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How Many Personal Chefs Are There?

As of 2015, there are approximately 6,400 Personal Chef Services operating in the US. Virtually all of these are sole proprietor type businesses. While you will find partners and/or multi-chef operations, by and large this is an industry where a single owner/operator seems to be the most efficient operational model, with good reason. First, let's return to the number of personal chefs. Since the Personal Chef Service inception in the early 90's (1991 to be exact), tens of thousands of people have used their own culinary talents to form a viable successful business. So why after 20+ years are there only 6,400 and not 20,000 you ask – and the question is quite a logical one – people, especially up until around 2005, were entering the field at ages 45+, after already being involved in the workforce environment for many years. The reasons people ended another career to become a personal chef are varied, but the fact was that personal chefs tended to be aged 45-65, and about 70% of those being women. Most of these people already had monetary issues fairly well sorted out, and this step was more of a way to get out of corporate America, still earn decent money, and do something they enjoyed immensely. These people never intended to make their Personal Chef Service a 30 year venture. The normal lifespan of a PCS was 4-7 years. While there are many personal chefs who break that mold, this business lifespan was quite typical. So as 1,000 new people entered the field during one year, as an example, 700 others may have greatly reduced or ended their service in that same period. The field of active personal chefs was fluid, but steadily growing. Today, the entry age has become younger, and people are making this more permanent rather than as a final career stop. We'll look at who becomes a personal chef and why in another segment. And for the record, when we speak of active personal chefs, we're speaking of those individuals who consider this a full time effort. You'll find thousands of people who have other primary careers who dabble in the personal chef arena one day a week, or more for fun than profit. Maybe think of them as hobbyist. The 6,000 figure is a verifiable number of active services, where that person's primary "occupation" is that of a personal chef, even if he/she only elects to actively cook 3 days a week.

