The Market Verdict™

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE



IDEA INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT · THE OUTSIDE READ

Brindle

An idea for an app that helps independent dog groomers stop losing money to no-shows. Is there a real job, and will anyone pay?

IIA

Startup · Pilot Edition · October 2026 · Specimen: fictional idea

Brindle is a fictional idea, created to show the format.

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01 · THE SHORT VERSION

The job is real. It isn't booking. It's deposits.

THE IDEA AS PITCHED

A booking app built for independent dog groomers: calendar, reminders, client and pet records.

WHAT THE PUBLIC EVIDENCE SUPPORTS

A way to take a deposit at booking, so a no-show costs the client, not the groomer. Booking is already solved well enough.

GO, WITH ONE CONDITION Groomers must pay to switch from the general booking apps they already use. That is the test, and it costs almost nothing to run.

Three things worth knowing

1. **Some groomers already pay to solve this.** Of 120 independent groomers' websites in three metro areas, 23 (19%) take a card deposit at booking, using general salon software built for hair salons [1].
2. **The complaint is everywhere, from different people.** 64 threads about no-shows in the largest groomers' forum in the last 12 months, started by 52 different people [2].
3. **Full business suites are the wrong answer.** Pet-business suites average 3.4 stars from solo groomers. The most common complaint is "too much for a one-person business" [5].

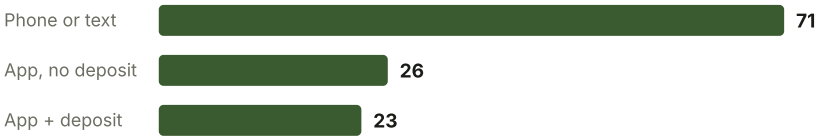
WHAT TO DO FIRST

Before writing any code, offer 40 groomers a set-up-by-hand deposit service for $29 for the first month. Count who pays.

About this sample. Brindle is a fictional idea. Every groomer, forum post, competitor, number and source in this assessment was created to show what an Idea Intelligence Assessment looks like for a startup with no customers yet (the Startup edition). Any resemblance to a real business is unintended.

Most groomers manage no-shows with a phone and hope

How the 120 groomers we sampled take bookings, from their public websites and booking pages [1]:



What they do	The job it stands in for	Where it fails
A paper diary, and reminder texts by hand	Remember who's coming, and nudge them	Time: forum posters describe 30–60 minutes a day on reminders [2]. No-shows still cost the full slot.
A general salon booking app	Booking and reminders, sometimes deposits	Built for people, not pets: no pet records, and it asks for a "stylist" [2][4]. Deposits work, but setup is confusing.
Overbooking on purpose	Insurance against no-shows	Outcome: when everyone turns up, the groomer works late or turns a dog away [2].
A part-time receptionist	Calls, confirmations, rescheduling	Money: rarely affordable for a one-person business. Two of 120 sites list a receptionist [1].
Nothing	Absorbing the loss	Money: the reported loss is one to three slots a week [2][3].

People do something about the problem today. That counts in the idea's favor: there is a habit to replace and spend to capture.

03 · WHERE MONEY ALREADY GOES

Groomers already pay for part of this

Who pays today	What for	Evidence and amount
Groomers using general salon apps	Booking, reminders, deposits	$30–$60 a month on public pricing pages [4]. Used by 49 of 120 groomers sampled (26 + 23) [1].
Groomers using pet-business suites	Everything, including kennel and payroll	$99–$149 a month [5]. Few solo groomers: 3 of 120 [1].
Groomers absorbing no-shows	Nothing; the loss is the cost	Reported in a regional association survey: a median of 2 no-shows a week, at an average appointment of $85 [3]. That's about $170 a week, reported, not observed.

CAPTURE OR CREATE?

Mostly capture. 49 of 120 groomers already pay $30–$60 a month for software that partly does this job. Brindle would have to win that spend from an app they already know: a switching cost. That's easier than creating new spend, and harder than it looks.

04 · WHAT PEOPLE SAY

In their own words

> *"Three no-shows on a Saturday is my whole profit for the day."*

Groomers' forum post, March 2026 [2]

> *"The app keeps asking for the stylist's name. I'm the only stylist and the client is a poodle."*

Groomers' forum post, June 2026 [2]

> *"Since I started taking a $20 deposit, no-shows went from three a week to maybe one a month."*

Groomers' forum post, August 2026 [2]. Reported behavior, one person.

05 · WHO ELSE DOES THIS

Three kinds of competitor, none built for this job

Competitor	How they work	Evidence
SalonBook (general salon app)	Booking, reminders and optional deposits, built for hair salons.	Used by 31 of 120 groomers sampled [1]. 14 forum threads complain about “stylist” fields and no pet records [2].
PetSuite Pro (business suite)	Full software for kennels, daycare and grooming.	3.4 stars from solo groomers on a software review site, 88 reviews [5].
Payment links (general)	Groomers send a payment link by text to take a deposit by hand.	Described in 9 forum threads as a workaround [2]. Free or low-fee, but manual.

06 · THREE POSSIBLE ANSWERS

What is Brindle, really?

We wrote three genuinely different answers and, before looking, what would show each one wrong.

Possible answer	Wrong if	What we found	Verdict
A. A deposit tool for groomers who lose money to no-shows	Deposit-takers still report as many no-shows, or nobody pays for deposits	23 of 120 already pay for software to take deposits [1]. Posters who take them report far fewer no-shows [2].	HOLDS FOR ONE GROUP Groomers with full books
B. A better booking app for groomers	Groomers using general apps are mostly content with booking	Complaints about general apps are about pet records and setup, not booking itself [2].	NOT TESTED YET
C. An all-in-one business suite for groomers	Solo groomers adopt suites and rate them well	3 of 120 use one [1], and those reviews average 3.4 stars, citing complexity [5].	WRONG For solo groomers

Is “paying to stop no-shows” a real signal?

The behavior we are testing: independent groomers paying for software so they can take a deposit at booking.

Check	Answer	Evidence
Repeated	YES	23 separate groomers’ businesses, in three metro areas [1]. The 64 forum threads are complaints, not the behavior, so they don’t add to this count.
Consistent	YES	The same specific behavior each time: a card deposit taken when the client books.
Costly	YES	They pay $30–$60 a month [4] and accept the friction of asking clients for money up front.
Lasting	YES	Archived versions show the deposit policy on 9 of the 23 sites for more than 12 months [6]. The other 14 are more recent.

All four are Yes, so it’s a real signal, for a group: groomers busy enough to risk asking for a deposit. What it doesn’t show is whether they will switch to a new app to do it.

08 · HOW BIG IT COULD BE

Honest about what we can count

Layer	Figure and working
Groomers in the three metros we sampled	120 with a website [1]. Groomers without one are invisible to this method.
Already paying for deposits	23 (19% of 120) [1]
Paying for an app without deposits	26 (22%): the next group to reach [1]
National figure	Not enough data. We found no reliable count of independent groomers that matches this group, and we haven't substituted a figure from a neighboring category.

09 · THE ROUGH ECONOMICS

Illustrative numbers, with the working shown

Item	Working	Per month
Price	Below the $30–$60 general apps [4], for deposits and reminders only	$29.00
Text reminders	About 300 texts a month for a busy groomer, at an illustrative $0.0083 each: 300 × $0.0083	$2.49
Hosting and support	Illustrative	$1.50
Gross margin	($29.00 − $2.49 − $1.50) ÷ $29.00 = $25.01 ÷ $29.00	86%
Not included	Card fees (passed to the client), the cost of finding customers (unknown until experiment 1), founder time	—

Illustrative, as of October 2026, subject to change. The missing number is what it costs to win a groomer from an app they already use.

Don’t start the second until the first has a clear result

1. **Hand-run deposits, paid.**

   3 WEEKS · COST: ABOUT 30 HOURS OF FOUNDER TIME, $0 SPEND

   Tests: will groomers pay for deposits alone? Offer 40 groomers a hand-run deposit service at $29 for the first month. **Go on** if 15 or more pay. **Stop** if fewer than 6 pay.

2. **The switch.**

   8 WEEKS · COST: FOUNDER TIME PLUS A SIMPLE PROTOTYPE

   Tests: will they leave their current app? Among payers who use a general app, count how many cancel it within 60 days. **Go on** if at least half do. **Stop** if almost none do: then Brindle is a feature, not a product.

3. **Month three.**

   12 WEEKS FROM FIRST PAYMENT · COST: FOUNDER TIME

   Tests: does it last? **Go on** if 70% or more are still paying in month three. **Stop** if fewer than 40% are.

11 · GO OR NOT YET

Go, with one condition: they pay to switch

The job is real, people already pay for part of it, and the signal passes all four checks. The open question is switching, and experiment 1 answers it in three weeks for almost no money.

What would change this

- **To Not yet:** fewer than 6 of 40 groomers pay in experiment 1, or fewer than a quarter of payers cancel their old app in experiment 2.
- **To Go:** 15 or more of 40 pay, and half of those leave their old app within 60 days.
- **Rethink the product:** groomers pay, but only want deposits added to the app they already use. Then partnering beats building.

12 · OUR PREDICTION, ON RECORD

What we expect to happen

ILLUSTRATIVE · RECORDED OCTOBER 2026 · CHECK DATE OCTOBER 2027

By October 2027, the share of independent groomers in the three sampled metros who take a deposit at booking will rise from 19% to at least 25%, whether or not Brindle exists.

Right if: 25% or more of a fresh sample of at least 100 groomer websites in the same metros take deposits.

Wrong if: the share is 19% or lower.

Inconclusive if: fewer than 100 websites can be sampled, the sampling method changes, or a major booking app makes deposits the default, which would change what the number means.

Recorded before the outcome is known. Illustrative, because this is a fictional idea: it shows the format of a prediction, not a real forecast.

What this rests on

What we could not see

This assessment is based on publicly available evidence only. It does not include internal financials, customer-level transaction data, or management-provided documents. We did not see your workbook.

What we are least sure about

- Groomers with websites may differ from those without. The sample leaves out the second group.
- The size of the no-show loss comes from a self-reported survey, not records.
- “Deposits cut no-shows” is what groomers report. We haven’t seen their booking records.
- Three metro areas may not represent the country.

Sources

1. Websites and public booking pages of 120 independent dog groomers in three metro areas, sampled September–October 2026.
2. The largest online forum for independent groomers: 64 threads about no-shows, Oct 2025–Oct 2026, started by 52 different people; plus threads on booking apps and payment links.
3. Regional groomers’ association, 2026 member survey, 310 respondents (self-reported).
4. Public pricing pages of three general salon booking apps, accessed October 2026.
5. Software review site, PetSuite Pro reviews from solo groomers, 88 reviews, 2025–2026.
6. Web archive: earlier versions of the 23 groomers’ booking pages, 2024–2026.

Specimen: Brindle, its groomers, forums, competitors and sources are fictional, created to show the format and tone of an Idea Intelligence Assessment. The Market Verdict™ does not claim omniscience, internal access, or definitive knowledge of customer intent. It reads publicly available behavioral evidence and applies a structured interpretation framework to it.

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