to retire the scrubs and replace them with a professional looking uniform. The long hours, being confined to a clinic setting and being on the verge of “burnout” lead me to take the leap and set my sights on becoming “my own boss.”

**OAVT: What other jobs have you had in this field?**

Shawn: I was employed at Forest Glade Animal Hospital & Tecumseh Animal Hospital for 18 years. I did shift work at 24 hr Walker Road Animal Hospital dealing with critical care patients. I volunteer at Windsor Essex County Humane Society, and participate in local pet charities and events.

**OAVT: What advice would you give to RVTs who have an idea and want to go into business on their own – but may be too afraid to make the jump?**

Shawn:

- Do your research
- Check out your demographics. Is there competition?
- Is it viable? Can I make a living at this or is it just a hobby?
- Do you have a start-up fund?
- Ask questions to random people. Do a survey
- Accept feedback and criticism
- Prepare yourself for investing a lot of your time and personal sacrifices
- Set goals and reward yourself when you reach them
- Positive attitude
- Dress for success
- Failure is not an option

Most of all, your clients and their pets are your business. Treat your clients, their pets and their homes with respect. Creating a bond, interacting with their pets, gaining your clients' trust and loyalty are all factors which will lead to success; after all you are in their home!