

TURN ANY HOBBY INTO A PART-TIME BUSINESS

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If you are planning on beginning a business, your best bet is to start out part-time while you are still earning a full-time income at your present job. If you are like most people who are existing from payday to payday - you don't have a lot of money to invest in a full-time business. No need to worry! Just use your favorite hobby as your business base and grow from there! There's no telling where you'll be at 2 or 3 years down the road. Perhaps you can even tell your present boss to "take that job and shove it." Wouldn't that be great?

Using your present hobby or favorite pastime as your business base has many benefits. Why? Because ANY business you decide to become involved in should be doing something you LOVE _ something you believe in _ something that you would work at NO MATTER what income it would generate. This will give you the stamina to see your business through the beginning hard times and times when there is more work to do than you can handle. We all know the feeling of doing a job that we hate to do. There is no way we can give it 110% of our abilities because we procrastinate getting through it and just want to get it over with. That's why it is vitally important to dearly love the product or service you have chosen to build your business around.

Do you like cooking? Start a recipe newsletter for others who like the same thing and sell your recipes by publishing a simple booklet. Do you enjoy making crafts? Sell them through mail order (be sure and mark up the price for shipping and handling). Do you enjoy working on cars? Print and distribute flyers in your neighborhood listing your prices. Offer a coupon discount for the customer to use on their first auto repair job. Do you enjoy writing? Write a small booklet or how-to manual and sell it through mail order or to multi-level enthusiasts. Do you enjoy computer programming? Write a program and sell through shareware groups or even to mail order computer owners.

Yes - just about anything you love doing can be magically transformed into a business opportunity for you. Some items may only sell well in your neighborhood, while some products and services do well in mail order. If you decide to sell through mail order, all you need to do is write a simple ad and have it typeset. Start out with a smaller 1-inch, 2-inch or 3-inch ad. Ask the customer to send a "first-class stamp" or "\$1.00" for more information. When they write you, include a 8 1/2x11 sheet detailing your prices. Make sure you have a small order form to make it easy to order your product or service. And of course _ include a cover letter stating that you appreciate their inquiry and look forward to doing business with them in the near future. You'd be surprised how many sales have been lost because a business didn't take the time to write a cover letter and personalize the mailing.

Also, start educating yourself by reading and researching other home-based businesses. Before I opened up my business I read national publications like "Small Business Opportunities," "Entrepreneur," "Home Office Computing," and "Spare Time Magazine." Although there were some full page ads in there filled with hype (claiming to make me \$1 million dollars with a sheet of paper) _ the articles are excellent. Don't spend more than \$3 for information in the beginning of your business because if a company is legitimate you should be able to call them and discuss the opportunity over the phone with them. Businesses that claim to put you in business overnight should never demand a large amount of money from you. On the contrary _ legitimate businesses have nothing to hide and will not charge you more than a few dollars in postage to learn the "whole" story behind their claims. Instead _ use these publications, as well as books from the library on starting a business to further your knowledge of the world.

Another good move on your part is to invest a few hours by attending a meeting that is sponsored by SCORE from the Small Business Administration in your area. It's free _ and the valuable information you obtain from actual people who have been in business before is something that will be extremely valuable in the months ahead. Just call the SBA to find out more information.

Yes - it's that easy! Of course, this is only the beginning. As with any hobby, it will take time (probably many months) to realize a profit but think of it this way: Most people that have a hobby know they have to spend money to take part in their hobby. It only makes sense to invest money in advertising your hobby to others so you can eventually make some of that money back in sales for your own business!