

How to Work From Home and Make Money in 2020:

13 Proven Home-Based Business Ideas You Can Start Today

By
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RainMaker Press



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**HOW TO WORK FROM HOME AND MAKE MONEY: 13
PROVEN HOME-BASED BUSINESSES YOU CAN START
TODAY**

3

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and Work Less (Work from Home Series: Book 9)¹⁰

1. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01CTMI7R4>

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8. <https://goo.gl/QvWWvr>

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10. <https://amzn.to/2rZPPQC>

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11. <https://www.rainmakerpress.com/new-products/how-to-outline-a-nonfiction-book-a-step-by-step-interactive-fillable-workbook>

12. <https://amzn.to/2sm91vA>

13. <https://amzn.to/30qHRAP>

14. <http://www.rainmakerpress.com/>

Introduction: Who am I to Write this Book?

By now, you've scoured the pages on Amazon and have seen dozens of books that claim to teach you how to make money from home. And as a smart consumer, you're probably wondering who you should trust. After all, anyone can write a book, but if you truly want to learn how to build a successful business, you shouldn't just listen to anyone. There are people out there who write books about topics they have no experience in.

That's not the kind of person who can teach you how to work from home and make money.

You need someone who has done it for themselves and can communicate in a way that will effectively teach you the basics and help you create a plan. That's where I come in.

When I hit my mid-twenties, I decided I no longer wanted to work for other people. I was the first person in my family to venture out on my own, so I had no instruction on how to go about starting my own business. I just knew I was tired of going to the office every day and slaving away for someone else's benefit.

I had ideas of my own and many things I wanted to accomplish, and I knew that as long as I worked for someone else, my plans would have to stay on hold. So for years, I trudged along and played along with office politics. I worked in a job I barely tolerated and came home too exhausted to pursue my own dreams.

But then one day I woke up. I was working as a sales representative for a window covering manufacturing business, and as part of my job, I traveled the state selling to and servicing retail window covering companies. My lifestyle consisted of staying in cheap hotels, eating a diet of fast food, and being away from friends and family for long periods. I was considered lucky because I had a good salary, a company car, and

certain freedoms that many employees don't have. For example, as long as I met my sales quotas, I was able to set my own hours.

But I was miserable.

And then one day, as I was talking to a client about how she got into the business, it hit me. If she could do it, so could I.

And that's how my life of entrepreneurship began. I built a successful window covering business and then went on to build other successful businesses after that. I'm what some people call a serial entrepreneur, but the truth is, I love the challenge of building a business from scratch and making it a success.

I also love the idea of working from home. In all the businesses I've built (some of which I'll teach you about in the chapters that follow), working from home has been my number one priority. In the beginning, it was because I couldn't afford an office space or storefront, and finally, because it just made good business sense. After all, why would I pay thousands of dollars in rent and other expenses when it's not necessary?

But opening and running a successful home-based business takes more than just a good idea and some motivation. In fact, I'd venture to say that it's one of the most misunderstood phenomena of our time. And if you go about it with the wrong mindset or a lack of knowledge, you can easily end up a statistic. But if you take the time to learn about how to do it the right way, your chances of success are much higher.

I didn't want an ordinary life. I dreamed big, and now I'm living the perfect life for me. And I'm guessing that if you bought this book, you're looking for the same thing. So let's get started, shall we?

Chapter One: Stop Building Someone Else's Dreams

When you were young, I bet you didn't imagine you would wake up every day, go to someone else's business, and put in the hours that would eventually contribute to their dreams. I'm sure you never expected that the biggest thing you would accomplish in your life is to allow someone else to live the kind of lifestyle you've always wanted to. Or that you would be instrumental in sending **their** kids to college, help **them** buy a new home, allow **them** to take that European vacation, or fund **their** retirement.

But if you work for someone else, that's exactly what you're doing.

I'm sure it's no surprise to you that the business you work for is in it to make money. But what may surprise you is just how much it is making from your labor. Revenue per employee is a benchmark that most business owners use to determine how useful their employees are to their bottom lines. To give you an idea of just how much a single employee can make for a business, here are some recent statistics:

- An employee working at Starbucks earns the company \$79,821 per year in additional revenue.
- An employee working at Google earns the company \$1.2 million per year in additional revenue.

You get the picture. All those long hours you put in at the office to get a measly raise at the end of the year? The company is cashing in on them.

Isn't it time you worked to build your own dreams?

That's where this book comes in. If you've bought it, I think it's safe to assume you fall into one of these categories:

- You've been laid off, are in between jobs, or just looking for a

change and want to do something that will positively affect your financial life.

- You have a family to care for, and are tired of disappointing them financially.
- You've always dreamed of owning your own business but aren't sure where to start.
- You want to start your own business but don't have a lot of cash to invest.
- You're just out of college, and the prospect of entering the corporate rat race makes you want to run and hide.
- You're a stay at home mom who wants to contribute to the family income but are hindered because you also want to care for your kids.
- You're retired and are looking for a new challenge that you can tackle on your own terms.
- You work for someone else and are tired of building their dreams instead of your own.

If any of the above scenarios describe your circumstances, you might be at the exact place in your life to start a home-based business. Unlike other types of businesses, it's possible to work from home with very little investment and no college training. In fact, the ten business ideas I list in this book can all be started with little to no money, no hardcore training, and you can actually wake up tomorrow morning and begin.

How's that for pursuing your dream?

Ready to get started? First, let's take a quick look at exactly what it means to be in business for yourself, what it will take to succeed, and put aside a few common myths about self-employment.

Chapter Two: The Top Five Lies About Working from Home

We've all seen them: the images of people sitting on the beach with a laptop, surrounded by beautiful people, and sipping cocktails in the middle of the day. And according to the sales copy that accompanies the images, you too can sit on the beach all day and earn thousands of dollars without lifting a finger.

If that's what you're after, you bought the wrong book.

While it's true that you can own a wildly successful home-based business, it's also true that it takes work — lots of it. And anyone who tells you differently is just trying to sell you something.

The fact is that home-based businesses make up a large part of the economy, and many people are very successful at it. In fact, Forbes Magazine says that 52 percent of small businesses are home-based, and those business owners earn combined revenues of \$929.6 billion.

That's a lot of successful home-based businesses and an indication of just how much money there is to be made. But before we begin talking about the specific ways to start your own business, I think it's important to talk frankly with you about some of the most commonly believed misconceptions about working from home so you'll have a realistic expectation of what it will take.

Lie #1: You Only Have to Work When You Want to

This belief is absolutely true—IF you don't want to be a success. Owning a business is just like anything else you do in your life: the more you put into it, the better your chances of success. And if you go into it with the attitude that you'll only work when you feel like it, you aren't likely to be a success.

Inc. Magazine says the majority of small business owners work 50 hours per week, and 25 percent of them work more than 60 hours in a

week. Compare that to the 33.8 hours most employees work, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This lie has been spread by the get rich schemes and scammers who try to convince people to buy their phony products, but it's simply not true. If you want to build your dream, it will take a lot of work and commitment.

Lie #2: You Don't Have to Answer to Anybody

This is one of my favorite misconceptions because I fell for it myself. The belief is that since you are the owner of the business and the boss, you only have to answer to yourself. Sounds enticing, doesn't it? But whoever invented this lie forgot about one tiny little thing: customers.

It doesn't matter what type of business you start; you will have customers. There is always an end-user for your products or services, and as a business owner, it's up to you to work around their schedules, make them happy and ensure that they're satisfied, so they continue to buy from you. You also want them to tell their friends and families about you, and they won't do that unless you treat them like the boss.

And while it's true that you will make the majority of decisions about how to run the business, you will still have to answer to each and every one of your customers. So, instead of one boss, you'll have dozens. Still with me? Good, let's bust another home business lie.

Lie #3: I Can Quit My Day Job Immediately

Many people believe that once you start a home-based company, the business will roll in, and before long, you'll be earning a big, fat salary. But the truth is that you will have to build your business slowly and steadily, just like any other business owner does. If you rely on the income from your current job to pay your bills, you should build your business slowly while maintaining your day job, so you don't fall short financially.

It's natural to want to jump in feet first and run your new business, but if your finances don't allow it, you simply don't have the option.

Many people have begun their home-based business on the side while working their regular jobs and do so until the business brings in enough profit to substitute for the lost paycheck. Working toward this long term goal will pay off in the long run with a solid, stable business. Plus, if you make a mistake when getting your business off the ground, having another paycheck will allow you to recover from it more easily financially.

Lie #4: I Need a College Education to Start a Business

According to a study done by the U.S. Census Bureau, just over half of people who start a business from their home have a college degree. That's it. In other words, almost 50 percent of home-based business owners do not have a college degree.

Some people think this is because business owners tend to be mavericks and want to do things their own way. Others think it's because once an entrepreneur gets a business idea, they don't want to take the time to get a four-year degree when they could be building a business instead. Whatever the reason, I can tell you this. If you choose a business that does not require specific training, like an IT-focused business or another area of specialty, you can do well without a college degree. I know this because I don't have one, and I've managed to build several successful businesses.

Lie #5: Clients Won't Take Me Seriously if I Operate My Business from Home

A long time ago, home-based business owners had to hide the fact that they worked from home from their clients. They were forced to rent temporary suites in buildings, so clients wouldn't guess they didn't have a commercial location. Luckily, times have changed.

Now that more than half of U.S. businesses are operated out of homes, the attitude has changed, and it's widely accepted to do business with home-based entrepreneurs.

But just because it's accepted, that doesn't mean you don't have to be professional in your dealings with customers. For example, no

client wants to hold a business conversation on the phone with a child screaming in the background. And if your business requires in-person meetings with clients, you should section out a portion of your home where they will have the least amount of contact with your living quarters. You might convert a portion of your garage into an office, an attic space, or add an outside door to a spare bedroom.

Even if you don't meet with clients, it will make life easier for you if you dedicate a portion of your home to your business and keep it neat and organized. And if you have small children at home, you'll need to work out a schedule so that when you're at work, they're looked after by someone else.

Okay, now that we've talked about the common myths that surround home-based businesses, let's delve into the ten business ideas I promised you. And remember, in each chapter, I'll give you all the information you need to get started on that business idea—today if you want to!

I've organized the ten ideas into two sections: online businesses and offline businesses. We'll start with online businesses since that's what most people seem to be interested in.

Part One: Online Home-Based Business Ideas

Chapter Three: Build a Business by Making People's Lives Easier

If you have a knack for organization, customer service-driven attitude, and some computer skills, a virtual assistant business might be the right home-based business for you. More and more business people are hiring virtual assistants to help them rather than hiring full-time assistants because it saves them money in the long run. But that doesn't mean you have to charge low rates. The average price paid for a virtual assistant is between \$20 and 45 an hour, and if you specialize, you can charge a lot more than that—closer to \$100 an hour. Have your attention? Here's the lowdown on starting a virtual assistant business.

What is a Virtual Assistant?

Virtual assistants have taken the place of yesterday's secretaries. They are smart, well-equipped, and fearless business owners who can provide what their clients need, whether that's administrative, creative or technical skills. Some specialize in certain areas such as project management, sales, bookkeeping, or real estate, while others offer general services. They operate remotely and can service multiple clients at one time. Here are some of the tasks virtual assistants perform every day:

- Communicating with clients via phones or emails
- Manage their client's calendar and set or cancel appointments
- Prepare and manage and oversee documents
- Lead generation and prospect management
- Follow up with new customers
- Act as a liaison between the client and his employees
- Make travel arrangements
- Prepare spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, charts, and slide shows for meetings
- Data entry
- Conduct research for projects

- Create customized solutions to store that research
- Set up an email autoresponder
- Database creation
- Transcribing
- Set up social media accounts and/or blog, and then update and manage them
- Answer support tickets
- Event planning
- Direct marketing

These are just a few of the duties successful virtual assistants perform. Basically, you can use any computer skills you have and offer it to busy business people. Are you an expert at commenting on blog posts for promotional purposes? Someone needs that. Do you do light bookkeeping? Someone will pay you for that. Are you a troubleshooter and have a knack for building good relationships with people over the phone? Business people hire good customer service reps all the time.

As you can see, a virtual assistant business is great for the person who has a specialty, or someone who has a bunch of skills and wants to put them to use in a business. If this sounds like a business that might be right for you, read on to learn about the specifics.

How Much Money Will it Cost?

You may already have everything you need to start a home-based virtual assistant business. Your main expenses will be related to computer equipment. You will need a computer, printer, internet connection, and software for the services you're providing. For instance, if you plan to offer light bookkeeping, you'll need bookkeeping software. In the same vein, you'll need PowerPoint if you plan to do presentations, Excel for spreadsheets, and word processing software to create documents. So, depending on what you already have, you could start the business for the price of a software package, or if you don't already have a computer, it may cost upwards of \$2,000.

You should also have a website, but it's possible to set it up for free by using WordPress or Weebly. Here's a free tutorial¹ that walks you through the process of setting up a WordPress site. (It includes free videos if you're more of a visual person) And here's a 42-minute video² that shows you how to set up a Weebly website.

How Much Money Will I Make?

As with all home-based businesses, your earning potential depends on how you set up your business, your skill level, and how much your work. In other words, you have the potential to make as much as you want. According to Payscale, the medium virtual assistant's income is about \$65,000. That's the average, so it's important to note that some assistants make less and some make more. There are three ways that virtual assistants typically bill their clients. They are:

- **Hourly.** The most common way virtual assistants bill their clients is hourly. You will have to set your rates, and they can vary depending on the job. For instance, you would charge more for specialized work rather than generalized. If you offer general services, your hourly rates will probably fall between \$25 - \$40 an hour.
- **Project Fees.** Sometimes virtual assistants offer package fees to help sell their services. For example, if someone contacts you to handle a direct marketing campaign, rather than charging by the hour, you can quote a fee for the entire project, start to finish. This is also a great way to convince someone to try your services, and hopefully, it will turn into a long term business relationship after the first project is completed.
- **Retainer Fees.** Another great way to charge for your services—and lock in future business—is to charge retainer

1. <https://www.siteground.com/tutorials/wordpress/>

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRN1-oec2b8>

fees for your services. For instance, if a client needs you to complete a variety of tasks every month that you estimate will take 10 hours, you can give them a slight discount in exchange for hiring you on a retainer basis. A retainer means you are guaranteed the work each month. This would provide the client with a discount and allow you to count on that retainer income month after month.

Also, you will need to determine how you will receive payment for your services. You can agree to accept wire transfers directly into your bank account, checks via the mail, or you can utilize an online payment service like PayPal³. (You can set up an account for free with just an email address.)

How Do I Find Clients?

Luckily for you, if you want to start this kind of business, there are plenty of clients to go around. It seems that virtual assistants are popular in every industry, so the work is abundant. To find your first clients, you will have to promote yourself where people are looking. Here are some ideas to do that:

- **Your website.** Make sure your website is SEO optimized (Here's a great beginner's guide⁴ to help you do that)
- **Online marketplaces.** There are many professional job sites where clients look for virtual assistants to help them with their tasks. These sites allow you to set up a profile and tell potential clients what you have to offer. Before you set up your own profile, check out the profiles of the success virtual assistants already on the site to get an idea of how you should structure yours. Some of the sites you should be on are VirtualAssistants.com⁵, UpWork⁶, and Guru⁷.

3. <https://www.paypal.com/home>

4. <http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2015/04/30/seo-basics>

- **In-person networking.** Attend local gatherings of business people, ask friends or acquaintances for referrals, and use your social media accounts to network and talk about your services.

What Tools Will Help My Virtual Assistant Business Become Successful?

Every business owner needs a set of tools that will help them operate more smoothly and enable them to provide their clients with better service. I've put together a list of the tools every virtual assistant needs, many of which are free. I've listed them in categories and provided links to each of the tools so you can find them easily.

Communication Tools

These tools will help you communicate with your clients more easily.

- Skype.⁸ You can download the program for free and communicate with your clients face to face, even though you may be hundreds of miles away.
- Mailchimp.⁹ You can use this well-known email marketing service for free as long as your mailing list has less than 2,000 people.
- RingCentral¹⁰. This handy cloud phone system allows you to plug your desk phone or PC into your internet connection for voice, fax, text, or audio conferencing and online

5. <http://www.virtualassistants.com/>

6. <https://www.upwork.com/>

7. <http://www.guru.com/>

8. <http://www.skype.com/en/>

9. <http://mailchimp.com/>

10. <http://www.ringcentral.com/>

meetings with your clients. The service starts at \$25 a month, but you can get a free 30-day trial.

Productivity Tools

These tools will allow you to make better use of your and your client's time.

- Clockify¹¹. A free time tracking application for your projects and tasks well suited for teams. You can even add your clients to the project and use it interactively.
- PayPal¹². It allows you to bill clients and receive payments online. It's easy to transfer the money to your bank once payment is received.
- Wave.¹³ Free business accounting software. This software also offers free invoicing.
- Hootsuite¹⁴. Sign up for free and use this site to manage your social media accounts. You can keep track of connections and schedule posts on all your networks.
- Google Docs¹⁵. Create and share documents with your clients for free.
- VA Networking.com.¹⁶ You can join this forum for free and interact with other virtual assistants to get questions answered and network with fellow VA's.

Most experts agree that the virtual assistant industry will continue to grow as executives and other business owners look to online assistance rather than in-office help. If you have computer skills and an abil-

11. <https://clockify.me/>

12. <https://www.paypal.com/home>

13. <https://www.waveapps.com/accounting/>

14. <https://hootsuite.com/plans/free>

15. <https://www.google.com/docs/about/>

16. <http://www.vanetworking.com/member/>

ity to work closely with people, this may be a great business for you. It takes little to no money to start, depending on what you already have, and you can set up shop in a day.

But if you don't have the skills needed to operate a virtual assistant business, there are other options for making money online. In the next chapter, we'll take a look at how you can successfully set up and run your own online shop.

Chapter Four: Run a Wildly Successful Store Without an Address

According to the latest figures¹ from the U.S. Census Bureau, e-commerce businesses in the United States made \$158 billion in the fourth quarter of 2019, which is a 2.6 percent increase from the third quarter of 2019. Internet sellers sold a total of \$1,386.2 billion last year, which is a 0.4 percent increase over the third quarter. In other words, consumers are spending billions of dollars online each and every year in the U.S., and those sales are only increasing.

And according to Shopify, 16.1 percent of all retail sales are expected to happen online this year. The latest numbers show that the average ecommerce website brings in just under \$39,000 a month. Obviously, some websites bring in more and some less, but \$39,000 is an exciting average.

And here's the thing. It doesn't take a college degree, a bunch of money, or even a vast amount of knowledge to set up and run a successful online store.

What it takes is a plan. You can't just throw a website up and expect people to find it and buy whatever you're selling. Instead, you'll need to build it in a way that helps people find it, and then you need to offer products that they want to buy. You also need to advertise your site and have shipping and other backend matters set up to best serve your customers.

That sounds like a lot, but trust me, it's completely doable. If owning an online store sounds like a business you'd like to begin, follow along as we talk about the steps you'll need to take to open a successful one.

Choose Your Business Name

1. https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec_current.pdf

This sounds like a no-brainer, but your name will play a key part in establishing your brand, which will make or break your business. What is a brand? It's what makes customers recognize your company in a unique way. Depending on the name you choose, it will do one of three things for your business.

- A good name can create buzz and establish you as an innovator.
- A so-so name will make you sound like everyone else and lump you into the crowd.
- A bad name will prevent you from being able to create interest in your store.

Think carefully about the name you choose because it will make a statement about your business. You'll have a few options when it comes to naming your business.

- You can use your own name, but unless you're famous or well-known, this probably isn't a good idea.
- You can use the name to describe what you do.
- You can use the name to describe the experience your customers will have when using your product.
- You can use a random word. If you choose this option, you will have to put a lot of effort into marketing and branding your name. One example is Apple. It's a random word, but because of its marketing efforts, the word apple is now associated with electronic devices.
- Make up a name. Companies like Zappos and Google use made-up names, but again, they've put a lot of money and effort into making those names well known.

Purchase and Register Your Domain Name

Now that you have a business name, it's time to put it on the internet map. You do this by registering a domain name (the address of your website) with a company and then paying a small fee for the exclusive rights to use it. Registering a domain name is an easy process. What's difficult is finding a domain name that hasn't already been taken.

There are a lot of new extensions for sale such as .net, .biz, and many others, but if you want the best success, you should stick with the tried and true .com extension. But some studies show that over 99 percent of the dictionary has been used in .com names, so finding an available name isn't going to be easy.

The best-case scenario is to use your business name in your website address. For instance, I choose to use my publishing name, Rainmaker Press for my website². It's simple, easy, and conveys what I want people to understand about what I'm selling. I got lucky that no one else registered this name before I did, but that's not always the case.

If your business name isn't available when you register your domain name, you should keep these factors in mind:

- **Keep it short.** Don't fall into the trap of using a long domain name so that you can include your business name. People won't remember it, and it comes across as salesy and unprofessional.
- **Don't use hyphens.** Sometimes people add a hyphen to be able to use their business name if it's already taken. For example, my name was already taken for samkerns.com. I could have used a hyphen and registered sam-kerns.com, but what would have happened is people would have ignored or forgot the hyphen and ended up at someone else's site.
- **Don't use keywords for SEO.** In times past, website owners could just use keywords in their domain names, and Google would point people to their site when they searched for the

2. <http://goo.gl/OCri2P>

word. For instance, before Google's recent algorithm changes, it would have been smart to call my website `workfromhome.com`. But because of the changes Google has made, they don't reward those kinds of domain names anymore.

- **Use a .com extension.** We discussed this in an earlier paragraph, but I don't want you to miss it, so I decided to include it on this list. If your business name is taken as a .com domain, it can be tempting to register it with another extension, but don't. People trust .com extensions and automatically use them when searching for a site. Using another extension can result in missed business and a lack of trust for your website from the public.

Now that you know the basics of how to register a domain name, you'll need to know where to do it. My favorite domain registration company is GoDaddy³. They offer a promotional offer of .99 cents for one year, and folks, it just doesn't get any cheaper than that. You can also find .99 cent registration fees at 1&1⁴,

Choose a Web Hosting Company

Now that you have your domain name registered, you'll need to contract with a web hosting company to park it. You can hire a website designer for thousands of dollars to create your website, figure out how to build it yourself, or you can do it the easy way. And since we're talk-

3. https://www.godaddy.com/offers/default.aspx?gclid=Cj0KEQjwvpm3BRDuh5awn4qJ-pLwBEiQAATTAQYc0OpGt8n1HXkfcxwI7QueUOj-mU7bwQ3rpLTjCMY14aAuBW8P8HAQ&tmskey=1dom_01&isc=gofdh020&cvos-rc=ppc.google.domain-names&cvo_crid=791840534048&matchtype=e&cf_id=VfNg2gAABRz5z8xl:20160314211656:s

4. <http://www.1and1.com/domain-names?ac=OM.US.USo42K356154T7073a#stage>

ing about opening an online store with the least amount of effort, I want to talk about the easiest and most affordable way to do it.

The cheapest way to open an online store is to use an e-commerce platform that allows you to build a website by clicking and dragging (no experience necessary) and the ability to collect payments online. There are many of these sites to choose from, and the prices vary. Here's a rundown of the most common ones.

- Wix⁵. This host allows you to build a customized e-commerce site with a payment gateway and shopping cart for \$16.58 per month.
- Weebly⁶. If you don't need to collect payments on your site (for instance, if you sell books on Amazon and can direct them there), you can set up a fully customized site for free. If you want to allow customers to purchase directly from you, it will cost \$25 per month for an e-commerce package that includes a shopping cart. Shopping carts allow your customers to pay you with credit cards or via PayPal.
- Shopify⁷. This is another easy-to-use site that offers a low rate. Prices start at \$9 per month for one buy button (if you only have one product), and \$29 per month for a full online store.
- BigCommerce⁸. This host offers an all-inclusive website with all the tools you need starting at \$29 per month.
- Squarespace⁹. This host now offers e-commerce sites that have an integrated shopping cart and other important essentials. Plans start at \$26 per month, and you won't have to sign a contract.

5. <http://www.wix.com/upgrade/website>

6. <http://www.weebly.com/pricing>

7. <https://www.shopify.com/pricing>

8. <https://www.bigcommerce.com/pricing/>

9. <http://squarespace.com/>

- WordPress via BlueHost. If you have a little more skill, you can set up a WordPress¹⁰ site using BlueHost¹¹. It will host your WordPress site for as little as \$3.49 per month. Then you can use WooCommerce¹² to install a free shopping cart. If you don't have the skills, but want to try and build your own site from scratch, here's a great video¹³ that explains the process step by step (Be warned: the video is two-and-a-half hours long.)

When building your website, it's important to keep your future customers in mind. Make it easy for them by clearly defining what each page will do by titling it appropriately. (For example, you may have a "Products" page, an "About Us" page, a "Returns Policy" page, a "Contact Us" page, and a "Customer Testimonials" page. Just make sure your customers know what to expect when clicking.)

Collecting Payments

If you don't want to use PayPal to accept customer payments and want to allow customers to pay you directly with their credit cards, you'll need to take an additional couple of steps. First, you'll need to set up an internet merchant account, which enables you to receive the funds once a customer has made a purchase. You can usually set up this type of account at your local bank, or by using a merchant account provider. These third-party vendors transfer the funds to your bank. Here are two to choose from:

- MerchantPlus¹⁴. Starting costs for this provider are \$30 per month.

10. <https://wordpress.org>

11. <https://www.bluehost.com/wordpress>

12. <https://www.woothemes.com/woocommerce/>

13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nmZNfHZIEI>

14. <https://www.merchantplus.com/>

Next, you'll need to use a payment gateway, which is how your store is connected to your internet merchant account. Payment gateways transfer your customer's sensitive data into your merchant account in a secure way. If you use a bank for your merchant account, it may provide the gateway, but if not, you can investigate these alternatives:

- Authorize¹⁵. You'll pay a \$49 set up fee, \$25 a month, and a 2.9 percent plus .30 cent transaction fee for each sale.
- eWay.¹⁶ There is no signup or monthly fee with this gateway provider, and you'll only pay 2.9 percent plus a .30 cent transaction fee for each sale.

Make Sure Your Site is Secure

Most consumers won't buy from a site that doesn't offer encryption of their credit cards and other payment information. To run a successful online store, you'll need a Secure Socket Layer (SSL) certificate to convince your shoppers that their information is safe.

You have options when it comes to securing your site, and those options vary in price. For starters, you may already have a third-party SSL certificate from your e-commerce platform if you use sites like Weebly and Wix. Your site won't have the certificate, but the third party sites where the transactions are done, such as PayPal, have them, so your customers are protected. However, if you use Shopify to build your site, an SSL certificate is included in the price.

If you build the site yourself using WordPress and BlueHost, you can purchase an SSL certificate from Symantec¹⁷ for about \$400 per year, SSLMate¹⁸ for \$15.95 per year, or sign up for a free certificate that

15. <http://www.authorize.net/>

16. <https://eway.io/>

17. <https://www.symantec.com>

18. <https://sslmate.com/>

has to be renewed every 90 days from Let's Encrypt¹⁹. The last option is a little more work, but hey, the goal here is low cost, right?

Sales Tax Automation

The laws regarding sales tax collection for online purchases are changing rapidly, and many online sellers are finding themselves at a loss about how to collect and remit it. Basically, if you have nexus in a state, you must collect sales tax. The term “nexus” used to mean having a physical presence in a state, but recent laws have dramatically expanded that definition. Now, online sellers who might have to collect sales tax in a state if:

- You have some physical presence in the state, such as a warehouse, inventory, office, or retail store. This is true even if you store your inventory in a warehouse that you don't own, such as Amazon's FBA warehouses.
- You have a sales representative in the state where the customer lives.
- You use an affiliate who has nexus in that state.

These are just some of the things that can trigger nexus in a state, and unfortunately, all states have their own rules. It would be impossible to keep track of the 12,000 tax jurisdictions in the U.S. (Some states, cities, and counties have multiple jurisdictions) for every state you do business in, and if you paid an accountant to do it, it would cost you a fortune. Luckily, there is sales tax automation software that makes the job easy. Here are three you should consider:

- Avalara AvaTax²⁰. This is the leading sales tax automated software on the market, and pricing starts at \$100 month.
- Taxify²¹. This service allows you up to 1,000 transactions per

19. <https://letsencrypt.org/>

20. <https://www.avalara.com/tax-type/sales-and-use-tax/avatax/>

21. <https://taxify.co/pricing/>

month for \$47, plus a \$27 fee for both state and local filing.

- Taxjar²². This automated sales tax system allows you up to 1,000 transactions per month for \$19. You can also get a free 30-day trial period before you buy it.

So, Where are We Financially?

Before we talk a little about how to find products and then market them to your customers, let's stop and take stock. I told you I would show you how to set up an online shop for hardly any money, and I want to show just how affordable it is before you become overwhelmed by the details.

If you use the least expensive products and services that I've outlined so far, you could have an online shop up and running (today) for as little as **\$23.48 per month**. Now, I didn't promise you that you wouldn't have to do some work, but as you can see, if you're willing to put in the time and work, you can compete with the big boys.

Now, let's talk about the options you have when it comes to products.

Where to Find Products to Sell

Now let's get to the most important aspect of building your e-commerce store—the products you will sell. By now, you should have in mind the type of consumers you want to attract and the products you think they will buy. To nail this down even further, answer the following questions:

- Who is my perfect customer? (Describe them in age, gender, economic status, and other details)
- What are these people's needs or problems?
- How can I fulfill those needs or solve their problems?

For example, if you plan to sell weight loss supplements, your ideal customer may be a middle-aged woman who has money to spend on

22. <http://www.taxjar.com/pricing/>

herself. Her problem is she needs to lose some weight, but maybe she doesn't have the time or inclination to go to a gym. You can solve her problem by selling her a fat burning supplement.

Once you have your ideal customer in mind, it's time to begin the search for your products. Here are the choices you'll have when it comes to product sourcing.

Wholesale Sites

If you want great products at wholesale pricing, you'll need to work with a wholesale site. With these sites, you'll be required to purchase a specified amount of product to receive the wholesale pricing. The only downside to this type of arrangement is that you will have to store the product, and since you will operate an online store, you may not have space. That means you may have to increase your monthly expenses by leasing a storage facility. Some of the most well-known wholesale sites are:

- Alibaba²³. This is by far the largest and well known wholesale site, and it's free to join.
- TradeKey²⁴. This another wholesale site that is free to join. You can watch an informative video about how the site works here²⁵.
- Global Sources²⁶. This site connects exporters with retailers and offers sellers everything from auto parts to swimwear.
- Made in China²⁷. This site connects online retailers with sellers in China.

Drop Shippers

23. <http://www.alibaba.com/>

24. <http://www.tradekey.com/>

25. http://www.tradekey.com/index.html?action=aboutus_what&cw=780&ch=525

26. <http://www.globalsources.com/>

27. <http://www.made-in-china.com/>

If you don't want to store inventory, your best bet is to use a drop shipper. These companies offer thousands of quality products that they will store for you until you make a sale. For example, if you want to sell decorative pillows, you should sign with a drop shipper who sells them, upload the pictures onto your website, and when a customer places an order, the drop shipper will send it to them. You will have to pay them a percentage of the sale for their services, but it allows you to offer products to the public without the expense and inconvenience of storing large amounts of inventory. If this sounds like something you want to explore, some reputable drop shippers you should consider are:

- Doba²⁸. Here, you'll find 2 million name brand products to choose from. You will also receive a free seven-day trial before you have to commit to their \$60 per month fee.
- Wholesale Central²⁹. This is an online wholesale directory that lists 1,400 suppliers and over 7,000 products sold at wholesale. It's free to use.
- SaleHoo³⁰. This site charges \$47 per year to access its 8,000 wholesale suppliers. They offer a 60-day money-back guarantee, and many eBay and Amazon sellers use them.

It's important to present your business professionally when first contacting a drop shipper. One of the best ways to do that is to wait to contact them until you've legally structured your business and have an official launch date for your site. Then simply pick up the phone and call them or communicate with them via email.

28. [https://www.doba.com/dropship-free-](https://www.doba.com/dropship-free-trial/?source=google&source_key=drop+shipper+hv+e&gclid=Cj0KEQjwvpm3BRDuh5awn4qJpLwBEiQAATTAQbD7P3xWSwpM9n5FhEPXq-Uvyd_ALPa5UeloS4zch6laAmla8P8HAQ)

trial/?source=google&source_key=drop+shipper+hv+e&gclid=Cj0KEQjwvpm3BRDuh5awn4qJpLwBEiQAATTAQbD7P3xWSwpM9n5FhEPXq-Uvyd_ALPa5UeloS4zch6laAmla8P8HAQ

29. <http://www.wholesalecentral.com/>

30. <http://www.salehoo.com/>

Local or Handmade Sources

In addition to buying products from large companies, it's also possible to source your products locally or even make them yourself. The handmade market is growing so large that Amazon is even expanding its site to include handmade items. And no one can argue the success of Etsy shops, which are entirely handmade. If you have a knack for creative pursuits, don't discount your talent. To give you an idea of the potential, Happy Supplies, a shop on Etsy that sells handmade jewelry, sold almost \$300,000 last year.

Be Sure to Market Your Site Properly

Finally, if you want to make sales, people have to be able to find your online store. Here are some tried and true methods of marketing an e-commerce store.

- **Start a blog.** Consumers typically find a website by looking for information, and much of that information appears on blogs. There's a reason that successful e-commerce business owners create blogs and maintain them. The internet is an information-driven machine, and those sites that present clear, helpful information to consumers often get the sale.
- **Use keywords.** You'll need to identify the keywords your potential customers use when searching online, and then use those keywords in your website copy as well as your blog. For example, if you determine that consumers use "weight loss supplements" or "pills for weight loss," be sure to incorporate them into your writing. You should use them in a natural way, or it will turn potential customers off. Use KWFinder³¹ to research keywords for free.
- **AdWords or Pay Per Click.** Another option to get customers to your site is to use pay per click ads. With these ads, you will only pay if someone clicks on your ad, which

31. <https://kwfinder.com/>

takes them to your site. These types of ads can be very beneficial, but I highly recommend that you hire a professional marketer to create your campaign until you get the hang of it.

- **Email.** You will need to build an email list, and then once you've done it, you should send out select emails advertising a sale or promotion to bring repeat business to your site.

Useful Tools for Operating an Online Shop

Of course, the right tools will make your leap to website owner much easier. Here are a few free and paid tools that you can put to good use.

- **Insightly.**³² This CRM allows you to offer better customer service. You can get it for free for up to 2 users.
- **Canva.**³³ You will need to design logos, headers for your website and social media, along with other items that will help spread your brand. You could pay designers hundreds of dollars to do that—or you could use this website and do it yourself with easy click and drag software.
- **SEO tools.**³⁴ Remember, search engine optimization (SEO) is the method you'll use to help consumers find your site. There are dozens of tools that you'll need to accomplish this, and luckily, you can follow this link³⁵ to find dozens of them for free.
- **SurveyMonkey**³⁶. To run a successful online store, you'll have to stay in contact with your customers to find out about their

32. <https://www.insightly.com/>

33. <https://www.canva.com/>

34. <http://solidseotools.com/>

35. <http://solidseotools.com/>

36. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

experience on your site. The best way to do that is with customer surveys. This platform allows you to start for free with ten questions and 100 responses per month, and if you want to upgrade later, you'll only pay \$20 per month.

- Google Analytics.³⁷ To keep track of your site's traffic, install this free software on your site. It will tell you how many visitors you receive, what they do while on your site, how many pages they view, and much more.
- MailChimp³⁸. You'll need to develop a mailing list to let customers know when you're having a sale or adding new products. This service is free up to your first 2,000 contacts.

Building an online store takes a lot of work, but not a lot of money (especially if you use all the free tools I listed.) And if you do it correctly, you'll build a business that works even when you don't. In other words, an online e-commerce shop is a great way to build passive income.

But studies show that even e-commerce sellers that have their own website will benefit financially by also offering their products on marketplace sites. We'll look at those in the next chapter. They serve as great outlets for website owners wanting to reach more people, or for sellers who don't want to set up and maintain their own website.

37. <https://www.google.com/>

[analytics/#_d1457b72c3fb323a2671125aef3eab5d_modal_active_43ec3e5dec6e706af7766ffea512721_none](https://www.google.com/analytics/#_d1457b72c3fb323a2671125aef3eab5d_modal_active_43ec3e5dec6e706af7766ffea512721_none)

38. <http://mailchimp.com/>

Chapter Five: Who Needs a Website? Sell Online Without One

If you love the idea of selling online but don't want to go to the trouble of setting up your own website, don't worry—you have plenty of options. In addition, website owners increase their sales by approximately 50 percent when they also sell on Amazon, according to executives from that company.

When you sell using an established online marketplace, your products will be seen by the millions of customers who shop at them every day. But before you set up shop on one of these high traffic sites, you should know about the pros and cons. Here are some to think about:

Pros

- You'll have access to millions of people who visit the marketplaces to shop.
- You won't have to work to build your own traffic. You'll have tons of potential customers the day you open.
- You won't have any out of pocket startup fees.
- Customers trust established marketplaces.

Cons

- You'll have to pay a percentage of your profits to the marketplace platform.
- You won't have any control over what your page looks like, or the policies relating to your customers.
- You won't be able to build an email list because the customers belong to the marketplace, not you.

If the pros outweigh the cons in your mind, then a marketplace shop might be the answer for you. Years ago, eBay was the go-to mar-

ketplace site for sellers, but today there are many to choose from, all with different aspects that make some better than others for certain types of sellers. Let's take a look at all of your options and the benefits of each. Please keep in mind that I've listed the most popular sites, but all of them may not be available in your country. Be sure to do some research and determine the most successful online marketplace in your area before you begin.

One final note before we get started: it can be tempting to try and sell on all the marketplaces to reach as many customers as you can. And while that may be a good long term goal, each marketplace has different infrastructures, policies, and procedures you'll have to follow. Because of that, it's wise to start with one, and then add additional marketplaces as you learn.

eBay

Let's start with the obvious. eBay has been around since 1995, and many home-based business owners have gotten rich by selling products on the site. You can sell just about anything on eBay from used baby items, electronics, clothes, beauty products, tools, even cars, and appliances. If you intend to sell unique, one of a kind items, vintage goods, or anything else that can't be classified into "common" goods, eBay is probably where you should set up shop.

Many people think selling on the site is complicated, but the truth is that you can be up and running in no time at all. Here are the simple steps you should take to set up an eBay account and start selling.

Register with the Site

To do this, go to the eBay registration page¹ and enter your name, address, and phone number. You'll also need to select an automatic payment method for your seller's fees.

Set up Your PayPal Account

Go to the signup page² on PayPal and set up an account. Be sure to enter your bank account information and then follow the steps to

1. <https://signin.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?SignIn&pos=1>

be verified. This will make you more credible to eBay buyers, and at the same time, increase the amount you can send and withdraw from your account.

Research

Next, you'll need to research your items to know how much to ask for them. This is true for whatever you're selling. Simply type in the product in the eBay search bar and then see what others are asking for similar products.

Get Your Items Ready to List

Before you take photos of your items, get them in the best shape you can. For example, if you're selling clothes, make sure they're ironed and neat. Toys, kitchen appliances, and anything should be wiped clean.

Shoot the Photos

You should use a white wall as a background that gets natural lighting. Then decide how you will display your items. If you're selling clothes, put them on a pretty hanger and attach a 3M hook to the wall. If you're selling other items, a white table in front of the wall makes for a great display piece and tends to highlight the item. Be sure to take multiple photos of the item from various angles. If you're selling clothes, be sure to take a photo of the label, showing the size and designer. If there are any imperfections or stains in what you're selling, take a photo of that as well.

Download the Mobile App

Using this app³ is the easiest way to list. Otherwise, you can use your PC to log into the site and list your items that way.

Price Your Item

You'll have a choice of listing your item as "buy it now" with a fixed price, or as an auction-style where shoppers bid on it. Keep in mind

2. <https://www.paypal.com/home>

3. <http://anywhere.ebay.com/mobile/?rmvSB=true>

that you'll have to pay fees to sell on eBay, such as listing fees and final sale fees. You can view the fee schedule here⁴.

Ship Your Items Quickly

Once the item sells, ship it as quickly as possible to keep your customers happy.

If you sell enough on eBay, you can become a Power Seller, and that will give you even more credibility with consumers. The key to success on this site is to treat your customers well. Set competitive prices, describe your items honestly and with great detail, and then ship sold products promptly. Next, let's look at another giant marketplace: Amazon.

Amazon

If you sell retail items, popular products, or recently released items, Amazon is likely your ideal marketplace. In fact, unless a product is common, meaning other sellers are selling it, you will have to get a UPC or EAN barcode just to list it on Amazon. So, for your unique or one of a kind items, eBay is your place, but for common products, Amazon is the place to be.

And Amazon is growing quickly. Figures show that for 2015, its worldwide sales were up by 28 percent, and over the next couple of years, it's estimated that the site will do \$100 billion in sales. But it's not just Amazon that's getting rich. Forty percent of those sales are made by individual sellers who list their products on the site.

If you sell more up to date and retail items, here are the steps you should take to list your products on the site.

Set up a Seller Account

Your first step is to set up an Amazon seller's account. Simply follow this link⁵ and fill in the required information.

Get a UPC or EAN Barcode

4. <http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html>

5. <http://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=12766669011>

Unless you're selling a product that already has one, you'll need to get a barcode for your products. In fact, without one, you won't be able to list your product on Amazon. (That's why eBay is a better marketplace for one of a kind, vintage and unusual items.) GPI⁶ is the most trusted site to purchase barcodes.

Create an SKU for Your Products

You also need to provide an SKU number for all products that you list, but don't worry; you won't need to purchase them. You can simply make them up. Be sure to create a spreadsheet or other method to keep meticulous records of which SKU numbers you assign to each product.

Decide on Your Plan

You can use Amazon's individual plan, where you'll pay .99 cents to Amazon for each sale, or you can use the professional plan, which costs \$39.99 per month for unlimited sales. You should wait until you are selling at least 40 products per month to justify the expense of the professional plan.

Research Your Category

Each category in the Amazon marketplace has different requirements, so you'll need to first decide on a category and then research its requirements. For example, if you plan to sell clothing, you'll be required to provide a photograph and sign up for the professional plan.

Research Your Keywords and Competitors

This is one area where I'm going to suggest you spend some money. AMZ Tracker⁷ is a great app that helps you choose the right keywords (which help customers find you on Amazon), spy on your competition, and gives you tools and strategies to improve your rankings in the Amazon search engine. The basic plan is \$20 per month, but you can start with a free seven-day trial.

Write the Product Description

6. <http://www.gs1.org/>

7. <https://www.amztracker.com/>

When customers find your product, the way you describe it, and the information you provide will either make them buy it or click off the page. Your description should include a list of all the benefits your product will give to the customer, and include practical details such as whether it comes in a package, its dimensions, color, shipping times, and other relevant details.

Set up Your Digital Storefront

One of the perks about selling on Amazon is that the site allows you to set up your own digital storefront. With it, you can create your own logo (using the free software at Canva⁸, of course), and include a description that tells potential customers about your company.

Hire a Professional Photographer

Amazon has very specific rules about the photos they will accept from sellers. All photographs must be taken by a professional, and only the product against a white background can appear in the photo. To find a qualified photographer, you can use Amazon's referral service⁹, which looks for photographers in your area.

Determine How You'll Ship Your Products

You'll have two choices for shipping. You can ship the items yourself when they're sold using a courier, or you can have Amazon ship them for you by using Amazon FBA. To use this service, you will have to ship your products to Amazon in bulk, and when an order is placed, they pack and ship the items. You will pay extra fees for this service, but it saves you time. Also, if your customer is a member of Prime, they'll receive free shipping on certain orders when your products are in FBA. If you decide to use a courier and ship the items yourself, follow these

8. <https://www.canva.com/>

9. <https://www.amazon.com/Product-Photography-Amazon-Images/dp/B01D9A8CJI>

links to find shipping calculators for the USPS¹⁰, Federal Express¹¹, and UPS¹².

Familiarize Yourself with Amazon Fees and Pricing

You'll need to have a grasp on the fees Amazon charges before you can set your own prices. In addition, Amazon determines the shipping costs for the seller, which aren't always sufficient to cover your costs. You'll need to know what they are for your products to set your prices. Here's the shipping cost chart¹³.

Determine Your Price

Now that you understand all the fees that will be deducted from your selling price, it's time to set your retail price. Amazon offers a low price tool, which will show you the lowest price your item is being offered for by other sellers, so use this as a guide for your own prices.

That's it—once you've completed all of the above steps, you'll be an official Amazon seller. And considering that this marketplace has millions of visitors every day, it's a smart move for anyone looking to run a profitable home-based business.

Etsy

If you'd rather handcraft the items you sell, Etsy is a fast-growing marketplace that boasts almost 21 million active buyers. In fact, eCommerce Bytes¹⁴ asks merchants to rate online marketplaces every year, and last year, Etsy won first place.

Etsy sellers specialize in handmade items, craft supplies, and vintage goods. Some of the most popular handcrafted items sold on the marketplace are gifts, jewelry, perfumes, costumes, fashion accessories like scarves and hats, and handmade clothing and blankets.

10. <https://postcalc.usps.com/>

11. [https://www.fedex.com/ratefinder/home?cc=US&language=en&link=1&lid=//ship/
Pack+Rates+Corp](https://www.fedex.com/ratefinder/home?cc=US&language=en&link=1&lid=//ship/Pack+Rates+Corp)

12. https://wwwapps.ups.com/ctc/request?loc=en_US&WT.svl=SubNav

13. <http://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=1161252#credits>

14. <http://www.ecommercebytes.com/cab/abu/y215/m02/abu0375/s02>

If you're the creative type and want to run a home-based business selling your crafts, here are the steps you'll need to take to open an Etsy store.

Decide What You Will Sell

Because Etsy is a handcrafted and vintage marketplace, you can't just sell anything there. For instance, the site requires that you or your employees make what you sell, and you're not allowed to resell anything that you haven't been involved in creating. Also, if you're going to call something vintage on Etsy, it must be 20 years old.

Register

Next, you'll need to sign up as a seller on the site. It's easy, just follow this link¹⁵ and enter the information it asks for.

Name Your Store

This step is important and will take a lot of thought. Your store name should be attractive and intriguing to consumers. The best way to accomplish this is to choose a name that is three words or less, unique, and memorable. Also, remember that Etsy doesn't allow spaces in between word names, so you'll need to use capital letters to help customers visualize and remember it. For instance, if my shop name were samsvintageplates, I would spell it like this, SamsVintagePlates. Be sure to search the site to make sure your name isn't already taken. Also, search the web because if you decide to create a website later, you'll want to make sure the name is available. You can save time by checking every place at once, including Etsy, by using Namechk¹⁶. And finally, Etsy only allows you to change your shop name one time, so make sure the name encompasses not only what you will originally sell, but what you may be selling years from now. So, my hypothetical shop may be better named SamsVintageDishes instead of SamsVintagePlates in case I want to expand my offerings.

Create Your Store Banner

15. https://www.etsy.com/sell?ref=hdr&from_page=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.etsy.com%2F

16. <https://namechk.com/>

Your shop will have a banner, and it will allow customers to get a feel for what you have to offer instantly. In other words, it should be as memorable and creative as the items you sell. The banner should be 760 pixels wide X 100 pixels tall and 72 dots per inch. You can hire someone to create it for you for \$5 on sites like Fiverr¹⁷, create one for free on Canva or download GIMP¹⁸, a free image manipulation program that is comparable to PhotoShop. If you decide to create your own banner using GIMP, here's a great how-to guide¹⁹ that explains how to create an Etsy banner on the program.

Set up Your Profile

Simply answer the questions asked of you when completing this step. You'll also be asked to provide an Avatar. This is an identifying image that you'll want to be associated with your store. It can be a photo of you, or a great photo showcasing your wares. You'll also be asked to write a profile. This section should include details about your shop, what you sell, and a little about yourself so your buyers can relate to you as a person.

Begin Adding Products

Now comes the fun—it's time to stock your store. Add your items and then add the details that will help them sell, such as prices, descriptions, and photographs. Keep in mind when pricing your items that Etsy charges a .20 cent listing fee and a 3.5 percent commission fee on everything you sell.

Now that your shop is set up, you'll have to work hard to promote and let customers know about it. Do that on social media, word of mouth, paid advertising, and also by using the promotional tools²⁰ that Etsy offers its sellers.

17. <https://www.fiverr.com/>

18. <http://www.gimp.org/>

19. <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/creating-a-banner-for-your-etsy-shop-with-gimp.html>

20. https://www.etsy.com/sell?ref=hdr&from_page=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.etsy.com%2F

In addition to Etsy, there is another marketplace that sells unique and handmade items. It's not as large as Etsy, so I won't spend a lot of time on it, but if you want to check it out for yourself, it's called Ruby Lane²¹.

Bonanza

If you're looking for a marketplace that combines new and common items with a mix of unique ones, then Bonanza might be right for you. A relatively new marketplace, it's won the Seller's Choice award five years in a row for its ease of use and simplicity. If you've never heard of it, don't worry. With almost 5 million buyers visiting the site each month, it's soon to be a household name.

Here are some other benefits to selling on Bonanza:

- No listing fees and commissions are only 3.5 percent.
- When you list an item, the link is automatically sent to Google and Bing, which will allow consumers to find you.
- They offer various payment options, including PayPal.
- They tout stellar customer service
- Each store is offered a built-in chat feature and customization options.

In addition to all those benefits, perhaps the most important one is how easy the site is to use. There is no registration required, and it's so simple it only takes a couple of steps to get set up. Here they are:

1. Go to the Bonanza set up page²².
2. If you're using Bonanza as an addition to another marketplace, simply check the box of where your products are already listed, and Bonanza will automatically import them.
3. If you don't yet sell any place else, check the "I don't have an

21. <https://www.rubylane.com/>

22. https://www.bonanza.com/sell_products_online

- active store elsewhere” box and press continue.
4. You’ll then be taken on a guided tour to set up your shop.
 5. You’ll be able to set a fixed price on your items.

That’s it. There is no registration, no listing fees, and you don’t have to sign over your firstborn child to list your items on this site. No wonder Bonanza has won the Seller’s Choice Award five years in a row!

Once you sign up on the site, Bonanza offers new sellers a free guide²³ that offers ideas about how to get people to your store.

Other Alternatives

The above-listed sites aren’t the only marketplaces around, but they are the most popular, and by using them, you’ll have the best chance of building a successful home-based business. But there are two other sites I will mention because some people have had success with them.

The first is Craigslist²⁴. This site works well for people who want to sell locally, but you have to be wary of scammers and other potential dangers. The benefit to Craigslist is that it is free to list there, and they don’t take a commission. Many people do well on this site, but it’s wise to be careful when meeting the people who want to buy your items. The things that sell well on this site are appliances, furniture, tools, and other large items.

eBid²⁵ is another up and coming site that may become a bigger player in the future. It’s an auction and fixed price site just like eBay, but it will cost you less to list your items. The site runs sign up promotions for sellers that range from \$49 to \$99 for a lifetime account that charges no listing or commission fees.

This ends our discussion of marketplaces and the opportunities they give people who want to work from home. We’ll continue our on-

23. http://www.bonanza.com/site_help/seller_success/how_to_make_your_first_sales

24. <http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites>

25. <http://www.ebid.net/>

line business ideas with something near and dear to my heart: Kindle publishing. Be ready for some information you've never heard before!

Six: Get Your Kindle On (Even if You Can't Write)

The latest report from Author Earnings shows that Indie authors (self-publishers who put their own books on Amazon) earn almost half of the market share of total author earnings. That's quite significant when you consider that eBooks earn millions of dollars each year. Ebook publishing can be a great home-based business, but like all the work from home businesses I discuss in this book, it takes a lot of hard work to make it in this fiercely competitive marketplace.

Obviously, there are places to publish an eBook other than Amazon, but most indie authors report that a significant portion of their income is from Amazon, so I will concentrate on Amazon in this book. But to be fair, I will offer a little bit of information and contact links for the other sites at the end of this chapter.

Let's start by wiping out some of the most common myths about publishing books for Amazon Kindle:

- **You can publish junk and get rich.** This myth has been around so long it's viewed as truth by many newbies. At the beginning of the Kindle publishing days, some people published short books filled with a lot of nonsense and saw some success with it. But today, readers are discerning, and if someone puts a junk book on Amazon, it's quickly exposed via the review system.
- **Kindle publishing is easy.** Actually, publishing books on Kindle and becoming a success is one of the most difficult jobs you'll ever have. You not only have to write the book (or have it written for you—more about that later), but you also have to market it. And considering that there are millions of books to compete with, getting the word out about your book is a never-ending task.

- **Kindle publishing is a get rich quick scheme.** While in the early days of Kindle publishing, it was possible to publish a book to Amazon and then watch as your sales grew. Today, things are a little different. There is a lot more competition, and not many authors see instant success. For most authors, it will take some time—a year or two—to build up an audience and become known among readers.
- **You can scam the system.** Many people have tried to make a dishonest profit by taking advantage of Amazon's vast customer base, but alas, those scams are quickly discovered and shut down. For instance, the latest one has to do with the Kindle Unlimited program. Authors are paid for each page read if their book is enrolled in Kindle Select, and some authors decided to put links in the front of their books offering a prize if readers clicked on it. When they did, it took them to the back of the book. Amazon's computers marked this as a book read, and these scammers were raking up millions of "pages read" and cashing in on it. Needless to say, Amazon caught on, and that scam is no longer working. In short, you can't scam the system and build a business. If you're looking to build a long-term business with Kindle Publishing, you'll have to do it the old fashioned way—steady and true.

If becoming a Kindlepreneur sounds like something you'd like to pursue, here are the steps you'll need to take to see your book published.

Decide on a Genre

eBooks fall into two categories: fiction and non-fiction. And as a book publisher, you'll have to decide which types of books you want to write. (You could also write in both genres. I do, but I use pen names to differentiate them.)

Fiction books are stories and have many categories such as romance, mystery, thriller and suspense, Christian, science fiction, fantasy, young adult, and more. Non-fiction books cover topics like parenting, business, money, health, medicine, self-help, sports, history, entertainment, law, and many, many others.

You can do well in both categories, and even better in both. But before you see any amount of success, you have to write the book, which takes us to the next step in the process.

Write a Book. (Or Hire Someone Else to do it for You)

Countless courses teach people how to write books, and while there are some finer points of the art that every would-be author needs to learn, the basic principle is this: sit down and write. Too many people spend years learning to write and never actually begin their book. When I first began writing, I was given the best advice I've ever heard on the subject. This professional told me to allow myself to write a bad first draft. To stop thinking about what the reader would like, or even if the first draft made sense or had plot inconsistencies. And you know what? It's all I needed to sit down and begin my first book.

If you have the desire to write your own books, there are some rules you will have to learn. For example, no reader wants to read a book filled with grammatical errors or a storyline that doesn't make sense. Because of this, I'll provide you with some links where you can research the craft and learn the basics. But only if you promise to take what you can and then get to the task at hand: writing that book.

- Creative Writing Now¹. This is a free online course that teaches you about creating plots, developing characters, adding tension to your story and writing dialogues, plus much more.
- Creative Writing Course². This course is set up in modules,

1. <http://www.creative-writing-now.com/how-to-write-a-story.html>

2. <http://creative-writing-course.thecraftywriter.com/releasing-your-creativity/>

and you can do it at your own pace. You'll learn how to release your creativity, write short stories (which also sell on Kindle) and learn which point of view to use in your books.

What to Do if You Can't (Or Don't Want to) Write

Not everyone is a writer, but that doesn't mean you can't start a business publishing books. There are plenty of freelance writers who will write a book for you, and then you can package the book and sell it. I can't imagine that this would work for fiction, so if you're going to outsource your writing, I suggest you stick with non-fiction. Here are the steps you should take to hire a writer.

- **Decide on your topic and then do the necessary research.** You can either do the research yourself, or pay someone to do it for you. You should save all of the links where the research is located.
- **Start looking for a writer.** Sites like Upwork³ are great for finding freelancers of all types, including writers. There, you can post a job for free, and then sit back and wait for the offers to come in. Ask each applicant for a writing sample, and if you like their work, you can negotiate a price. Expect to pay about \$250 for a 100-page book. You may get samples from people who don't speak English as their first language, but as long as their English skills are excellent, that shouldn't be a problem. Be sure to ask for plenty of samples before you decide on a writer. Then you will need to set a deadline and put the funds into escrow. The great thing about hiring on Upwork is that the writer won't be paid until you receive the work and approve it.
- **Send your research to the writer and wait.** It's now up to the writer to create your book. You should ask them to send

3. <https://www.upwork.com>

you each chapter as they complete it. This accomplishes two things: it allows you to keep track of their progress, and it helps to ensure the deadline will be met.

Preparing the Book for Publication

Now that you have a completed manuscript from the writer, you'll need to do a few things before you're ready to hit the "publish" button.

Edit the Book

Just because you hired a professional writer, that doesn't mean your manuscript will be error-free. Depending on the writer you hired, it may only require a few edits, or you may have to edit the entire thing with a fine-tooth comb. Keep in mind that good reviews will play a major part in the success of your book, and a poorly edited book will not only disappoint readers, but they will leave negative reviews because of it. And that will prevent a lot of people from buying your book.

So, if you're not a grammar expert yourself, how can you edit the book? I recommend doing this in two parts.

- Start by running your manuscript through an online editing program to catch any misspellings, word inconsistencies, punctuation mark errors, and style issues. If you only do a chapter at a time, you can use some great programs for free. My favorite is ProWritingAid⁴, which also offers a paid subscription for \$35 a year. You'll also find excellent online software at editminion⁵. And you can run 20 documents

4. <https://prowritingaid.com/>

through Cliché Cleaner⁶, which helps you identify commonly used phrases and suggests alternatives. Once your free trial is over, the program is \$12.95 a month.

- Hire a proofreader or editor. This will be the most important investment you make in your book. If you wrote a fiction book, you'd need an editor to check not only grammar but also plot inconsistencies. This is a necessary part of publishing fiction, and if you skip it, your book won't be the best it can, and readers will let potential buyers know that in the reviews. If you've paid a writer to create a non-fiction book according to your research and outline, you'll simply need a proofreader to catch all the grammatical errors the online editing program missed. The program won't catch them all, but if you've reduced them by using it, you'll pay less for the proofreader. You can find proofreaders on Fiverr⁷ and UpWork⁸.

Format the Book

Once you have a completed and polished manuscript, you'll need to have the book formatted, so it's acceptable to Amazon. I use Fiverr⁹ for this process because, although you can do it yourself, it's frustratingly complicated. You can hire someone on Fiverr for \$5 to do this for you.

If you want to do it yourself, you will need to upload a Word file to KD Publishing and then use their free previewer¹⁰ to

5. <http://editminion.com/>

6. <http://www.cliches.biz/clichecleaner/index.html>

7. <https://www.fiverr.com/categories/writing-translation/proofreading-editing>

8. <https://www.upwork.com/hire/proofreaders/>

9. <https://www.fiverr.com/>

10. <http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?docId=1000765261>

check the file. If you want to be able to add specialized chapter headings, page breaks, and a table of contents, you will have to create an HTML file and then download Kindle-Gen¹¹ to turn your Word document into a Mobi file, which is Amazon Kindle-friendly. Next, you'll need to use Scrivener¹² (It costs \$40), and it will create a table of contents and allow you to format the book to your specifications.

Or...you could just head over to Fiverr and pay someone \$5 to do it for you.

Design a Cover

Designing a great cover is one of the most important things you can do to ensure your books sell. Many beginners try and design their own cover using sites like Canva, but unless you're truly talented, it won't produce a cover that makes people want to buy your book. You have many options when it comes to book covers. Here are a few:

- **Purchase a pre-made book cover.** Some book designers create generic book covers and sell them to authors. You can find some pretty good ones if you look hard enough. The prices really vary on these but plan to spend between \$45 and a few hundred for a good one. Find them on sites like Go on Write¹³, where you'll find an extensive selection of great covers starting at \$45, The Book Cover Designer¹⁴ where you'll find more than 5,000 designs starting at \$50 and eBook Indie Covers¹⁵, where you'll find a substantial selection that

11. <http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?docId=1000765211>

12. <http://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php>

13. <http://www.goonwrite.com/index.htm>

14. <http://thebookcoverdesigner.com/>

runs \$40 to \$80.

- **Crowdsourcing it.** Sites like crowdSPRING¹⁶ allow you post a project, set a price, and then watch as candidates from all over the world submit their designs to you. You will be able to collaborate with them, ask for revisions, and then finally make a choice. It's the best way to see the full possibilities of your cover idea come to life. Prices start at \$299.
- **Use Canva.** If you have a creative streak, you may be able to create your own eBook cover. Keep in mind that Amazon is full of amateur book covers, and frankly, buyers tend to steer clear of them. But if you truly have a knack, you can create a cover for the price of a stock photo with Canva¹⁷. And it is possible. I created one of my fiction covers, and it sells great. But I had someone with a design eye tweak it before I made it public. I also created the cover of the book you're reading now for free on Canva.
- **Hire a photo manipulator.** Finally, if you have an image in your mind of the cover you want, but you can't find a photo, you can hire a photo manipulator to combine images, change the color of it, or layer and put filters on it. I'm in the process of doing that now for one of my books, and I found a great provider at UpWork¹⁸. The cover will cost me about \$100.

Remember, people really do judge a book by its cover, so you mustn't skip on this step. Potential customers will not only see your cover on your book page, but also on your author page, the "also bought" section of other people's books, the top 100 lists, and the "also

15. <http://ebookindiecovers.com/premade-ebook-covers-2/>

16. <https://www.crowdspring.com>

17. <https://www.canva.com/>

18. <https://www.upwork.com/hire/photo-manipulation-freelancers/>

viewed” section. Here are a few additional tips to ensure your cover gets the right kind of attention from buyers:

- Make it stand out. You can do this with bright colors, bold text, and an image that makes people want to know more.
- It should look good in the standard 160 pixels X 250 pixels, where it will be shown on your book page, but also in the tinier version of 60 pixels X 90 pixels when it’s shown on the “customers also bought” section of other pages.
- To submit your cover, Amazon requires a 1563 pixel X 2500 pixel image, and it must have a 1.6 height to width ratio.
- Ask readers for input. If you’re undecided about which cover you think is best, why not ask potential readers? Using Survey Monkey¹⁹ and social media, you can send out a survey and ask people to choose between a few designs. It’s a great way to find out which cover appeals to the masses.

Choose Your Book’s Program

The first choice you’ll have to make when submitting your book to Amazon is whether you will publish it on Kindle Direct Publishing²⁰ or KDP Select²¹. There are some significant differences between the two options. If you publish with Kindle Direct Publishing, your book will be available on Amazon, but you will also have the option of putting it on other platforms such as Smashwords, Apple iBooks, Kobo, your own website, as well as all the other online bookstores. But when you enroll your book in KDP Select, you give Amazon exclusivity, and you won’t be able to sell it anyplace else, not even on your own website. When you enroll a book in KDP Select, you do so for 90 days at a time

19. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

20. <https://kdp.amazon.com/>

21. <https://kdp.amazon.com/select>

and take it out of the program once your time is up. But that exclusivity comes with some major benefits. They are:

- **You will be able to promote your book.** You can choose between 5 free days in the KDP Select period, or seven days of Countdown Deals²² within the 90 day enrollment period. Both of these types of promotions help draw shoppers to your books and increase your rankings.
- **You will earn extra income on borrows.** Amazon has a subscription reading program where readers pay about \$10 a month to read as many books enrolled in KDP Select as they can. And while you won't receive money for a sale from these borrows, you are paid for every page read. The amount varies from month to month, but it often averages about half a cent per page. That means if you have 20,000 pages read in a month, you'll earn an additional \$100 in income.
- **You'll reach new readers.** By appealing to two types of readers—those who buy books they want to read, and those who are members of Amazon Prime and have access to the Lending Library, which is made up of books enrolled in Kindle Unlimited—you will get more exposure for your books, and you can use this to promote yourself. For instance, if you write a fiction or non-fiction series of books, you can offer the first one in Kindle Unlimited, and if subscribers want to read the rest of the books in the series, they'll have to purchase them.
- **Your rankings will improve.** Amazon's algorithms are set up so that when a Kindle Unlimited borrow downloads your book, it improves your ranking. If you promote your book on to Kindle Unlimited users via social media and get enough borrows, you'll not only earn money for each page read, but

22. <https://kdp.amazon.com/help?topicId=A3288N75MH14B8>

your book will move farther up in the rankings, which will allow buyers to find it.

Set Your Price

Whatever program you enroll your book in, you will be asked to select between a 30 percent and a 70 percent royalty. If your book is priced below \$2.99, you will only be able to earn a 30 percent royalty on the sales. But if it's priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99, you'll earn 70 percent of the sale. Obviously, earning 70 percent of your book's sales makes sense, so I recommend setting your price within that range. Be sure to check out your competition and set your book's price accordingly.

Upload Your Book

The moment is finally here—it's time to upload your book for the entire world to see. Amazon makes the process easy as all you have to do is follow their prompts, but there are a few key things you should that will help your book achieve visibility.

- **Choose your categories carefully.** When uploading your book, you will be able to select two categories. These are important because you'll want to choose a category where your book can be ranked well. You would be wise to check out the categories your competitor's books are in and select those. Not every category is shown on the options, and if you can't find the one you want, simply email the help desk at Amazon and ask them to put your book in the category you want.
- **Select your keywords.** These keywords are what help readers find your book, so be sure to think carefully about what they would search for when looking for a book like yours. Amazon only allows you seven keywords, so make them matter. For example, for this book, I choose home-based business, work from home, entrepreneur, make money from home, and

other similar keywords.

- **Upload your cover and book file.** All that's left is for you to upload your cover image and book file. After your book file loads, click on the option that allows you to preview it for free online and check to make sure there are no errors in the file. Then click submit, and your book will go live within 12 hours.

Get Reviews

Have you ever seen a book on Amazon that didn't have any reviews? It makes you wonder what's wrong with the book, doesn't it? You'll need to get some reviews as quickly as possible, but keep in mind that Amazon is serious about cracking down on fake reviews. Here are four legitimate ways to get reviews for your book.

- **Ask for reviews.** Send the book to people and ask them to read it and leave an honest review for it on Amazon.
- **Seek out Amazon reviewers.** Find books similar to yours and look at the reviews. Click on each reviewer's name, and if there is contact information for them, get in touch with them and tell them you have written a similar book and would be happy to give them a review copy. Ask them to read it and leave an honest review.
- **Give it away.** Run a couple of free day promotions if your book is enrolled in KDP Select. Readers will download hundreds of copies, and some of them will leave reviews.
- **Send your book to reviewers.** There are many blogs and Facebook pages that offer reviews in exchange for a review copy of books. Most of these sites concentrate on specific genres, so you'll need to google your "genre + reviewers" to find them.

Promote Your Book

Now that your book is live on Amazon and you have some good reviews, it's time to begin promoting it. If you enrolled it in KDP Select, you could use your free days or Kindle Countdown Deals to get the word out about it. And if you didn't, you'll need to use social media, word of mouth, and paid advertising to tell people about it. Be sure to track your results on your KDP account. It will give you a real-time report of sales, the number of pages read for Kindle Unlimited, and free downloads when you run promotions.

Think about Publishing Wide

If you choose not to give Amazon exclusivity, then you'll also need to upload your book to other sites. There are two main players, and they send your book to multiple outlets for you, making the job easy. The two sites you should about are:

Smashwords²³: This site is a little more difficult to use, but it's been around for longer and has a great reputation. To upload your book to this site, you'll have to go back to Fiverr and your book formatted again for Smashwords. After it's uploaded, the site will send it out to all the major retailers and libraries.

Draft 2 Digital.²⁴ This relative newcomer has made things easier by allowing authors to upload a simple word file. And while the site is easier to use than Smashwords, its commission is a bit higher.

Start Your Next Book

Whew, that was a lot of work, wasn't it? But you can't just sit back and enjoy your accomplishment because successful Kindlepreneurs publish a book about every 3-4 months. The good news is that it's easier the second time around. Some well-known authors like Steve Scott²⁵, who has published 39 books on Amazon and made a fortune, know that the key to making it in this business is continually releasing new books.

23. <https://www.smashwords.com/>

24. <https://www.draft2digital.com/>

25. <http://www.amazon.com/Steve-Scott/c/B0098NFKNM>

What if you like the idea of writing for a living, but don't think books are the right path for you? In the next chapter, I'll show you how to build a writing empire by selling other types of writing. And guess what? You can do this even if you can't write. Shall we move on?

Chapter Seven: Build a Freelance Writing Empire (Without Writing a Word)

If you know anything about internet marketing, you understand how important content marketing is. There are almost a billion websites on the internet, and the number one way they vie for the attention of consumers is with content marketing and SEO. Think about it, when you're thinking about buying a product, what's the first thing you do? If you're like most consumers, you'll google it to try and find out more information about it. And the website that offers you the quality information you're looking for is where you likely buy from.

All those articles you read online are put there for one reason: to draw consumers to a website in hopes of a sale. But who writes those billions of online articles and blog posts? Freelance writers.

And that's where this home-based business idea comes into play. Freelance writers are the backbone of any internet marketer's plan, and they are in very high demand. In fact, a recent study¹ shows that 94 percent of small business marketers use content marketing. That's a lot of demand for freelance writers, but **unlike many other authors, I'm not going to tell you that you can make a killing with this kind of business. At least not all by yourself.**

I've worked as a freelance writer for 20 years, and it didn't take long for me to figure out that my income was drastically limited by the hours in a day. For example, if my average was \$25 an hour (which is pretty common for beginners) and I worked 8 hours a day, I would be limited to earning \$200 a day, which for a five-day workweek is about \$24,000 a year.

That's nice, but is it really all we can or should expect from a home-based business? I didn't think so, and I began to experiment to try and

1. http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/B2B_SMB_2014_CMI.pdf

figure out how I could run a more profitable freelance writing business. After some time, I finally hit on the answer: outsourcing. Let me tell you how it works in a nutshell; then, I'll break it down more thoroughly in this chapter.

Because freelance writers only have some much time in a day, they are limited in how much work they can take on. For instance, let's imagine that you work as a freelancer and can write four quality articles a day. Each article takes you two hours to write. That would be impossible unless you want to work around the clock. And that limits your ability to take on new clients, additional work, or extra projects. In other words, you can't reach your earning potential because you simply don't have enough time.

This is the point I was in my career, and let me tell you, I was frustrated. I found myself having to turn down new clients, and the only way I could earn more money was to work twelve-hour days and most weekends. That's not most people's goal when running a home-based business.

So I began to look for other writers to take up the slack. I would hire them, pay them less than I was earning, and still earn a profit on the articles. I became an outsourcer, and soon, I not only produced more than four articles a day but dozens—and soon after that, I was outsourcing hundreds of articles per week. My income rose substantially, and I arrived at a place that I only wrote when I felt like it, and when I did, I charged four times the amount than I used to. I had built my very own writing empire.

If you have entrepreneurship in your blood, I can already see your mind spinning at the possibilities. Is it really possible to profit from other people's work and make a lot of money? The short answer is yes. But there are a lot of small details that can make or break a business like this, and if you do it wrong, you will not succeed. Period.

What follows below is a brief outline of how to build a freelance writing business of this type. I have just released a full-length book on

the subject, *How to Build a Writing Empire in 30 Days or Less*², that explains the process in more detail (there is simply no way to include it all in this short book.)

But for now, here are the steps you should take to build your own writing empire.

Familiarize Yourself with the Writing World

When I first started in the writing business, I had to send story ideas via snail mail to magazines in hopes of getting an assignment. After the letter was sent, I would wait weeks, or sometimes months, just to hear back from them. And then I would write the article, send it in again, and then wait weeks or months more to be paid. Boy have times (thankfully) changed.

Today it's possible to receive an assignment and get paid the same day. But if you're new to the writing world, you'll need to have a thorough understanding of types of writing people pay for. Here's a list of some of the most common writing jobs.

- **Article writing.** Websites need articles—lots of them. And the owners of those websites pay freelance writers to write them. The articles are about every topic you can imagine—from socks to pet care to management integration. A good freelance writer can switch back and forth between topics with ease because the internet makes it possible to research whatever topic you're writing about in a snap. Most internet articles range from 400 words to 1,500, and they need to be written for search engine optimization (SEO). I'll explain more about that later.
- **Blog writing.** You know all those blogs you follow? Chances are the person you are following doesn't even write the posts. That's right, I've ghostwritten blog posts for people you would never imagine. They pay freelancers to do it either

2. <https://www.amazon.com/Build-Writing-Empire-Days-Less-ebook/dp/B01EVX19G8>

because they don't know how to write, or they just don't have time. But either way, that's a whole lot of blogs in need of writers, and guess who the bloggers go to for the posts? That's right, freelance writers.

- **eBooks.** Many business owners want to publish an eBook to help promote their business, but the problem is, they don't know how to write. That's just another opportunity for freelance writers. They work with the business owner and produce an eBook that the owner will usually give away on their website to brand them as an expert in their field.
- **White papers.** Internet marketers use white papers as a persuasive means to promote their products or services. The paper typically presents a problem and then uses facts to tell the reader how to solve it. It's a cross between a technical paper and a brochure that promotes a product. The length varies on these documents, but are generally between 6 and 8 pages—although some clients will want you write white papers that are 50 pages long.
- **Newsletters.** Freelance writers are hired to both print newsletters and e-newsletters, although the trend today is toward the digital type. When doing this type of writing, you (or your writer) will need to thoroughly research the business to have a complete understanding of it.
- **Social media posts.** As social media plays such an important part of today's marketing campaigns, website owners are paying freelance writers to craft and post their social media posts.
- **Press releases.** Press releases are not only issued when a business has an important announcement but today, they're also used as marketing tools. Writing a press release is an art, but once you get it, you'll be in high demand.
- **Product descriptions.** Have you ever wondered who writes

the descriptions for the products listed on your favorite website? You guessed it—freelance writers. These are lucrative gigs because you'll be paid more for fewer words.

- **Website content.** When someone opens a website, they need content for all of the pages on the site, and they typically turn to freelance writers to provide it. They'll need words for the landing page, about us page, contact us page, products page, and every other page on their site.

Those are just some of the more common writing jobs that freelancers tackle every day. But as a freelancer, you never know what your client will ask for. I've had clients ask me to write creative bios that tell stories, and a series of short stories for one internet marketer who wanted to test the effectiveness of certain keywords. And speaking of keywords, let's talk about them and the importance of SEO.

Keywords and SEO

When you write articles, or just about anything else for the internet, you have to use keywords and SEO tactics. In fact, it's expected from freelance writers, and if you don't know how to use them, you won't succeed in this business. Let's start with a basic definition of the two.

- **Keywords.** These are the words people type into their search engine when looking for something. For instance, if you want to buy a bedspread that matches your décor, you may type "blue queen-sized bedspread" into Google. The words you typed in are known as keywords, and they are the basis for everything written on the web. Most of the time, clients will have already done the keyword research and provide you with the keywords they want you to use. But occasionally, a client

will ask you to do it. I don't have the space to go into the specifics of this art here, but I will provide in-depth instructions in the full-length book.

- **SEO.** SEO stands for search engine optimization, and it's the method of getting the search engines to "notice" a website. Once that happens, the site shows up higher in search engine results, and more people will be able to find it. The basics of SEO are using the proper keywords, deciding how many times to place them on a page (called keyword density), and other tactics that help website owners get more traffic.

A Word About Bylines

Many times newbie writers get upset when they realize that they won't get a byline on an article, blog post, or other pieces of writing they've written. Unfortunately, that's not usually the way it works. Most internet writing is contributed to the website owner, blog owner, or a random name chosen by the website. You will have opportunities to see your name on some of your work, but don't expect it to appear next to everything you've written.

How Much Does it Cost to Get Started?

Just like the other businesses I discuss in this book, you can start a writing business for little or no money. All you really need is a computer and an internet connection. Seriously—that's it. You can get fancy if you want to and create a (free) website using a hosting service like Weebly³, but that would just be the icing on the cake. Most of your clients, at least in the beginning, will come from job boards, and you only need an internet connection to reach them.

Build a Portfolio

After you've done a little research by reading popular blog posts and internet articles, you should have a good idea about what people look for when they hire a freelance writer. So now it's time to jump in.

3. <https://www.weebly.com>

You'll need to decide whether you want to try your own hand at writing the first articles, or whether you immediately want to hire other writers to do the work for you.

If you want to try to write some articles on your own, I suggest you choose a couple of topics you're familiar with and write a few articles and blog posts about it. This will create a portfolio of your writing, which customers will ask to see before they hire you. If you're going to hire another writer right off the bat, you'll need to ask them for samples of their work so you can present them to the client. Let's talk about hiring that first writer.

Hire Your First Writer

Hiring your first writer is perhaps one of the most important things you'll do in your business. The writer must be able to adhere to strict deadlines, write well, and communicate daily with you. To find this writer, you will need to place ads in various places asking for applications. Some of the places I've had the best luck at are:

- UpWork⁴. This is the go-to place for hiring freelancers of all types. Once you set up an account, you'll be able to post your job and then wait for the applications to come in. When posting your job, be sure to include a good job description and ask for samples of their work. You should also ask that only applicants with SEO and keyword experience apply. Finally, you will get a lot of applicants who are from other countries and speak English as a second language. Some people hire these writers because they charge significantly less, but in my experience, I've found the work is very difficult to edit. Because of this, I only hire writers who speak English as their first language.
- Craigslist⁵. You can post a nationwide job posting on this site

4. <https://www.upwork.com/hire/article-writers/>

5. <http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites>

and get applicants from all over the country. Be sure to ask for the same amount of information and samples that you do from your other applicants.

- AllFreelanceWriting.com⁶. This site is specifically designed for people looking to hire freelance writers, and you'll have a choice between hiring a new writer for minimum pay to a high-end professional.
- Freelancer.com⁷. This is another great site that people use to find freelancers of all types. Many writers look for jobs on this site.

Once you begin to receive applications, it's time to dig a little deeper. Here are some keys to making sure you hire the right writer the first time around.

- **Be clear about your expectations.** Communicate with the writers that you are looking for a long-term relationship with a professional, and you expect that deadlines will always be met, the quality will always be top-notch, and then outline your preferred method of communication. For example, you can ask that the writer is available via email or Skype during regular business hours.
- **Study the samples.** You asked the applicants to send you samples of their work with their applications, and now is the time to go over them. Do they understand the basics of grammar and punctuation, or are there spelling errors and structural problems in their work? Is the writing friendly and

6. <https://allfreelancewriting.com/>

7. <https://www.freelancer.com/hire/>

Writers?gclid=Cj0KEQjwLm3BRDjnML3h9ic_vkBEiQABa5oeclzGYKJvEMuqtJEv2XDBehctr2a3Oz1q9oG_Zl1XglaApgy8P8HAQ&utm_expId=294858-406.iW92aLPwSmGCwqvH7Tr3EA.0&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

engaging, or does it sound like a college thesis? As you go over the samples, identify writers that you would feel good about having represented your business.

- **Ask about SEO and Keyword experience.** Make sure they're knowledgeable in this important area by asking for specific samples where they've used them.
- **Ask for their rates and turnaround times.** Since you will be selling their work at a profit for yourself, you need to find writers who don't charge a lot. As for turnaround times, you will set the deadlines, but you need to have a conversation with them about what kind of turnaround times they're comfortable with. In other words, can they produce one 500 word article a day or twenty?
- **Find out their total experience.** Ask what kind of writing they've done in the past. Have they only written blog posts, or are they also experienced in press releases and white papers? You'll need to understand what they know before you begin making assignments.

Look for Work

Now that you have a good idea of the market and your first writer ready to go, it's time to get some work. I recommend that you start small because this first job will test your new writer. Go to the same job boards where you found your writer, but this time, don't search as an employer, but as a writing company looking for work. Study the job postings and look for jobs that contain just a few articles about a general subject. Place your bid on a few projects, keeping it low enough that you have a good chance of receiving the job, but not so low that you won't make a profit after paying your writer.

Once you receive your first job, send the project details to your writer, setting the deadline a few days before the work is due. This allows you some leeway in case your writer doesn't complete the job, and

you have to do it yourself or quickly find another writer. Now all you have to do is sit back and wait. I don't recommend that you continue bidding on jobs until you're sure your writer is going to work out.

Complete the First Assignment

Once your writer submits the articles to you, run them through a free online editing program to ensure there are no blatant errors. Programs like ProWritingAid⁸ are great. Next, you should make sure that the writer didn't plagiarize any web content, which would cost you future work. Copyscape⁹ is a great online tool and allows you to cut and paste articles into their search box, and the program will check the internet for matching content. If the article exactly matches existing content on the web, it means the writer didn't write the article, but instead found it online and turned it in as original work. If it comes back clean, you can feel free to submit it to your client. It cost 5 cents to run a search. A \$5 minimum purchase is required, but you can save the credits and use them over time.

Collect and Send Payments

Now that the project is complete, your client will pay you. Depending on which site you're working on, it could be immediately or a couple of days. You will also need to pay your writer—quickly. If he or she did a good job, you should keep them happy so they'll continue writing for you, and one of the best ways to do that is to pay them promptly. Don't wait until the client pays you because it's irrelevant in the eyes of your writer. You hired them to do a job, and now they will expect payment.

Keep in mind that a lot of freelance writing work comes from repeat customers, so it's important to not only do an excellent job for your client but also to try and establish a working relationship with them. The best way you can do this is always doing what you say you

8. <https://prowritingaid.com/>

9. <http://www.copyscape.com/premium.php>

will, meet your deadlines, turn in quality work, and let them know that you're available for more projects.

Gear Up for Your Next Project

Now that you've had a successful project, it's time to gear up for some serious business. Confirm with your writer the number of articles they can turn in per day and then begin looking for more work. Continue with this until your writer has reached the limit of the amount of work he or she can do, and then if you feel comfortable enough, begin the search for another writer. Simply follow the same steps you did when you found the first one, and once you've hired another, begin to search for more work to assign to them.

As you can see, there is no limit to the amount of work you can produce in this type of set up. You can literally do hundreds of articles per day, without ever writing a word.

As I told you at the beginning of this chapter, I can only scratch the surface for this type of home-based business because there is so much to learn. If you haven't already signed up to follow me on Amazon, click this link¹⁰ and do so to be notified when the full-length book comes out (later this year).

Well, that's our five home-based online business ideas. If you want to read about home-based business ideas that don't involve the internet, continue to read part two of this book where I'll show you how to set up five offline businesses you can run from your house.

10. <http://goo.gl/17iI2C>

Part Two: Offline Home-Based Business

Chapter Eight: Six Things You Must Do Before Starting an Offline Home-Based Business

So, you decided that an online home-based business just isn't for you because you'd rather spend your time dealing with people in person and handling products. That's okay. There is still a huge demand for traditional businesses, so there's plenty of money to be made. But before you decide on a business, I thought it would be wise to give you a list of 6 things that everyone who runs a traditional business from their home needs to do. Keep in mind that some businesses require additional steps, and I'll deal with them in the chapters specific to those ideas.

But before we get to those, here are six things you will need to do for sure before you set up shop in your home.

Write a Business Plan

Many newbie entrepreneurs try to skip this step, but if you want your business to be the most successful that it can, you should write one. The good news is that because you're going to open a business that doesn't take a lot of cash, you won't need the complicated novel-length business plans that banks require. Instead, you can get away with a 1-3 page plan that simply outlines your mission, goals, and financial strategies. You can find a free template at bplans.com¹.

Get a Mentor

Who wouldn't want to profit from some advice from someone who's been there? Luckily, you can get free advice from people who have built businesses themselves. Go to [score.org](https://www.score.org)² and ask to be assigned a mentor of your own.

1. <http://www.bplans.com/members/downloads/business-plan-template/>

2. <https://www.score.org/>

Determine the Legal Structure of Your Business

You will need to set up your business legally, and you'll have a few structures to choose from. Most home-based businesses are set up as sole proprietorships, which means there is no legal line between you and your business. In other words, if your business gets into debt or gets sued, the debtors or court can take your personal assets. To prevent this, you can structure your business as a corporation, which will protect your personal assets as long as you keep them separate from your personal ones. For an in-depth overview of all your options, here is a comprehensive guide³ put out by entrepreneur.com.

Register Your Business Name

Next, you'll need to register your business name with either your local county clerk's office or your state. Use this interactive chart⁴ where you can click on your state and find out the requirements specific to your area.

Register for State and Local Taxes

In addition to paying federal income taxes, you will have to pay state and local taxes, such as income tax, disability tax, and employment taxes. But each state has different requirements about how you should register and what you will need to pay. Here is a state-by-state list⁵ of links you can follow to find out the requirements in your state.

Apply for Business Licenses and Permits

Depending on the type of business you open, you may have to apply for a business license or a permit. You can check to see if you need any federal licenses here⁶ and find a link to your state's business license office here⁷.

3. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/75118>

4. <https://www.sba.gov/content/register-with-state-agencies>

5. <https://www.sba.gov/content/learn-about-your-state-and-local-tax-obligations>

6. <https://www.sba.gov/content/what-federal-licenses-and-permits-does-your-business-need>

7. <https://www.sba.gov/content/what-state-licenses-and-permits-does-your-business-need>

**HOW TO WORK FROM HOME AND MAKE MONEY: 13
PROVEN HOME-BASED BUSINESSES YOU CAN START
TODAY**

75

Okay, now that we've dealt with the administrative stuff, let's dig into five more business ideas that are run offline and from your home. We'll first talk about one that is raging hot right now—the cottage food industry.

Chapter Nine: Turn Your Foodie Love into Serious Cash

So, you're a foodie. Or maybe you just have an artistic flair, and you express yourself in the kitchen. Whatever the case, if people are constantly complimenting you on your food, you have a secret recipe that people beg you for, a green thumb that produces vegetables and fruit that your neighbors envy, or you have a knack for planning and putting together meals in a special way, a home-based food business might be right for you.

Because so many people are into artisan foods these days, this is one of the hottest home-based businesses you can start. But there is a lot to do to get prepared for this type of business. The most important thing you'll need to do is figure out which type of home-based food business you want to start. And you have plenty of options that are only limited by your imagination. Here are a few:

- **Home-based food production.** If you have that secret recipe and want to mass produce it and sell locally, you can now operate this type of business in many states thanks to the new cottage food laws that are passing in more and more states. (Check the link in the next section to find out if your state allows it.) Many entrepreneurs have made it big by making home-based goods, including cupcakes, pies, and cakes, or other artisan food items. There is a highly rated course¹ on Udemy that provides an entire plan for this type of business.
- **Food truck or bicycle delivery.** Another trend that is making a big splash across the landscape is the current obsession with food trucks. I've included this in the section only because it relates to food. You can't start this type of

1. <https://www.udemy.com/how-to-start-a-home-based-food-business/>

business cheaply because the cost of the truck alone is very high. But if you happen to have some cash to start a food business, this could be a profitable one. If you love the idea of a mobile food business, but don't want to spend that much cash, think about using a bicycle with a trailer hitched to it. You can easily start with one, and as your business grows, hire other bicyclists to deliver your goods. Max Krusshar started PieCycle², which is a mobile food delivery business powered by bicycles. He's had so much success the Food Network did a show about him.

- **Farmer's markets.** If you grow vegetables or fruits, bake delicious loaves of bread and desserts, make a great homemade peanut or almond butter, granola, or can salsas and jams, you belong in a farmer's market. People today want to know where their food comes from, and if you visit a farmer's market in your area, you'll quickly see the potential. These markets are packed with visitors every weekend, and many vendors work both Saturdays and Sundays to fulfill the needs of the masses. When you sell your goods at a market, you can typically ask more because customers understand that what you're selling is quality. Keep in mind that if you want to go this route, you need to contact the managers at the farmer's markets in your area and submit an application.
- **A wholesale food business.** If your goal is to mass-produce food and then sell it to stores, then you'll need to learn about how grocery and specialty stores purchase their products. Because of the amount of food you'll need to produce to supply retail stores, you'll likely have to rent a commercial kitchen, at least part-time, to fulfill the demand. You can find them in your area on this site³, rent one from someone who

2. <https://www.facebook.com/thepicycle/>

3. <http://www.commercialkitchenforrent.com/>

lists a kitchen on a site called Culinary Incubator⁴, or you can contact local schools, restaurants, or churches and ask about renting their kitchens on the days they don't use them. You can find a great book to read on this very in-depth topic here⁵.

- **Catering.** If you have a knack for putting together a delicious meal, planning menus, and like being around crowds, you might consider a catering business. You can become a general caterer, or you can operate a catering business that specializes in business functions, weddings, or other special events. And if you live in a state that has enacted food cottage laws, you can prepare the food in your own home and then travel to the event location.
- **Sell food online.** I know this is the offline section of the book, but I would be negligent if I didn't include online food businesses in this section. People purchase artisan foods online from individual websites or boutique websites like Etsy. There are a lot of federal regulations that apply to selling food online, and you can find a list⁶ of all the requirements on the FDA's website.

That's a lot of options, isn't it? But before you decide on the type of food business you want to begin, you'll need to check with your state. Cottage food laws, which are the laws that govern home-based food businesses, vary by state. Forrage.com has an easy-to-use chart⁷ that breaks down the laws state-by-state.

I obviously can't list the specifics about each type of food business in this book because of space constraints, but the next book in this se-

4. <http://www.culinaryincubator.com/>

5. <http://www.amazon.com/Getting-Specialty-Product-Store-Shelves/dp/0692213287>

6. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Industry/ucm322302.htm>

7. <http://forrager.com/laws/>

ries, *How to Start a Home-Based Food Business: Turn Your Foodie Dreams into Serious Income* (Work from Home Series: Book 3), will be released this fall, and it includes all the information you need for each type of food business. Sign up at my website, RainMakerPress.com⁸, and be the first to know when the book is live.

But for now, I recommend that if one of the ideas piques your interest, you do some research about that specific idea and talk to some people in the industry. Frequently, successful business owners are willing to talk to newbies and give them tips to prevent them from making mistakes.

But while I can't go into the details about each type of food business, I can provide you with a general step-by-step list that applies to most food-based businesses. (Remember, the six items I listed in the previous chapter are required for any type of business, so be sure to complete those before moving on to this list.)

Know the Law

We've already talked about the cottage food laws and how important they are, and that's why your first step should be to research the laws in your state to find out what is and isn't allowed. These laws affect business licensing, zoning, and permits and are different in every state. And remember, if your state doesn't allow you to use your own kitchen to prepare your goods, you can always rent a commercial kitchen or make a deal with a church, school, or restaurant during its off-hours.

Research Your Market

You must determine whether your products will do well in the marketplace before you put time and money into your new business. Even if you think you make the best wedding cakes in the world, if brides don't like them, your business won't succeed. The best way to test your products is to form a focus group of people you don't know who will give you their honest opinion. If that goes well, begin by selling to a few local shops to see if consumers buy your goods. And remember, if they

8. <http://www.rainmakerpress.com/>

don't sell, it doesn't mean your food isn't good. You may just need to change the packaging.

Design Your Packaging

For your products to move off the shelves, you need to package them in a way that makes people want to buy them. If you're not the creative type when it comes to packaging, hiring a packaging expert would be a great investment. You'll want to purchase your packaging supplies in bulk from companies like Bags & Bows⁹, Excel¹⁰, or this list¹¹ of unique specialty food packaging companies.

Find a Bulk Supplier

To keep costs down, you'll need to purchase your raw food supplies in bulk. And depending on which type of food you sell, you may have to use more than one supplier to get what you need. Start looking at the most popular bulk food suppliers like foodservicedirect.com¹², Sysco¹³, and U.S. Foods.¹⁴ You may want to look for local sources of specialty foods by searching out local farms, vendors at farmer's markets, and co-ops.

Price Your Product

You'll need to find the sweet spot in your pricing to ensure that the price is affordable to customers, while still getting a decent profit for you. In addition to checking out your competition's pricing, you'll need to determine your exact costs to set a profitable price point.

Market Your Business

9. https://www.bagsandbowsonline.com/retail-packaging/gourmetfood/?PRO-MOCODE=JC242&cs_kwid=MARIN_14804%7Cmkwid%7CsM-cvvvS1P%7Cpcrid%7C92429460680%7Cpdv%7Cc

10. <https://www.excelpackaging.com/>

11. <http://www.howdesign.com/design-creativity/10-tasty-food-packaging-designs/>

12. http://www.foodservicedirect.com/index.cfm/Bulk_Food.htm

13. <http://www.sysco.com/>

14. <http://www.usfoodservice.com/index.html>

Now that you've done all you can to ensure your business is set up properly and have begun making your food products, it's time to get the word out about your business. Start with the logical—friends and family, and then tackle your social media channels. If you plan to run a local food business, reach out to the people and organizations that would benefit from your products. If you want to sell nationally, you'll need to create a website and work on SEO tactics so customers can find you.

A love for all things food is one of the most important traits you'll need to make it in this business, but you will also need a good head on your shoulders when it comes to business. You'll need to source products for a reasonable price and then figure out how to create unique, artisan products from those bulk ingredients that people want to buy.

Not a foodie? Well, then let's move on to our next chapter. It's one of the most misunderstood business ideas in modern history.

Chapter Ten: The One Business Idea That You Really Can Make Money in Your Sleep

There are many scams out there that tell you it's possible to open a business and make money in your sleep, and most of the time, those people are trying to scam you out of your hard-earned money. But there is one legitimate business that truly does allow you to earn passive income while you sleep—and all the other hours of the day. I'm talking about a vending machine business.

Now I can hear the groans and almost see the disbelief spread across your faces, and most of it comes from the horrible ads you've seen that make this business look like a scam. But let's talk about the facts.

The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) issued a report that says 18 percent of existing vending machine owners earn between \$1 million and \$5 million a year. Wow—really? From machines that sell candy?

Actually, vending machines have come a long way, and they don't only sell candy these days. You can find meat vending machines, vending machines that sell short stories, candy, healthy snacks, drinks, cigarettes, ice cream, videos, popcorn, grooming and hygiene products, and anything else that fits into the machine.

But you can't just jump on the first vending machine offer that you see. According to the Better Business Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission¹, you have to be careful not to be scammed when first entering the business.

If you're interested in opening a vending machine business and operating it out of your home, what you need is a plan. A detailed plan of action that will help you get into this business the smart way to avoid

1. <https://www.ftc.gov/search/site/vending%20machines>

scams and operate profitably. Here's a 7 step plan that will help you do just that.

Step One: Choose Your Machines

Take another look at the list above that shows all the different types of products that can be sold in vending machines. To begin this journey, you'll first need to decide what type of machine you want. Will you sell a little bit of everything, or specialize in one type of item? Also, will you sell bulk products such as gum and hard candy, or will your machines dispense individual packages?

Step Two: Make Sure You're Legal

Depending on which state you plan to operate your vending business in, you may need to apply for a seller's permit. The SBA provides a listing of all the state's licensing and permit offices, and you can use it to check the requirements in yours here².

In addition to permits, some states require that vending machine operators charge sales tax on the items they sell. The states that require it all differ on what amount to charge and what minimum selling price kicks in the requirement. Each state has a Department of Revenue (DOR), which is where you can find the sales tax requirements of your state. Click here³ to find a list of every DOR in the nation.

Step Three: Purchase Your Machines

You'll have the choice of buying a new machine or a used one, and there isn't a right or wrong answer. If you buy a used vending machine, you should have some skills to be able to repair it when it breaks, or know someone who can. If you buy a new machine, even it will eventually need repairs. If your machines do break down or need repairs, you can save money by purchasing used parts on sites like Vendors Exchange International⁴.

2. <https://www.sba.gov/content/what-state-licenses-and-permits-does-your-business-need>

3. <http://www.taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies>

As you can expect, there is a large price difference in new and used machines. A new one will run you a few thousand dollars, but you can start this business on the cheap by finding a used one. Good places to look are Amazon, eBay, and Craigslist.

Step Four: Get a Truck

You will need a truck to haul your machines to and from the places you put them. Also, when you make the rounds to fill the machines, you will need a vehicle with a lot of room to carry the products. You can go the inexpensive route and buy a used truck that will get you around, or you can invest in a specialty truck. I suggest that when you're first starting, you keep your expenses low and use a basic truck that will do the job.

Step Five: Source Your Products

The key to making as much money as you can in this business is to buy your products for the lowest amount you can. And in many cases, that means buying in bulk. You have a few options when purchasing them. Some vending machine owners source their products at big box stores like Sam's Club⁵, which offer products specifically for this market. You can also source your products online. For example, Candymachines⁶ sells bulk candy at wholesale prices.

After you find your products, you'll need to price them. Generally, you can mark up your bulk items, like candy and gum, between 200 and 300 percent. If you plan to sell individually packaged items, you can usually mark them up between 60 and 100 percent.

Step Six: Find Locations for Your Machines

Now that you have your machines and the product to go inside of them, you need to find a public spot that will gain you a good amount of sales. Start by looking around your area and noticing where the busy machines are, and then take a second look to determine which busy

4. <http://www.veii.com/>

5. <http://www.samsclub.com/sams/vending-machine-accessories-vendible-items/2255.cp>

6. <http://www.candymachines.com/>

spots are lacking machines. The most profitable spots are those with a lot of foot traffic such as airports, shopping malls or strips, office buildings, or doctor's waiting rooms.

Once you identify a spot, you'll need to set an appointment with the owner of the space. If you negotiate with them and offer them a percentage of your sales, many will allow you to place your machine in their space. Some vending machine operators offer to donate a portion of the sales to charity. Whatever agreement you come to, it's important to get it in writing, so if any dispute arises in the future, your agreement can't be disputed.

Step Seven: Maintain Your Machines

Now that your machines are placed in high traffic areas, it's up to you to keep them filled, maintain them, and make sure they're clean. You should set up a schedule, which will be based on how busy the area is. For example, if it's located in a shopping mall, you may have to check and restock the machine very few days, while a machine located in an area that isn't as busy may be okay for a week.

It's important to remember that you are partners with the person who owns the space, and they will count on you to keep your machines stocked and in good working order. Not taking care of them may result in the space owner asking you to remove them.

See? The vending machine business can be viable and profitable, but as is true with all the businesses in this book, it takes hard work. You'll have to haul machines and products all over town and communicate well with the space owners. But, while you're sleeping, people will still insert coins and buy your vendible products. Sometimes things that seem too good to be true are real.

Chapter Eleven: Organize Your Way to Massive Profits

Are you an organized person who loves a challenge? Does the site of overflowing boxes and stacks of stuff thrill you? Then you may be the perfect person to start a professional organizing business. This type of service is very much sought after right now, and you don't have to just concentrate on just one area. Here are some of the ways to put your skills to use in this type of business.

- **Home organization.** Some people just have too much stuff, and when they become overwhelmed by it all, they call in a professional organizer to completely overhaul their home. These are large projects, and you can either charge by the hour or quote a flat rate.
- **Garage sale organizer.** Many people have garage sales to clean out their junk and make a profit, but not many of them like the process of getting everything organized. You can work in one of two ways to help organize garage sales. You can pay a percentage of the sales, usually about 30 percent, or you can charge by the hour.
- **Closet organizer.** Closets are an important part of anyone's life, but if they're not organized, it can create problems. As a closet organizer, you will analyze the space and come up with creative and functional ways to make the most of it. Again, you can charge by the hour or set a flat fee.
- **Create systems.** Most people who call professional organizers aren't in the habit of keeping their stuff neat and tidy. But good organizers create systems for their clients, so they don't fall back into old habits.
- **Recycler.** A lot of people don't get rid of stuff because they don't know what to do with it. Professional organizers help

get clothes to consignment shops, furniture sold on Craigslist, important documents properly shredded, and donations to the proper places. In other words, they don't just declutter and organize; they do everything needed to reclaim a space and make it usable again.

Does this sound like fun to you? Then you may be a professional organizer at heart. If this sounds like a business you'd like to investigate, let's look at some of the steps you'll need to take to start.

Start at the Beginning

Refer back to the beginning of this section, where I list everything you need to do to start an offline home-based business. After you've completed those steps, continue with this list.

Get Some Training

To be the best you can be, you really should take some courses that teach the basics of this profession. You can take them online, in the comfort of your home, and they won't cost you a fortune. With some courses, you'll be granted certification, which will help you sell yourself to clients. Some of the courses you should consider are the Professional Organizer Academy¹, the Institute for Professional Organizers², and the Professional Organizer Certificate Course³ offered by IAP.

Think About Coaching

If you'd rather work one-on-one with an organization coach, you have a couple of great options. Geralin Thomas⁴ offers 60-minute phone consultations to help you get started, and she also sells forms⁵ that are specific to professional organizers such as client assessment and

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1. <http://www.professional-organizers.com/>
 2. <http://www.instituteprofessionalorganizers.com/>
 3. <https://www.iapcollege.com/program/professional-organizer-course/>
 4. <http://www.metropolitanorganizing.com>
 5. <http://www.metropolitanorganizing.com/professional-organizer-training/new-organizers-forms-essential/>

intake forms. You'll also find freebies on her site like this article⁶ about how to organize a garage sale.

Join a Professional Organization

When you belong to a professional organization in your industry, you'll be able to keep up with the latest events and happenings in the professional organization world, be part of a database where potential clients in your area can seek you out, and take advanced training to make yourself more marketable. Most organizers belong to the National Association of Professional Organizers⁷. If you live outside of the U.S., here's the link⁸ to the IFPOA international site.

Identify Your Niche

While it's possible to offer a general list of services, if you can hone your services down and create a specialty, it will be easier to market yourself. For instance, if you specialized in organizing small closets, word would quickly get around that you are an expert in the field. The same goes for garage sale organization—can you imagine how fast word would spread about your services?

Name Your Business

You'll need a name that will be easy for people to remember, and it should also clearly convey what you do. For example, I could name my organizing business, Sam's Small Space Solutions. Get the idea?

Set Your Pricing

Now that you know what area of professional organizing you'll specialize in, it's time to set your prices. Start by calling around to find out how your competitors price their services so yours will be competitive. Then set your hourly rates, package rates, project rates, and retainer fees. You'll also need to decide if you'll charge a cancellation fee when a client cancels without sufficient notice.

6. <http://www.metropolitanorganizing.com/professional-organizing-services/how-to-organize-a-successful-stress-free-garage-sale/>

7. <http://www.napo.net/>

8. <https://ifpoa.wordpress.com>

Get Your Marketing Materials Ready

Before you take any other steps, you should put together your marketing materials. For instance, you'll need business cards, brochures, and other materials that will tell people what you do and how much you charge.

Join Local Organizations

In addition to joining the national association, you should join local ones to network and meet people who could potentially send business your way. For example, you should join your local Chamber of Commerce and other associations where you'll get to mingle with and meet people. It would also be a smart idea to join your local chapter of the Institute for Challenging Disorganization⁹, a community that helps disorganized people learn how to organize their lives. It's at these meetings that you'll pass out your newly created marketing materials.

Set up an Office

You'll need a space in your home that is solely dedicated to your business. It should be private, so when you speak to clients on the phone, you'll sound professional. Also, you'll need plenty of room to store your supplies, computer, printer, and any other office equipment you need.

Build a Website

Even though this isn't an online business, you'll still need a simple website where potential customers can find you and look at your services and prices. Take the advice I give in other parts of this book and use Weebly¹⁰ or WordPress¹¹ to set up your site for free.

Get Social

Next, you should set up accounts with all the social media platforms and begin to spread the word about your business. Pinterest is a great channel for professional organizers. Also, attend the meetings of

9. <http://www.challengingdisorganization.org/>

10. <http://www.weebly.com/>

11. <https://wordpress.org/>

the local organizations you joined, and ask your friends and family to spread the word about your business.

Give Away Some Services

To start the momentum with your business, try doing a few free jobs to start people talking. Once they see what you can do, they'll be more likely to help you spread the word. Not only may it bring your business, but it will give you valuable real-world experience and provide great before and after photos for your website.

Professional organizers are in high demand, and if you like dealing with people and turning messes into organized areas, then you might be able to make a killing at it. Don't forget that this is one of the businesses where it truly does pay off to get some training.

Okay, now we're off to the next potential business—a truly passive income that anyone can do. Ready? Let's move on to it.

Chapter Twelve: The Ultimate Passive Income

What if I told you that you could build a business by renting out your home or apartment? And that you don't even need to own it to rent it out and make a high income? Sounds too good to be true, right? But with the advent of the sharing economy, many people are bypassing the corporate world of hotels and motels and booking directly with people who rent out rooms in their house for a fee.

The Industry leader is Airbnb, which boasts over a million listings in 190 countries. The premise is this: anyone can rent an extra room in their home or apartment, or they can rent their entire home while on vacation. Some people have invested in properties in high-demand areas and rent out those rooms and houses full time. It's quite possible to make a full-time income on Airbnb by simply renting out extra space that you already own.

But before we get into the details of this mind-blowing opportunity, let's talk about some realistic situations that could get you into financial or personal trouble. After all, it pays to go into a business with your eyes wide open, and although many people are touting an Airbnb business as the greatest thing to ever happen to regular people (and it can be), I want you to be informed.

So, start by reading this list of possible problems that can occur when renting on Airbnb, and if you're still excited about the idea, I'll follow up with a detailed plan about how to enter this lucrative business.

5 Things That Can Go Wrong When Renting a Space on Airbnb

As fabulous as this potential business opportunity is, it doesn't come without risks. Here are five risks that you should be aware of before placing our property in the Airbnb rental pool—and ways you can avoid them.

Risk #1: A Guest gets Hurt and Sues You

It's not possible to predict every possible scenario that can happen while guests are staying on your property, and one of the worst ones is that a guest gets injured. If this happens, you can be sued and held financially responsible for the mishap. And even if you're not at fault, it could end up costing you thousands of dollars to defend yourself in a court of law.

What to do about it: You'll need to have liability insurance for your property in case a lawsuit is filed. Airbnb offers a policy that pays up to \$1 million, but its extensive terms-of-service statement¹ may render it useless when the rubber meets the road. Most experts agree that taking out your own privacy policy is worth the cost.

Risk #2: A Guest Damages a Neighbor's Property

Another worst-case scenario is that one of your guests does damage to a neighbor's property. They could accidentally start a fire that spreads next door or cause a flood that damages the property downstairs. If this happens, you'll be held responsible, and even if Airbnb's liability policy covered it, it might not be enough.

What to do about it: Again, your best bet here is to make sure you are personally covered with your own liability insurance policy.

Risk #3: Your Local Law Won't Allow It

Not every city and state allows individuals to rent homes or apartments for short stays. In fact, although New York residents earned \$282 million in 2014 from Airbnb rentals, it's illegal to rent a space for less than 30 days in that state. This can be a problem for two reasons. First, if caught, you could owe serious fines for violating local laws. Also, if you break the law, you may have problems when you try and enforce the terms and conditions of your contracts. Airbnb won't take your side if you have issues with a guest because their guidelines say that if you don't comply with local laws, you are violating the contract.

1. <https://www.airbnb.com/terms/>

What to do about it: You'll need to check with your city to learn the laws in your area. Airbnb lists regulation information for 50 cities here², and if you can't find yours there, try this list³ of state and city links.

Risk #4: Your Landlord or Condo Association Won't Allow It

If you rent or lease your house or apartment, you need to get permission from them before you list the space on Airbnb. Otherwise, you might end up getting evicted or incur some other penalties. Likewise, if you live in a condominium or other shared housing unit, the bylaws may not allow it.

What to do about it: Simply pick up the phone and ask. Explain to your landlord that the property will be better maintained because you'll need to keep it in tip-top shape for your guests. If you live in a condo, ask to see a copy of the bylaws to determine whether you're allowed to rent the space short term.

Risk #5: You May Have to Pay Sales Taxes

Some states are requiring Airbnb business owners to collect occupancy excise taxes just like hotels do. If your state requires this, you'll have to register with your state's Department of Revenue and remit the taxes when they're due.

Also, you will have to pay federal income taxes on any money you earn from the rental, but keep in mind that you'll be able to deduct your expenses such as cleaning fees, advertising, and other related expenses.

What to do about it: Contact your state's Department of Revenue and ask if you are required to collect sales tax. You can find contact information for your state on this list⁴.

Now that we have all the possible hazards out of the way, let's talk about the possibilities and create a plan that will allow you to start your very own Airbnb business. According to an article in Fast Company⁵,

2. <https://www.airbnb.com/help/responsible-hosting>

3. <http://www.statelocalgov.net/>

4. <http://www.taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies>

it's possible to earn six figures a year renting out apartments on Airbnb. Not bad for a part-time business.

If this business idea sounds like something you're interested in, let's look at the steps you'll need to take to make it a reality.

Take a Look at Your Space

People rent everything from a spare bedroom in their own home, to an empty apartment, a mother-in-law studio in the back of their home, or even their entire house while they're on vacation. One woman built a tiny apartment addition on the back of her home and rents the big house to guests. Each situation is different, but most involve dedicating a portion of your home or other space to guests. And keep in mind that many people have started out by renting a room in their home, and once they began earning a profit, quickly expanded their business by renting or purchasing other spaces.

Identify What Makes Your Space Unique

When guests look to Airbnb to find a space to rent, they don't only look at the room, but also the unique experience it can give them. You'll need to identify what makes your area and location special in the eyes of guests. Are you located near shopping sites, or is your space near a park or other local attraction? Can guests walk to nearby restaurants, or is your space located in a serene location for those people who want to get away from it all? You'll use this information when you list your rental on Airbnb to help attract reservations.

Determine Your Time Commitment

It's estimated that you'll spend about 1 hour per night booked attending to all the tasks involved in renting Airbnb properties. So if you have one unit and book it for 21 days a month, you should expect to spend about 20 hours that month communicating with potential guests, checking guests in and out, and cleaning rooms.

Take Photographs of the Space

These days, it's not good enough to snap some shots of the room or apartment and post them on Airbnb. Today's savvy business owners are hiring professional photographers and having slick photos taken that really show off a space. If you try to use amateur photographs on your listing, it will likely get lost among all of the professionally done photos. You should have a minimum of ten photos taken, and ask the photographer to capture the character of the space, so its uniqueness is shown. Also, post pictures of any amenities that you offer, as well as surrounding areas that guests may be interested in.

Set Your Price

You'll need to be competitive when you list your space on Airbnb, and one of the best ways to do that is to look at all the listings in your area to get an idea of what others are asking. Also, you can use Airdna⁶, which is a great site that allows you to use data to not only help you determine the right price but also figure out what others in your area are making by renting their spaces. Be sure to factor in your cleaning bills, increase in utility bills, taxes, and the 3 percent processing fee you'll pay Airbnb. (Your guests will pay the 6-12 percent book fees.)

Determine the Amount of Your Security Deposit

Airbnb allows hosts to set security deposits up to \$500, and it's wise to ask your guests to pay one. This money is to protect you from any damage that the guests may do to your property. To claim a security deposit, you will have to file a claim with Airbnb to receive a portion or all of the security deposit within 14 days or before your next guest checks in, whichever is sooner. Also, if your claim is for more than \$300, you'll have to file a police report before contacting Airbnb. Be sure to document any damages that guests have caused with your before and after photographs.

Invest in a Lockbox

Unlike a hotel, you won't be available every time a guest checks in, but that doesn't mean they should be inconvenienced. Instead of mak-

6. <http://www.airdna.co/>

ing them wait for you, invest in a lockbox, and after the rental transaction is complete, give them the code so they can enter the room by themselves. It will go a long way in getting good reviews from your guests, which are important to consistent rentals.

Line up a Cleaning Service

Some Airbnb hosts choose to clean the spaces themselves after guests leave, and some hire cleaning services to do the job for them. It's a personal decision, but one you should think about carefully. Guests will expect a pristinely cleaned room, and if you don't think you could do it service, you should pay a professional to do it. But remember that if you have to pay a cleaning service, it will come out of the rental fee and reduce your profits for the stay.

Attend to the Details

Successful Airbnb hosts pay attention to the details that make their guests stay more pleasant. For example, think about supplying a coffee pot, an iron, an assortment of books and movies, and even board games. Other hosts provide a fully stocked kitchen, complete with condiments. Still, others welcome guests with a bottle of wine or a basket of fruit upon their arrival. Whatever you decide, paying attention to the details will make your guests feel welcome, and that's great for business.

And finally, make sure your furnishings are appropriate and comfortable for your guests. Does the mattress on the bed sag in the middle? Then get a new one. Are the chairs around the table the right height and in good condition?

Secure Your Valuables

If you're renting an empty apartment, you won't need to worry about storing your valuables out of sight, but if you're renting a bedroom in your home, you should securely lock away any valuables.

Airbnb allows hosts to leave reviews for guests, so take the extra step of searching the reviews for the people you rent to. If another host

had a problem with the guest, you might consider canceling the booking.

Talk to Your Neighbors

To avoid problems in the future, talk to your neighbors and tell them about your business. Assure them you will be running a professional business and ask them to come to you if they have any issues so you can deal with them personally. Doing this will prevent things from escalating if there is a problem.

List Your Property

Now it's time to take the big step—listing your property. You'll be able to list it for free, but you should be ready for guests before you do. After all, if you listed it before and weren't ready, how would you accommodate your guests?

You'll need to set some house rules, but not so many that guests will feel constricted. For example, if you don't want to rent to smokers, be clear about that in your listing. Also, discuss whether you allow pets, children, or late-night partyers.

Check the Site Often

You'll have to spend some time on the site because if someone has a question about your property, they will send you a message. Experts say that it may take a few messages between hosts and guests until a guest is comfortable enough to book the space. If you respond quickly to each inquiry, it will improve the experience of your guests and take away the temptation to book somewhere else.

Also, by being friendly and informative and helping the guest feel welcome, you'll set yourself apart and make your property desirable in the eyes of guests. One way to do this is to put yourself in the shoes of your guests and image how you would want the interaction to happen.

How You Get Paid

The great thing about listing your space on Airbnb is that the site handles all of the payment transactions. That means a guest can't check-in, stay and then leave without paying their bill.

Guests pay via Airbnb, and the site will release payment to you within 24 hours of their arrival. Once it's released, you have a few options about how to receive it. If you choose PayPal or Payoneer, which is a prepaid debit card, you'll receive a payment within a few hours. If you'd rather get paid via bank transfer, it will take a few days, and if you want Airbnb to mail you a check, you'll wait 15 business days to receive it.

If a guest arrives and doesn't like the arrangements, you should respond to them immediately. If you don't, they may be able to request and receive a partial refund. Also, if you cancel a guest's reservation at the last minute, forget to leave them a key, fail to provide a clean room, or don't meet the basic requirements in some other way, Airbnb may require you to refund the guest's payment.

And finally, if a guest suggests that you go outside of Airbnb's system to avoid paying the fees, be wary. Once you leave the system, you're at risk of the guest not paying, and you won't have Airbnb behind you to force the guest to pay.

So, what do you think? Do you have some extra space that you're willing to turn into a "hotel" room for guests? If so, this is a great business opportunity that has unlimited earning potential. Another thing I like about this type of business is that you can start small and build a hugely successful business in a very short amount of time.

But if being a host isn't for you, we have one more home-based business to consider. Follow along as we talk about our last idea.

Chapter Thirteen: Clean-Up in a Hurry with This Business

In generations past, hiring cleaning services were only for the well-to-do, but in today's hectic, fast-paced society, many people rely on the services to do essential jobs that they just don't have time for. And because of it, you can really clean up financially by starting this type of business.

But these aren't your mother's cleaning services. Today cleaning professionals run many different types of cleaning businesses. Some of them are:

- **Traditional home cleaning services.** There is always a demand for high-quality cleaning services that service residential homes.
- **Commercial cleaning services.** Some cleaning companies specialize in cleaning commercial spaces such as office buildings, stores, restaurants, and more.
- **New construction cleaning businesses.** When a new home is built, there is a lot of sawdust and other remnants from the construction, and builders hire cleaning services to "detail" the homes to get them ready to show.
- **Move-out cleaning services.** When someone rents an apartment or home, it needs to be cleaned before the new occupant moves in. These types of cleaning businesses work with both the renters who are moving and want to ensure they receive their security deposit back by leaving the place clean and also landlords who need their properties cleaned before they can rent them again.
- **Green cleaning services.** With so much emphasis on staying healthy, eating organic, and using chemical-free products in the home, green cleaning services are sprouting up all over the country. They use all-natural cleaning products and cater to

the clientele who don't want harsh chemicals in their homes.

You can choose to specialize in one of these types of businesses or combine a few of them to make up your business. Whatever you decide, the plan for starting your own cleaning business is the same, except for who you choose to market to.

Ready to get started? Let's first talk about a few important issues that not many people think about when starting this type of business.

Check Your Skills

Just because you've cleaned your own house doesn't mean you're ready to operate a professional cleaning company. Your customers will expect perfection, and there's a lot to learn when it comes to cleaning a house (or commercial space) for other people. Most experts agree that the best way to get the proper training for a career like this is to offer to clean friends and family's houses for free in exchange for honest feedback. Ask them to view your work as they would if they'd hired someone and paid for the job, and then give you pointers about how to improve. Once you've perfected your skills, you're ready for the next step.

Check Your Physical Ability

Professional cleaning is hard work. In fact, it's a strenuous job that not everyone is cut out for. Before you commit to starting this type of business, make sure you're physically able to do it. You'll clean several houses a day, and if you're not in great physical shape, it may prove to be too much for you.

Think About the Long Term

You'll have several paths you can choose with this business, and you should have your goal in mind when starting. You can create a one-person service business and clean all of your customer's houses by yourself. If you do this, it will limit your ability to grow because you can only clean so many houses in a day.

On the other hand, you can choose to build a cleaning company rather than a cleaning service, and hire other professional cleaners to

work for you. By doing this, you won't limit your ability to grow because you can hire as many employees as you need to.

How to Start a Professional Cleaning Business

Now that you're sure professional cleaning is the right business for you, let's talk about the steps you'll need to take to begin. Please start by referring back to the beginning of part two of this book, where I outline what you need to do to start an offline business. All of those items apply to this type of business, so that's where you'll need to start. Once you accomplished everything on that list, here are your next steps.

Choose Your Name

All business names are important, but when you run a cleaning business, it's much more so. You will have a lot of competition, and your name is one way you have of setting yourself and your business apart.

Your name should convey the type of cleaning business you are, and cause potential customers to think "clean." It should also be easy to remember, catchy, and a little humor will help customers remember it. (Think: The Clean Dream Team)

Also, remember that you'll need to start a website, so it won't hurt to do a domain name search before you finalize your name to see if the .com domain name is available.

Choose Your Cleaning Products and Equipment

Unless you plan to start a green cleaning business, which utilizes products like vinegar, baking soda, and essential oils, you'll need to decide on a brand of cleaning products. Obviously, you want to use a brand that works but is also cost-effective. You may already have a favorite brand, or if not, you should try brands when you're doing the test cleanings for friends and family.

In addition to cleaning products, you'll need the right equipment so you can get the job done. Here's a list of what you'll need to start with:

- **Mops and reusable pads.** For the best cost efficiency, use a

mop with a washable pad. You'll be able to wash the pad hundreds of times, and if you use a quality microfiber pad, it will save you work because they pick up so much more.

- **Brooms.** You'll need brooms, and most cleaning professionals prefer to use wide-angle brooms to make better use of their time.
- **Toilet brushes.** You'll need to replace these often as customers won't want to see you using a dirty toilet brush in their home or office. You can buy them inexpensively, so be sure you only use it until it starts to show wear and tear.
- **Cleaning cloths.** You'll need lots of these, so try and buy them in bulk.
- **Cleaning caddies.** It's more time-efficient if you can carry all your products around with you instead of repeatedly having to go back and look for products. Purchase a caddy that is large enough to hold all your products, but not so heavy that it's too much to carry.
- **Vacuum cleaner.** A cheap vacuum cleaner won't do for a professional cleaner. You'll need one that picks up well, plus has the proper attachments so you can get into corners and under cushions.

Get a Vehicle and Use it to Market Your Business

You'll need a reliable vehicle to get you from job to job, and it also has to be large enough to carry the vacuum cleaner and all of your supplies. The ideal situation would be if you already have a vehicle that fits the bill because you won't have to spend any money to get started. But if you don't, look for one in the local used car ads.

Once you have your vehicle, you should have magnetic signs made for the sides of it. These signs are like walking billboards, and you may get new business just by driving down the street.

Set Your Price

As a professional cleaner, you have many options when it comes to how you will charge customers. Let's talk about them all here.

- **Charge by the hour.** This is the way many professional cleaning services charge, and it makes sense in most circumstances. To get an idea of the hourly rates in your area, you'll need to call some cleaning services and ask about their prices. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that professional cleaners make, on average, \$14 per hour, but again, that will depend on where you are. It's a good idea to have a minimum fee, so you don't waste your time by taking a job that only lasts an hour. For instance, if you charge \$14 an hour and set a minimum of 3 hours, the lowest you would ever be paid is \$42.
- **Charge a flat fee.** Other professional cleaners like to charge a flat fee, based on many variables like the size of the house, how messy it is, and how often you will be cleaning it. To decide on the fee, consider all these things and then quote your price. This type of pricing will work best for you after you have some experience, so you'll be able to estimate how long a job will take you accurately. Flat rate fees generally range from \$75 to \$150 but may be different in your area.
- **Charge per room.** This one can be tricky because some rooms take longer to clean than others, but you should have a general estimate for each type of room in case a customer asks you for a rate per room.
- **Charge per square foot.** If you are asked to bid on a very large house, charging by the square foot is a common approach because not only will it take a lot longer, but you may have to bring in help to get the job done.
- **Think about add-ons.** Some customers will want you to do

more than basic cleaning and may ask you to do laundry, wash the windows, organize a closet, or clean out the refrigerator. You'll do well to have a set price in mind for these tasks if you're asked to do them.

One important thing to keep in mind when quoting prices is that you should never do it over the phone. Ask to see the house before you give a price, or you could end up quoting a low price for a disaster of a house.

Have the Proper Forms

When you get your first client, you'll want to sign a cleaning contract with them to ensure everyone is on the same page. This site has a great contract¹ specifically designed for cleaning businesses, and you can download it for free.

Get Insured and Bonded

Because you'll be working in other people's homes, you will need to be insured and bonded. To do this, you'll need to contact your local insurance company because the rules and regulations are different for every state. This will go a long way in helping people trust you, which will improve your odds of success in this business. You will be able to pay the fees quarterly or yearly, but you will have to renew the policy and bond every year.

Advertise Your Business

Now that you're all set up, it's time to advertise your business and begin looking for your first client. One of the most important ways to do that is to create a website and use SEO tactics to draw people to your site. Of course, your customer base is local, so instead of traditional keywords, you'll want to make them specific to your area.

For instance, instead of using "home cleaning services," use "Los Angeles home cleaning services" in the articles and copy you put on your website. That way, when someone looks for a cleaning service in

1. <http://www.atyourbusiness.com/contract/cleaning.php>

Los Angeles (or whatever city you live in), your site will come up in the search engine rankings.

In addition to a website, you should advertise your services on Care.com². It's a great website where customers go to look for cleaning services in their area. On it, you'll set up a profile, tell customers a little about yourself, and explain your pricing.

You will probably get most of your business from these two things, but you should also do the following:

- **Pass out business cards.** Because your business will be local, you should have business cards made up and pass them out to everyone you see.
- **Leave flyers** in offices, grocery stores, and anyplace else you can post them. The flyers can offer specials or discounts for first-time customers.
- **Leave door hangers in neighborhoods.** It's like a flyer but has a looping cutout so you can hang it over a doorknob. Choose neighborhoods that hire professional house cleaners, and leave these door hangers on every house you can.
- **Offer referral fees.** Once you establish regular customers, offer them a referral fee for every new client they send you. For example, tell your customers you'll pay them \$25 for every new client they send you or offer to reduce your cleaning fee a certain amount for every new client.

Set Yourself Apart and Build Customer Loyalty

Your customers can call anyone to clean their house, so you'll need to give them a reason to call you time and time again. Obviously, the first reason they'll want to call you is that you do a great job. But in addition to being the best house cleaner they've ever had, you can leave them special surprises when you're finished with the job. For example,

2. <https://www.care.com/>

you can leave chocolates on their bed pillows, or a fresh bouquet of flowers on their kitchen counter.

And one more note: no matter how much you like your client, don't engage them in long conversations. Most people are very busy, and when they hire someone to come into their home, they want to get back to their own tasks as soon as possible. If you spend more time talking to them than cleaning, you probably won't be asked back.

Take it to the Next Step

By this time you'll know whether you want to continue working as a one-person operation, or if you want to expand your business by hiring other professional cleaners. The choice is yours, but be sure to seek out the advice of a professional if you add employees to your company.

Part Three: New and Updated Work from Home Opportunities for 2018

Chapter Fourteen: Sell Online Courses to Bring in Passive Income

One of the newest and most exciting ways to earn money from home is by creating online courses. If you spend any time online, you've undoubtedly seen the multitude of these available courses. And while I've been an outspoken critic of them, I'm beginning to understand their value. At least with some of them.

My Issue with Online Courses

I've been pretty vocal about some of the online publishing courses I've seen over the past few years because a lot of them are nothing more than overly-priced products that many people get sucked into buying. For example, when I first started writing Kindle books and looking for information, I was inundated with sales pitches from other authors who wanted to charge me thousands of dollars to show me how it's done via an online course. I didn't take one of the courses and instead did the research myself. Since then, I've published my exhaustive book *How to Publish a Book on Amazon: Real Advice from Someone Who's Doing it Well*¹ as an alternative to all those expensive courses.

But lately, I've been seeing some online courses that have made me rethink their value. Some very smart people are putting together online courses and selling them to the masses for a reasonable fee. For example, Nick Loper², the undisputed king of side hustles, has a course on Udemy about book publishing that he says earns him about \$400 a month. The thing is, he only sells the course for \$15 as of right now, but with 4,000 students enrolled, that means he's earned approximately \$54,000 from the course³ since its release.

1. <https://goo.gl/jYSZlH>

2. <https://goo.gl/bxL8X1>

3. <https://www.udemy.com/kindle-launch/>

And the best thing? His students get quality information for an affordable price. Now that's something I can get behind.

Online Courses are a lot of Work Initially, But Ultimately Turn into Passive Income

I'm sure you've heard all about the merits of passive income. The theory is that once the product or service is live, all you have to do is sit back and collect your earnings. There is simply no better way to make a living because it affords you the lifestyle you want by freeing up your time.

And while online courses are indeed passive income, they do require a lot of work upfront — a lot. In fact, according to Loper, he spends about an hour for every 5 minutes of finished video for his course. And there are two-and-a-half hours of video included in the course. You do the math.

But now that all the hard work is done, he simply collects his check every month. Not a bad way to make a living, is it?

And that living can be profitable. According to a report⁴ issued by Global Market Insights, last year, the E-learning market totaled \$165 billion, and by 2023, it's expected to grow to \$240 billion a year. Wow—let's get into this great home-based business idea, shall we?

How to Set up An Online Course

If this sounds like a work from home business you'd like to try, you need to be prepared to spend an enormous amount of time creating it before you can launch. Trust me, I'm currently creating my own course, and I can't emphasize how time-consuming it is. But if you're willing to commit, I believe this is a great business. Here are the steps you'll need to take to set up your own online course.

Choose Your Topic

First things first, and before you can begin building your course, you'll need to decide on a topic. There are two routes here, and there are pros and cons to each one.

4. <https://www.gminsights.com/industry-analysis/elearning-market-size>

- **Choose a narrow niche.** You can choose a narrow subject if you're truly an expert on it. You will generally be able to charge more for the information. That's because the people who are looking for that specific information will typically be willing to pay more for it because it's not widely available. On the other hand, you won't have as many students for your course, so you'll need to determine whether or not the higher price will result in a sufficient income.
- **Choose a broader subject.** If you choose a topic that will appeal to a large number of people, you will attract more students to your course. And even if you lower the price to bring in more sales, the sheer volume will likely result in a decent income. For instance, Loper's \$15 course has to date brought him almost \$55,000 because there are so many people who want to publish books.

Keep in mind that while you should have some knowledge of the topic, you truly don't have to be an expert. For example, many people sell courses on topics they've researched thoroughly and do just fine. But if you are an expert on a topic and think it would make a good course, you should probably start there.

Choose Your Platform

You'll need to determine where to host your online course, and I'm here to tell you, the decision can get confusing. There are many great platforms, and each one has its pluses and minuses. To try and reduce some of the confusion, I've outlined the major choices below and will tell you what to expect from each one.

- **Academy of Mine⁵.** This platform offers everything an online course seller could possibly need, and as an added bonus, it uses drop and drag software to help you set up the course

5. <https://www.academyofmine.com/>

easily. Prices start at \$199 a month and go up to \$449 a month, depending on how many goodies you want to incorporate into your course. As of this writing, you can use this coupon code to get 75 percent off the first month: `aom_disc_75`.

- CourseCraft⁶. If you want to get your feet wet before committing to a large monthly fee, this platform offers a forever free plan that includes a lot of amazing features, including unlimited courses. You'll be charged a 9 percent transaction fee per enrollment and are limited to 100 students per course. You can upgrade to the Club plan for \$23 a month or the Society Plan for \$47 a month.
- Educadium⁷. While you can try this platform for free for up to 25 students, if you decide you like it, you'll pay between \$99 and \$299 per month, depending on the plan you choose. It has a full suite of tools for the serious course builder.
- LearnWorlds⁸. You can get a free 30 day trial on this platform, and if you decide to keep your course there, you'll pay between \$39 a month to \$199 a month for the complete service. Keep in mind that this site bills annually, so paying monthly isn't an option unless you use the \$199 a month plan.
- Ruzuku⁹. This is a great platform for people who don't possess any tech skills. Prices start at \$74.75 a month and go up to \$125 a month. This site also collects the payments annually.
- SkillShare¹⁰. This subscription platform is free to use, and you

6. <https://coursecraft.net/>

7. <http://www.educadium.com/>

8. <https://www.learnworlds.com/>

9. <https://www.ruzuku.com/>

will earn royalties on your course determined by how many minutes of video the site's student's watch. This is similar to KDP Select on Amazon in that you're only paid if a student watches your course videos. The site claims that their top teachers earn \$40,000 a year. Also, you can earn \$10 for every student you bring who signs up for the site's premium subscription.

- Teachable¹¹. This site claims 5 million students, 20 thousand courses, 10 thousand instructors, and over \$50 million earned by instructors. Prices start at \$33.25 per month and go up to \$83.25 per month, billed annually. All plans offer unlimited courses and students.
- Thinkific¹². This platform provides free live training that is offered on specific days. (Check the site for the next training.) You can sign up for the forever free plan or three other plans that range from \$39 to \$219 a month, billed annually.
- Udemy¹³. If you want to go where the students are, you can't go wrong with this platform. But you'll pay a hefty price for using this free platform. While you can create courses for free, you'll pay the site a whopping 50 percent commission for every student who is referred from the site. The students you bring will result in a lower commission, which is determined by a sliding scale. On the other hand, Udemy is so well-known that you'll likely find more students there.
- WizIQ¹⁴. If you want to conduct live training, this platform

10. <https://www.skillshare.com/>

11. <https://teachable.com/>

12. <https://www.thinkific.com/>

13. <https://teach.udemy.com/>

14. <https://www.wiziq.com/>

can handle it. Plans start at \$190 a year and go all the way up to \$890 a year. You can sign up for a 30-day free trial.

Once you've chosen your platform, the real work begins. It's time to begin designing your course, and how you do it depends on which platform you choose. For example, some platforms allow you to create fillable PDF workbooks, slide shares, or screen recordings on the site, while others require you to create them offsite and upload them. But because I don't know which platform you'll choose, I'll provide a brief overview of each step you'll need to take when designing your course below.

Design Your Online Course

Now comes the hard part. You have to take all that knowledge that's stored in your head and turn it into an online course that walks the student through the topic in a way that they'll learn. I've found that the best way to start the process is to create a chronological outline of everything you want to cover. When creating your outline, keep these helpful tips in mind:

- First, write down everything you want to cover in your course. Don't worry about being neat or organized at this point. Just write down all the information in the order that it appears in your head. You'll go back and organize it once you've exhausted all of your ideas.
- Once you have all the information written (or typed), put it in order chronologically. Imagine that you're mapping out the information as the student will see it. Make sure that when you introduce a new subject, the student has already learned the foundation needed for the new topic.
- Now arrange all the subjects into sections. Your course should clearly identify a specific number of sections, and each of those sections will contain mini-segments. For example, if

you're creating a course on writing, your sections could include book ideas, research, writing, editing, and marketing, and each of those sections would have few segments that further expand the section topic.

- It's now time to determine how you will convey each section and segment to your students. You should use videos of yourself talking for some of them, voice-over screen recordings on others, and written content, along with PDF fillable workbooks and quizzes on others. Organize them in a way that keeps the student engaged and interested.

Create the Content

Now that you know what you're going to teach, it's time to organize it into the various forms of content. In the previous step, you outline exactly which areas of your course will be written content, talking head videos, voice-over screen videos, PDF's, and quizzes, so now it's time to take each course section and bring it to life. This is the most time-consuming part, and depending on the length of your course, you should expect to invest a few months in it.

Upload Your Course to a Platform

All that's left now is to upload your course to the platform you've chosen. Most platforms provide everything you'll need to run a successful online course, including payment options, and communication tools so you can interact with your students.

But if you haven't chosen a platform with a built-in audience of students like Udemy, you'll need to market your course to get enrollees, and the best way to do that is with Facebook ads. (More about this later.)

Resources for Your Online Course

There are a bunch of online and offline tools that will help you in creating your online course, and I've listed a bunch of them below.

Keep in mind that your choices are endless, but these are the things that have helped me in the creation of my own course.

- OBS Studio¹⁵. This is open-source software, which means that it's free to use. It allows you to live stream or record video from your Mac or PC. Unlike other screen recording software, this does not leave a watermark on your footage.
- ScreenFlow¹⁶ for Mac or Camtasia¹⁷ for Windows. Both of these software downloads will allow you to create professional-looking screencasts.
- LCDS.¹⁸ If you're a Microsoft user, this free software will help you structure and refine your course. It will help integrate your content, videos, written materials, and videos.
- Courselab¹⁹. This is another open-source software that helps you create your course and integrate all of your materials. Once the course is designed, you can upload it to your platform.
- Weebly²⁰. If you plan on having a website for your online course (and you should), you can set up a simple website for free on this platform.
- LightWorks²¹. This is a well-respected and free video creation

15. <https://obsproject.com/>

16. <https://screenflow.en.softonic.com/mac>

17. http://discover.techsmith.com/camtasia-brand-desktop/?gclid=CjwKEAjwtYPKBRCYr5GLgNCJ_jsSjABqfw72XOV0_B8EmuxT4zC6daDNtiEJeY5msBc9CSfUkAFdhoCptbw_wcB

18. https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/lcds-tool.aspx?utm_campaign=elearningindustry.com&utm_source=%2Ffree-authoring-tools-for-elearning&utm_medium=link#tab1

19. http://www.courselab.com/view_doc.html?mode=home

20. <https://www.weebly.com/>

21. <https://www.lwks.com/>

and editing tool.

- Microphones. You'll need a good quality microphone whether you do live training, voice-over screen, or audio only, but it needs to be good quality, or your student's experience will be poor. Look for a dynamic microphone if you can afford it because they are best at screening out background noise. Some of the best tried and true microphones are the Blue Snowball Microphone²², which sells for about \$49, and the Rode Podcaster USB Dynamic Microphone²³, which retails for \$229.

How to Market Your Online Course

Once you've created your course and uploaded it to your chosen platform, you'll need to get the word out about it. But before you begin marketing it to paying customers, you'll need to get some social proof so those paying customers will be willing to take a chance on it. Here's how to do both:

- Start by offering the course for free in exchange for reviews. You'll need at least ten reviews for your course before most paying customers are willing to take a chance on it. And if your course is uploaded to a site like Udemy that keeps track of enrolled students, you'll want to have a few hundred enrolled to give it that much needed social proof. You can accomplish this by giving it away for free until you get enough students.

22. <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B014PYGTUQ/>

ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=aprigere-20&camp=1789&creative=9325&linkCode=as2&creativeASIN=B014PYGTUQ&linkId=784ba9fd71237f4544e5268fc9264a7d

23. <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000JM46FY/>

ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=aprigere-20&camp=1789&creative=9325&linkCode=as2&creativeASIN=B000JM46FY&linkId=b142a7b59c692c037d0cd8f64dab2fcb

- Make adjustments to your course based on the feedback you get from the free students. This will ensure that your course is as good as it can be.
- Once you have enough social proof and you've made improvements based on the feedback, email your mailing list and let them know about it.
- Next, ask your friends and family to post about the courses on their social media channels.
- Use Facebook ads to get the word out about your course. You should use targeted ads to appeal to those people who are most likely to buy the course. Here's a \$15 Udemy course²⁴ about how to create effective Facebook ads, or you can watch some free videos put out by Facebook here²⁵.
- If you use a platform that has a large built-in group of students, make sure you take advantage of every opportunity to market your course on the site. For example, if you use Udemy, post details about your course to the Studio U Facebook page²⁶.

Finally, keep in mind that you're not limited to only one platform. As the course author, you're allowed to post your online course to any and all platforms that you wish.

Okay, let's talk about another great new way to earn money from home: teaching your native language online.

24. <https://www.udemy.com/facebook-ads-facebook-marketing-mastery-guide/>

25. https://www.facebook.com/blueprint?sw_fnr_id=2377395674

26. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UdemyStudio/>

Chapter Fifteen: Teach Your Native Language Online

If you have a computer, headset, webcam, access to high-speed internet, and a Skype account, you can make thousands of dollars per month teaching English (or your native language) to international students. For this chapter, I'm going to talk about teaching English because it's the most sought after language in the world.

In the past, English teachers traveled to other countries to teach their students. Teachers would live in foreign countries and teach in physical classrooms, just like a traditional school. But the internet changed all of that, and just like most things these days, English lessons can be taken online.

And the teachers who are providing them are making a killing.

In fact, average English teachers who only work about 5 hours a day often earn approximately \$2,000 a month. Not bad for a side gig, is it?

But there's an art to building a teaching business. Many people simply upload a profile to a teaching site and wonder why the students aren't signing up. If this sounds like a work from home business you'd like to try, here's a detailed overview of how to get started in this exciting and ever-growing industry.

But First, Let's Clear up Some Misconceptions

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of teaching English online, let's talk about some common misconceptions about the gig.

- **You need to speak other languages.** Many people don't think they can do this gig because they don't speak another language. But a good English teacher doesn't have to speak the language of their students. In fact, most of them don't. This ensures that the focus during the entire lesson is in English. Your main duties will be to help students with correct word

usage, their accent, and cultural understanding.

- **You need to have a degree or certification.** While it's true that some sites do require you to be a certified teacher, others don't. For example, on italki, the world's largest language learning site, students can choose from professional teachers and community tutors, and the tutors, who aren't certified, get as many students as the teachers. Of course, if you wanted to get your certification, it would only add to your and your student's experience.
- **You need to be an expert teacher.** You will need to provide value to your students, but luckily, it's a skill that can be learned. Later in this chapter, I'll give you links to some great resources that will help you devise lesson plans your students will love.
- **You need to work regular hours.** On most language learning sites, you get to choose the hours you work. You can be on call for students at all times of the day or simply work during the hours that are most convenient for you.
- **You need to invest a lot of money to be a teacher.** As I stated earlier, all you need to set up shop is a computer, a high-speed internet connection, a headset, webcam, and access to a VOIP product like Skype. You most likely already have all of that. And most sites allow you to set up shop for free, only charging a commission when a student pays you.

Okay, now that we've got the misconceptions out of the way, let's talk about how you can begin teaching English online. As you'll discover in the next few pages, you can be up and running by the end of the day!

Choose Your Platform

Your first job will be to choose the platform you want to work on. Keep in mind that you're not limited to only one platform as long as you can juggle your schedule between multiple sites. Here are the most well-known and respected sites where you can earn money for teaching English.

- Italki.¹ I mentioned this site earlier as it's the large language learning site out there. To sign up is simple. Just register, create your curriculum and teacher profile, set your prices, and then wait for the students to show up. You should offer a test lesson, which is typically about half of your normal rate. So if you charge \$20 an hour, you should offer a test class for \$10. It's free to register as a teacher, and Italki will take 15 percent of your earnings as commission.
- Verbal Planet.² This site is another resource, but you must apply to teach on it and to be approved, you'll need to have some teaching experience. They expect their teachers to have experience teaching language or the relevant qualifications. Once approved, you're free to set your rates, and the student pays a "booking fee" which is then paid to the site. You'll need a Skype connection and a PayPal account to work on this site. It's free to sign up.
- iTutorGroup³. This is a very professional site that also requires some experience or certification. In fact, this site will allow you to apply without certification, but if you're approved, you will be placed on a probation period, and during it, you must get your certificate. The site pays teachers based on their experience, so you will not be able to set your

1. <https://www.italki.com/home>

2. <http://www.verbalplanet.com/index.asp>

3. <http://recruit.tutorabc.com/program/index.asp>

own rates, but they are flexible with teaching hours. The site has some very strict equipment requirements and pays via direct bank deposits.

- Lingoda⁴. If you want to work from home but prefer a salary, this language learning site might be right for you. It hires native speakers to work for them and schedules the teacher/student interactions. In other words, you would be working as a paid language teacher on a salaried basis.

In addition to the above-listed sites, there are a lot of other sites where you can set up a profile and begin teaching students, but there isn't a lot of data on them. I've decided to list them all here, so you have complete information before you decide where to create a profile.

- BuddySchool⁵
- CafeTalk⁶
- Chegg⁷
- Classo⁸
- EdooPAD⁹
- eTutor School¹⁰
- Fluentify¹¹
- HiOffer¹²
- LingoLoop¹³

4. <https://www.lingoda.com/en/english>

5. <http://www.buddyschool.com/>

6. <http://cafetalk.com/>

7. <https://www.chegg.com/>

8. <http://www.classo.me/>

9. <http://www.edoopad.com/>

10. <http://www.etutorschool.com/>

11. <https://www.fluentify.com/>

12. <https://www.hioffer.com/landing?f-17>

- Palfish¹⁴
- Pratify¹⁵
- S-Lessons¹⁶
- Tandem¹⁷
- Teachlingo¹⁸
- Tutor Agent¹⁹
- Verbling²⁰
- Wyzant²¹

Keep in mind that every one of these sites has its own rules, so you'll need to understand them before posting your profile thoroughly. And many of these sites are in different countries, so it's important to understand the payment amounts and procedures before you commit.

Okay, now that you've investigated all of the possible teaching sites and decided which ones you want to work on, it's time to put together your profile.

How to Put Together Your Teacher Profile

When students log onto one of these teaching sites, they can choose which teacher they want to use. And the way they make that decision is by looking at the profiles each teacher puts up. That's why it's so important that your profile is put together in a way that showcases your talent, commitment, and skill.

13. <https://www.lingoloop.com/>

14. <http://www.ipalfish.com/>

15. <https://www.pratify.com/>

16. <https://s-lessons.com/wte/en>

17. <https://www.tandem.net/teachers/>

18. <https://www.teachlingo.com/>

19. <http://tutoragent.com/>

20. <https://www.verbling.com/teach>

21. <https://www.wyzant.com/>

On most sites, your profile will consist of a written explanation of your classes, your pricing structure, and a video. The video is the key aspect, and you should consider it your sales pitch. Here are the key components it should include:

- **Speak slowly.** Remember, the people viewing your video are there to learn English, so you should speak slowly to ensure they understand. They will appreciate this because it shows your concern for them.
- **Talk briefly about your experience.** Don't give potential students a long list of your accomplishments, but keep it brief and to the point. Remember, this is about them, not you.
- **Tell them what to expect.** When students watch profile videos, they're looking for a teacher who will provide them with the experience they want. If you plan to specialize in business communications or conversational English, let them know that. And if you plan to hold fun classes, let them know that too. This is the perfect time to tell potential students what to expect from your classes.
- **Infuse some personality.** Don't make a dry video and expect students to sign up in droves. While it's important to keep it professional, you should also be friendly and just a tad unique.
- **Ask for the sale.** Just as in any "sales video," you should include a call to action. In other words, ask the viewer to schedule a class with you. Remember, if you don't ask, they may not click the buy button.

If you don't have the equipment or software needed to make your profile video, check out the resources section in the previous chapter, where I provide a list of free, quality software.

How to Set Your Prices

In the beginning, your primary goal should be to build up a list of regular students who take classes from you every week. And to attract those first students, you'll need to start with lower prices. That's because you won't have any feedback left by other students or a sufficient number of enrolled students. To overcome this, set your prices on the low end the first week or two until you build your social proof. Once you do, you can raise your prices incrementally until you reach your desired rate.

Your price increments might look something like this:

- Weeks 1-2: \$10 an hour
- Weeks 3-4: \$20 an hour
- Weeks 5 and forward: \$30 an hour

Obviously your goal should be to teach for as few hours as possible while earning a good income, and the higher you set your prices, the easier this will be. For instance, if your goal was to earn \$500 a week, your path could look like either of these scenarios:

- If you charged \$15 an hour, you would have to work 33 hours.
- If you charged \$30 an hour, you would only have to work 17 hours.

I know which one I'd choose.

Resources for English Teachers

If you're going to be an English teacher, you need plans, curriculums, and other things to keep your classes informative and interesting. I've listed some pretty cool free resources below that you can use to make your student's learning experience fun.

- Everything English²². This site offers free lesson plans and

22. <http://www.everythingsl.net/>

scores of articles about teaching English.

- Using English.²³ You can find more lesson plans here, as well as quizzes and handouts, that you can convert to PDFs and send electronically to your students.
- TOEFL²⁴. Some of your students will be studying to pass the TOEFL exam, and the site offers all sorts of study advice you can use to help your students take the test.
- Culturally Authentic Pictorial Lexicon²⁵. A great free resource when you need to use pictures to show your students the true meanings of words.
- Many Things.²⁶ As the name describes, this site has many things for English students and their teachers such as vocabulary lists, quizzes, and a daily podcast where your students can learn and practice new short songs.
- ESL Basics.²⁷ This site has some great training videos for teachers.
- One Stop English²⁸. A great site that has everything an English teacher needs.
- Wyzant²⁹. A comprehensive site that has lesson plans and a whole lot more for English teachers.

So, what do you think? Teaching English could be a great way to make money from home, and the thing I like about it is that it's easy to set up, and you get to control the number of hours you work. Pretty sweet, huh?

23. <http://www.usingenglish.com/teachers/>

24. http://www.ets.org/toefl/teachers_advisors?WT.ac=toefl_27125_teachers_advisors

25. <http://capl.washjeff.edu/index.php>

26. <http://www.manythings.org/>

27. <http://www.eslbasics.com/>

28. <http://www.onestopenglish.com/>

29. <http://www.wyzant.com/resources/lessons/english/esl>

Chapter Sixteen: Earn Reoccurring Income with a Box Subscription Service

I have to tell you that this next work from home idea has me pretty excited. In fact, I've already created the outline in my mind for exactly how I'm going to start my own box subscription service. The industry is exploding, and there is a lot of potential here. It's not uncommon to hear of people making between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a month in this business. But keep in mind that the people making this kind of money aren't average entrepreneurs. They approach the project with enthusiasm and a focus on their customers. After all, not everyone will make that kind of dough because only a select few will put their all into it. In fact, according to Cratejoy, the leading box subscription service, the average person will make about a \$15,000 profit in the first year.

But you're not average, are you?

I'm excited to share what I've learned with you, so without further ado, let's talk about the huge potential in box subscription services.

What are Box Subscription Services?

In the past, retailers tried to gain repeat customers by offering "of-the-month-clubs." These clubs offered everything from music to books and were wildly popular. But they fell out of favor once the internet came along, and retailers have been looking for a way to achieve the same results ever since. And it looks like they've finally done it with box subscription services.

These services are so popular because, unlike the clubs of before, they seek to surprise and delight consumers every month as they open their box. Here's how it works: The business creates a theme and designs a box around it. Then that business owner tries to convince consumers to sign up to receive that box every month. For example, you've probably heard of wine clubs, where new wine is sent to recipients every month. These boxes are along the same lines, except the niches are

varied and unexpected. Some box services are based around beauty and fashion, while others are all about baked goods or herbs from around the world. Some send exciting and unique jewelry every month, while others send special dog treats or books from a certain century. And the customers never quite know what to expect. It's all part of the experience as they get to "unbox" the package every month.

It sounds like fun, doesn't it? But as you can imagine, creating a box subscription service takes a creative idea, careful planning, the right resources, and a willingness to market like crazy. Let's get started learning all about his exciting work from home venture!

Step One: Choose Your Theme

Every box has a theme, and to get the most number of subscriptions, your theme should be as niche as possible. For example, instead of offering a coffee box, you could ship a box of Hawaiian coffees every month. Or instead of sending a box full of beauty supplies, you could focus on organic beauty supplies. There are boxes for everyone: herbs for French cooking, snacks from Japan, jewelry made of silver or a certain gem, collections of things from a local farmer's market, or even boxes with a monthly recipe and all the needed ingredients. Basically, if you can think of it, someone will probably want to try it.

Here are just some of the box subscription categories to think about when designing your own box:

- Art and culture
- Beauty and fashion
- Book clubs
- Family
- Food and beverage
- Fitness and outdoors
- Gaming and geek things
- Home and living
- Kids

- Men
- Novelty
- Pets

Your first step in this process is to look over all of the above categories and let your imagination run wild. Will you send a box to golf lovers for the men's category? Or a box full of unique geek items? Maybe your focus is on kids, and you want to create a Dr. Seuss subscription box that includes a book and specialized toys and treats? You're only limited by your imagination!

Step Two: Name Your Box

Now that you have a theme, you'll need the perfect name to go with it. Your box's name should sum up the theory behind your box. For example, some people choose simple names that describe what the box is, like the *Say it With a Sock Box*, which sends new socks to men every month, while others create more branded names like *Shaker and Spoon*, which is a monthly cocktail box.

To come up with your perfect name, take out a pencil and paper and write down everything you want to convey with your box. Who are your ideal customers, and what do they want? What is unique about your box, and what need will it fulfill? After spending some time doing this, you should walk away with the perfect name for your subscription box.

Step Three: Choose Your Platform

You have a great idea but now you to find an outlet for it so customers can find it and subscribe to your service. Luckily, the marketplace has stepped up big time and created some platforms that can help you easily get the word out about your new service. But as you can imagine, not all of them are equal. I've outlined 4 of the best platform choices below.

- **Cratejoy.**¹ This is not only a terrific platform for building your box, but it's also the place where many box subscribers

go to look for new boxes. In fact, according to the site, more than 3 million visitors go to the site every month, and 500,000 of them are looking for subscription boxes. This is an all-in-one site that lets you set up your subscription, manage payments and customer contacts, and get reviews from customers for \$39 a month, some transaction fees, plus 10 percent of the sale. If you want to connect to your website, you'll pay \$138 a month, plus the 10 percent and transaction fees, plus a 10 cent fee per transaction along with a 1.25 percent fee. Finally, the site offers a **free subscription school**² that provides a wealth of knowledge for people wanting to start a box subscription service.

- **Lemon Stand**³. This platform offers themes for subscription box businesses so you can build your own website, but it won't help customers find you. This is an affordable alternative if you want to try and build your own customer base rather than relying on a platform's built-in traffic. Monthly charges start at \$19 a month, but you'll be limited to 75 orders a month. You can get 300 orders a month for \$69 or 1,000 orders for \$199 a month. The site offers a free 14-day trial.
- **Subbly**⁴. This is another website builder, but it's a great place for those who don't know code and just want an easy way to build a subscription website. The site boasts about exceptional customer service and easy pricing. It starts at \$29 a month and goes up to \$189, depending on the plan you want. Fees range from 2 percent for the lowest-priced plan to .05 percent for the highest.

1. <https://www.cratejoy.com/sell/>

2. <https://subscriptionschool.com/>

3. <https://lemonstand.com/>

4. <http://www.subbly.co/>

- **Shopify.**⁵ If you want to create your own website, Shopify is another great platform to work with. It's easy to set up a website on this platform, and there are a lot of **apps**⁶ you can integrate into your website to create the perfect box subscription site. Prices start at \$29 a month and go up to \$299, depending on your plan. You'll pay \$49 for a retail upgrade on all plans and credit card fees ranging from 2.4 to 2.9 cents, plus .30 cents per transaction. You can try the site for free for 14 days.

Step Four: Source Your Products

The idea behind a subscription box service is that you should surprise and delight your customers every month with a box so full of wonderful products that they can't wait for the next one. Remember, your goal as a subscription box owner is to keep your customers coming back every month so you can build up a lot of regular customers who never even think about unsubscribing to your service. And to do that, you'll have to fill your boxes with fabulous products every month. But where do you find those products?

Every person who runs a box subscription service has a different answer to that question, but here are some great ideas about where to source your products.

- **Source them locally.** Many business owners look locally when it comes to finding great products to fill their boxes. For example, if you plan to create a culinary box, you could theme it in a way that all of your food products are locally produced.

5. <https://www.shopify.com/>

6. <https://apps.shopify.com/search/>

[query?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=subscription?source=post&medium=blog&term=202360137&campaign=howtosellonline](https://www.shopify.com/search/?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=subscription?source=post&medium=blog&term=202360137&campaign=howtosellonline)

- **Work with manufacturers.** Another option is to purchase your products directory from the manufacturers. You can shop in local stores to find the products and then contact the manufacturers directly, or you can attend the retailer's market or trade show in the city closest to you and ordered that way. Check out this site⁷ to find the one nearest you.
- **Look online.** Don't forget about the wealth of information available online. By searching for the types of products you're looking for, you'll find all kinds of options. Look at the websites that offer the products and either ask them for a wholesale price or use them to find the products and approach the manufacturers directly.
- **Look at specialty sites.** Finally, you can find some great prices and usual items on some specialty sites like Etsy⁸, Alibaba⁹, and IndiaMart¹⁰.
- You will probably use a combination of all of these tactics to find products to fill your boxes, and some manufacturers will also contact you as your company grows. And in addition to filling your boxes with full-sized products, you can search for free sample sizes in include in them. Just keep in mind that a trial sample is a great "bonus" for your customers once in a while, but you will quickly lose them if they take up most of your box.

Step Five: Prelaunch Your Box

The subscription box industry is different in that you can prelaunch your box before you've ever put together the first one. People get excited about new boxes, and if you have a great idea and are willing to put

7. <http://www.wholesalecentral.com/trade-shows/trade-show-calendar.html>

8. <https://www.etsy.com/>

9. <https://www.alibaba.com/>

10. <https://www.indiamart.com/>

in the time and resources to create some exciting promotional materials, you can get a lot of email addresses from people who have expressed an interest in your idea.

It's called a prelaunch, and you should not skip this step if you want to see success. It will not only help you gain a large list of email subscribers that you can try and sell a subscription to when you launch, but it's also a great way to test the market. If you don't generate some consumer excitement during your relaunch, you may need to reevaluate your idea.

To conduct a successful prelaunch, you should follow these steps:

- **Build a prelaunch page.** If you're going to use your own website, set up a special prelaunch page that customers will see when they log onto your site. If you're hosting your service on a platform like CrateJoy, use its prelaunch theme¹¹.
- **Get started on social media.** You can drive a lot of people to your prelaunch site by interacting on social media sites like Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The key is to use beautiful photographs that portray your box. If the photos are captivating enough, people will share them, and that will bring you more email addresses as people sign up.
- **Keep in touch.** Over the next few weeks, as you continue to prepare your box for launch, send your new list sneak peeks and other things that will make them excited about the launch. You don't want them to forget who you are and why they signed up for your list.
- **Find Influencers.** You should also look for influencers in your industry and contact them. Offer to send them your first box in exchange for a mention of your box to their audience. You'll need to create a PDF for these people that explains what your box is, and what benefits it offers subscribers.

11. <https://www.cratejoy.com/sell/blog/prelaunch-theme/>

Most experts agree that you should expect a 10-15 percent conversion rate from your prelaunch email list when you launch your box. That means if you gather 5,000 email addresses, you should plan on about 500 of them converting to subscribers.

Step Six: Decide on Your Packaging

Your next step is to decide what kind of box you'll ship your products in. This is important because the bigger your box, the more you'll pay for shipping, and if you're shipping hundreds of boxes, it can add up quickly.

Your box size will depend on the types of products you plan to include in your box. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

How big are the products I plan to ship?

- How many products will I include in each box?
- Do my boxes need any special inserts? (For example, a cupcake box would require special inserts to keep the cupcakes in place.)
- What type of marketing inserts will I include? For example, will you include written instructions, a thank you note, or an ingredients list? Remember, any written material will need to be professionally created.
- Do you want to create a custom box, or will a white or colored box with a custom sticker work? You'll need to find a box manufacturer to work with. PackLane¹² will allow you to create custom boxes with a minimum order of 10, Ecoenclose¹³ produces earth-friendly boxes, The Paper Worker¹⁴ offers low minimum custom boxes, and you can use the standard boxes¹⁵ at CrateJoy if you use them as your

12. <https://packlane.com/>

13. <http://www.ecoenclose.com/Default.asp>

14. <https://www.thepaperworker.com/>

15. https://cratejoy.boxup.com/tag/cratejoy?utm_source=subschool&utm_campaign=custom-

platform.

- How much will it cost to ship the box? One of the best ways to estimate the shipping on your box is to use these shipping calculators¹⁶.

After you've designed and ordered your box, there is only one step left in launching your business, letting people know about it.

Step Seven: Price Your Box

Until you've completed all of these steps, you won't know how much to charge for your box. Remember, you'll need to arrive at a price that makes it affordable and desirable for consumers while allowing you to make a good profit for all of your hard work. One of the best and most comprehensive tools I've seen on the subject can be found here¹⁷.

Step Eight: Get the Word Out About Your Subscription Box Service

You've put in a lot of hard work, and now it's time to collect the rewards of it. Since you did a prelaunch on your box, the marketing of the actual launch will be easy. Here are the steps you should take.

- Email your list and let them know the box is launching. Ask them to subscribe and be sure to include a link to make it easy for them. Remember, you should expect 10-15 percent of your list to subscribe.
- Let your social media channels know that your box has launched. Be sure to include lots of beautiful photos, so your posts get shared.
- Run contents giving away free boxes for referrals.
- If you use your own website as your platform, run some Facebook ads to attract new subscribers.

subscription-box-packaging-comprehensive-report-30-manufacturers

16. <https://www.cratejoy.com/sell/blog/two-new-subscription-box-shipping-cost-calculators/>

17. <https://www.cratejoy.com/sell/subscription-box-calculator/>

- If you used a platform like CrateJoy, be sure your description and social proof are enticing to potential subscribers.
- Get your box listed on sites like [hellosubscription.com](https://boxes.hellosubscription.com/)¹⁸, a directory where subscription box junkies go to find their next fix!

What's Next?

Whew, that was a lot of work, wasn't it? But guess what? It's time to start all over again because next month, your subscribers will expect a box as equally impressive as your first one. That means you'll need to continually source new products and print new materials so your boxes are always as good as they can be.

18. <https://boxes.hellosubscription.com/>

Conclusion

Well, that brings us to the end of our journey. I hope this book has inspired you and caused you to think about pursuing your own dreams instead of working for someone else and helping them build theirs.

One of the lessons I had to learn the hard way is that it's a big world out there, and we can easily limit ourselves by dreaming too small. Instead, when we **dream big** and set our sights on the **big goal**, we are better able to reach it.

So, my hope for you is that you set your goals high and work until you reach them!

Remember, if you've enjoyed the book, I sure would love it if you would post a review for it on Amazon¹. And if you have any questions that I haven't answered, be sure to contact me at RainMakerPress.com², and I'll get right back to you.

And if you want to check out any of my other titles, just go the next page where I'll tell you a little about each one.

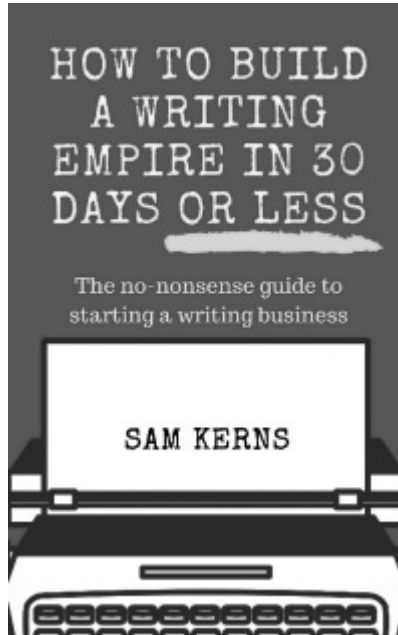
Now get out there and pursue your dreams!

Sam

1. <https://goo.gl/jYSZlIH>

2. <http://www.rainmakerpress.com/>

How to Build a Writing Empire in 30 Days or Less in 2019 (Work from Home Series: Book 2)



Do You Want to Make a Real Living as a Writer? You'll Have to Throw Out Everything You Know

Let me guess—you're a talented writer who is willing to do whatever it takes to make a full-time living by writing. You've read countless articles and books on the subject, followed the suggestions in them, but you just can't seem to make the income leap.

Or you may be a new writer who is convinced that you're missing something because your own experience isn't matching up to what you've read is possible.

Or perhaps you've been moonlighting as a freelance writer for years, and you're convinced that it's simply not possible to quit your "real" job and do what you love full time.

Let me tell you a secret. You've been lied to. Yes, you heard me correctly. **Lied. To.**

The truth is, only about 10 percent of writers earn enough working full time to support themselves. *Ten percent.* That's not something all those other how-to writing books spend a lot of time on, is it?

Luckily, there's a real solution.

I know this because I've been doing it myself for years. But to be successful in this business, you'll have to turn the current freelance writing working model on its head. In fact, you pretty much **have to throw everything you thought you knew out the window.**

What I'm talking about is a new system. One that doesn't limit a freelance writer's ability to make a great income because of time constraints. I'm talking about earning a living anyone would be proud of.

In this book, I'll show you how to create your own Writing Empire in 30 days or less. You'll learn:

- Why most freelancers can't make a decent living—and what to do about it
- How to structure your writing business in a way that works best for your lifestyle
- How to brand your business to attract the type of clients you want
- Where to find clients and how to land the jobs
- How to structure your time to earn the highest possible income in the shortest amount of time
- How to hire a team of qualified, motivated writers who will help you build your Empire

And that's not all. I'll give you a **step-by-step plan** that will lead you to success. This plan looks **in detail** at your first:

- Day
- Week
- Month
- And beyond

As I said, I structured my own business this way, so let my experience help you achieve your dreams.

Are you ready to get serious about your writing career and make some serious money? Start right now by downloading the book and learn how to make a real living with writing!

[Click here to buy the book on Amazon!](#)¹

1. <https://goo.gl/C5Eiq7>

How to Start a Home-Based Food Business: Turn Your Foodie Love into Serious Cash with a Food Business Startup (Work from Home Series Book 3)



1

Finally, a Comprehensive Guide to Starting a Food Business!

Do your insides jump for joy when you see a perfectly frosted cupcake or cookie? Or do you love the look of violet lavender syrup or a mouthwatering strawberry and lime jam? Or are you more of a savory person and melt when you see a jar of homemade salsa or seasoned nuts with just the right amount of spices?

If food excites you as much as it does me, you just might be a foodie. And in today's food-centered world, there is serious money to be made with your passion.

Food consumption has really changed in the past decade, and now more than ever, people want to know what's in their food, where it

1. https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01HX058Y2/ref=series_rw_dp_sw

came from and who made it. That's bad news for businesses that mass-produce food, but great news for those in the cottage food industry.

You see, in the past, individuals who wanted to sell food were required to involve the state health inspectors and lease commercial kitchens to sell to the public. Obviously, that prevented a lot of people from pursuing their food dreams. But now many states have passed **cottage food laws** that are designed to give home chefs and bakers the right to produce products from their homes and sell them to the public.

If you've read my other books, you know I'm a serial entrepreneur. I've opened and closed many businesses in my lifetime, and there's nothing I love more than taking an idea and turning it into a smoothly run, profitable business. And this book was born of that desire.

Let me explain.

I bake. There—it's out in the open. I'm a guy, and I bake. Can we please move on?

Specifically, I bake specialty brownies that are so good I've had local stores approach me and ask me to sell them wholesale, and I get phone calls from friends begging me to bake a batch. Yeah, my brownies are that good.

So when I heard about the changes in the law allowing people to start home-based food businesses, my entrepreneurial mind starting spinning. I have a great product, so in my mind, there was no reason why I couldn't create a profitable business. I should just open one, right?

Fortunately, that's not the way I roll. I have never simply opened a business and learned as I go—instead, I conduct so much research that I know absolutely everything there is to know before I begin. In other words, I leave no room for error. I want the information upfront, so I can make the best decisions and build a successful business.

Otherwise, what's the point?

So, when the idea of opening a cottage food business occurred to me, I began researching, and I didn't stop for months. That's where this book comes in. There is a lot to know about this type of business, and one thing I learned is that there is simply nowhere that you can get all of the information in one place.

Until this book.

Don't believe me? Take a look at all the other books on the subject and see if the author provides a state-by-state index of all the cottage food laws. Let me save you some time. They don't.

And recipes that fit into the guidelines of the laws? Nope, you won't find them in other books. How about serious insight into how to best brand, package, and market your home-based food business? You'll only find that in this book.

So, let my obsessive research into business ideas, along with my entrepreneurial skills, help you in your own business. I've done the hard work for you, so **all you have to do is follow the plan I've outlined in this book, and you'll be on your way to building your very own food business.** And all the newbie questions you have but are too embarrassed to ask? I had them, too, and I've included the answers to them in this book.

If you're ready to pursue your foodie dreams, download the book and learn everything you need to know!

[Click here to buy the book on Amazon!](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01HX058Y2/ref=series_rw_dp_sw)²

2. https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01HX058Y2/ref=series_rw_dp_sw

How to Brand Your Home-Based Business: Why Business Branding is Crucial for Even the Smallest Startups (Work from Home Series Book 4)

How to



Your Home-Based Business

Sam Kerns

What's the Difference Between a Successful Home-Based Business and One that Fails? Branding.

Home-based business startups are exploding all across the world as more and more people realize that the best way to take control of your life—and your finances—is to work for yourself. But what many people forget to do is brand their small business.

That's a mistake. You see, business branding isn't only for the big guys. Home-based business owners also need to focus on creating a brand that will speak to their customers and forge that ever-important bond between the business and the public.

But home-based business owners shouldn't play by the same rules when it comes to branding their business. For starters, most solopreneurs don't have the finances to pay big shot logo designers, graphic artists, and copywriters, not to mention the cash to invest in top-notch packaging and marketing efforts.

And why would you want to?

Building a brand doesn't have to be expensive or complicated, but it does require a plan and the knowledge about how to best create the right brand and then use it to build your business.

If you own a home-based business and can't figure out why you're not meeting your goals, could it be that you haven't taken the time to brand it properly? And if you're just starting out, you shouldn't even think about opening your doors until you've branded your business for success.

In this book, I'll show you:

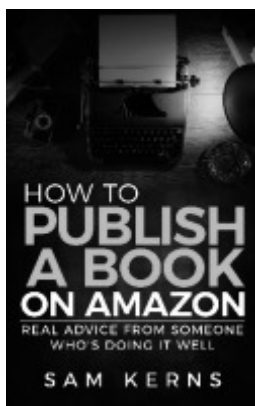
- What branding is and why your business can't truly succeed without it
- The biggest benefits you'll reap from a business brand
- The 7 mistakes most people make when building a brand—and how to avoid them
- How to build a brand in today's high-tech world
- A step-by-step guide to brand building that will work for any type of business (along with links and resources)

Don't let your hard work go to waste. Increase your market share (and profits) in your current home-based business, or start your new business on the right foot by reading this important book.

[Click Here to Buy The Book from Amazon!](https://goo.gl/6fLLFo)¹

1. <https://goo.gl/6fLLFo>

How to Publish a Book on Amazon in 2019: Real Advice from Someone Who's Doing it Well (Work from Home Series: Book 5)



Are you tired of “how to publish books” that are full of fluff and no real information? So was I.

Before I began my publishing career with Kindle books, I read just about everything out there, looking for real answers to questions I had about the industry. But much to my disappointment, most of the books were filled with fluff or stories of people who “hit it big” without really telling me how or why.

I determined to jump in and learn for myself—and that’s exactly what I did. I started with my first book, *How to Work from Home and Make Money*, and then quickly published three more. I was looking for the topic of my fifth book when it hit me—**why not share what I’ve learned with the people who still haven’t made the leap and published their own book?**

It all began when I received an email from a book promotion site. One of the features was a how-to book about publishing Kindle books, so out of curiosity, I followed the link and read the reviews. And sure enough, the page was full of people complaining that the book didn't contain any valuable information.

So here's what I decided to do. Write a book that answers all of the real questions without painting an unrealistic view of the possibilities. I answer things like:

- How to pick book topics that will sell. (Why it's important, and what I've done right—and wrong.)
- How to write a book in 30 days or less. (And take weekends off)
- How to conduct research for your book.
- How to make your own covers for free.
- The pros and cons of pre-releasing your book.
- When you should enroll your book in Kindle Unlimited (And when you shouldn't.)
- How to format your book yourself. (Including the clickable table of contents) And how to get it done for cheap if you don't want to.
- Why you need a paperback version. (And how to create one)
- Why you may need an audiobook (And how to get one for free)
- How to get your book translated into other languages for free (And why you should)
- Why ranking matters (And what to do if your book isn't ranking well.)
- How to market your book. (Including links and contact information for the people I use)
- What to do after you publish your first book.
- How much you can REALLY expect to make with Kindle

publishing

I talk about the mistakes I've made, so you don't make them, too. And I provide you with **step-by-step instructions and relevant links for all of the above areas**—and more. In other words, this book is the **ONLY** book you'll need to start a career publishing Kindle books.

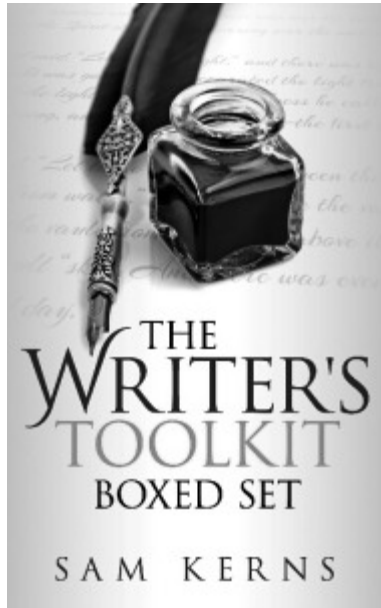
If you've been dreaming of publishing a book, but don't know where to start—or if you've already published but can't find success—this may be the book you've been waiting for.

Why not take the first step toward your publishing career and download it right now? I promise you won't find any fluff or useless information in it. Just an actionable guide that answers the questions no one else will.

[Click here to buy the book from Amazon!](#)¹

1. <https://goo.gl/jYSZlH>

The Writer's Toolkit Boxed Set (Work from Home: Books 2 and 5)



Two bestselling books in one boxed set!

[Click here to buy the boxed set from Amazon!](https://goo.gl/hKKhsG)¹

1. <https://goo.gl/hKKhsG>

The Weekend Writer: How to Write a Non-Fiction Book in Two Months even if You Have a Full-Time Job (Work from Home Series: Book 6)



Do you fear you’ll never publish a book because you don’t have time to write?

Let me guess—you’re a writer, but so far, the book you *know* will be a big hit is stuck inside your head because you simply don’t have the time to sit down and write it. You’ve probably been told that you need to block out mass chunks of time to write a book, but I’m here to tell you that’s just not true.

It’s possible to write a quality book in two months—writing only on the weekends—using my step-by-step plan.

I’m not talking about putting out some of the junk that passes for books these days. I’m talking about writing a full-length book you’ll be proud to put your name on, and readers will be thrilled they bought.

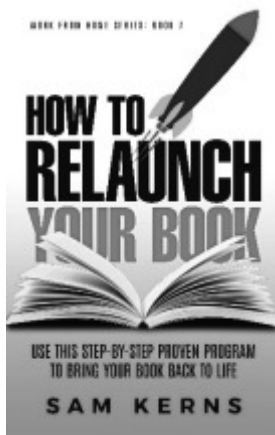
Here's what you'll find in this revolutionary book:

- How to get in the right mindset to write on a limited schedule
- How to choose your book topic, so it sells
- How to outline your book in a way that makes writing it easier
- How to set up a no-fail writing schedule so you can meet your deadline
- How to use productivity hacks that will help you stay on track and accomplish your goal
- How to edit as you go
- A weekend-by-weekend guide that shows you the exact steps you need to take to have a finished book in just two months—only writing on the weekends.

[Click here to buy the book from Amazon!](https://goo.gl/FhHHOh)¹

1. <https://goo.gl/FhHHOh>

How to Relaunch Your Book: Use this 7-Step Proven Program to Bring Your Book Back to Life (Book 7)



Do You Have a Book That Isn't Selling? Don't Leave Money on the Table!

There's nothing more exciting than writing and publishing a book, but if you're like most authors, your book sells for the first couple of months and then quietly and alarmingly sinks to the bottom of Amazon's rankings. Or maybe your book never saw success. There are thousands of book authors thought their book would achieve success only to watch it sink to the bottom of the rankings. Sadly most book authors simply accept that it's just the way things are.

But it doesn't have to be.

The truth is, **it is possible to relaunch your book months—or even years—after its initial release and see success.** To prove this, I'll use the first book in my Work from Home series, and relaunch it as an example of the process I outline in this book. I purposefully allowed the book to slip in the rankings so I could use it as a case study for this book. But keep in mind that I'm certain the program works because I've used it many times.

A successful book relaunch is more complicated than simply marketing your book again. In fact, to do it successfully, you'll need to follow the 7-step program I outline in this book. Some of the things we'll cover are how to:

- Analyze your book's position
- Create an improvement roadmap
- Test the existing cover to determine whether or not to design a new one
- Rearrange your book categories using my Lift Off strategy
- Ensure your internal marketing techniques are in place to increase sales of other books in the series
- Use the relaunch to increase the size of your mailing list
- Organize the relaunch so that you don't experience another quick drop off in sales.

This book not only provides you with a 7-step process, but I'll also give you an “over the shoulder” look at how I successfully follow the program myself.

If you have books on Amazon that aren't selling, you're leaving money on the table. Why should your only option be continuously writing new books to make money on Amazon? The secret is that you can—and should—revive your old books. Won't you follow along as I show you how to bring your backlist to life and reignite those book sales?

[Click Here to Buy the Book from Amazon!](https://goo.gl/QvWWvr)¹

1. <https://goo.gl/QvWWvr>

The 30-Day Small Business Startup Plan: Do You Have What it Takes to Be Your Own Boss and Achieve Financial Freedom (The Work from Home Series: Book 8)



In this myth-busting book, bestselling author Sam Kerns strips away the falsehoods surrounding entrepreneurship and challenges you to do a bare, in-your-face analysis of whether starting a business is the right move for you.

The truth is, not everyone is cut out to be their own boss. Entrepreneurship is hard, and unless you approach your new business with a solid understanding of how you will react to the stresses and challenges,

you can't really know how you'll do. Also, there are some basic skills you must have to run a successful business, and without them, you don't have a chance.

Does that sound harsh? Here's the reality:

- One out of every two businesses fails within the first year, according to the Small Business Association.
- That same report shows that one-third of those new businesses fail in the first two years.
- The US Bureau of Labor and Statistics says that only half of new businesses that make it to the five-year mark survive.

But what if I told you there is a way to determine whether or not you are cut out to be your own boss—and **increase your odds of becoming a success?** What if you could know if quitting your job and starting your own business is the right move for you—*before* you took the leap?

And if you find out that you don't have what it takes? I'll teach you how to get past your limitations and increase your odds of success.

You see, I talk to way too many people who left their jobs to venture out on their own before they were ready. And if you ask them, they'll all tell you the same thing: They wish they'd been better prepared, so their great business idea didn't result in a missed opportunity.

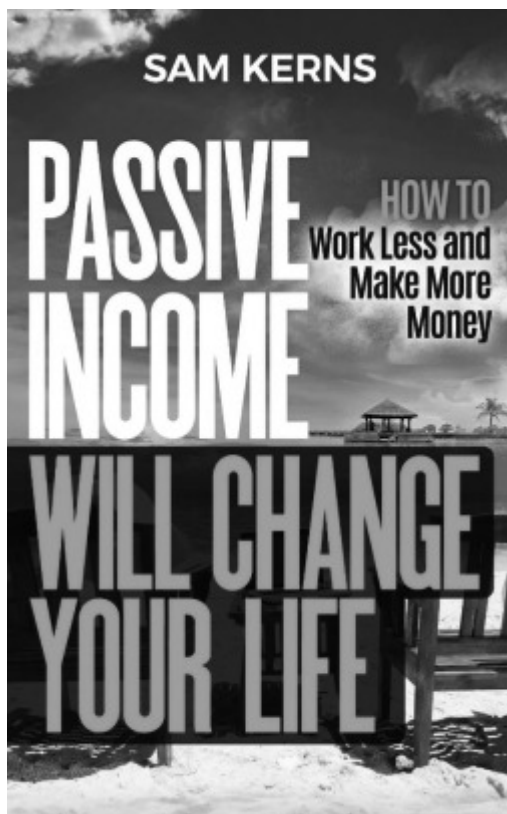
In other words, if they had the information outlined in this book *before* they started their own business, they might have succeeded.

If you like the idea of starting your own business and want the best chance for success, you'll love the hard-hitting and practical advice found in *The 30-Day Small Business Startup Plan*.

Don't take the most important step of your life without first evaluating your position. Buy The 30-Day Small Business Startup Plan now to give yourself a better chance for success!

Buy the Book on Amazon!¹

Passive Income Will Change Your Life: How to Work Less and Make More Money (Work from Home Series: Book 9)



Are You Ready to Get Serious about Generating Passive Income?

When thinking about writing this book, I read other books on the topic and found myself walking away, shaking my head in frustration. Many of the ideas presented were outright ridiculous and could never lead to legitimate passive income. So I decided to write a better book.

The idea of structuring your life around passive income is real. I currently have four streams of passive (or semi-passive) income (I'm working on the fifth), and would

never again consider trading my time for money. But it's not as easy as some books suggest. As with anything in life, if you want to create passive income, you will need to understand it, plan for it, and then work to make it a reality.

I have done just that and don't need to punch a clock or answer to anyone else. Because most of my income is passive, I don't have to exert a lot of time or effort to earn a great living.

Does this sound too good to be true? I assure you it's not. But this type of lifestyle won't just come knocking at your door. You need to get the knowledge and planning skills that will allow you to pursue it.

And that's where this book comes in. Here's an overview of what you'll find in *Passive Income Will Change Your Life: How to Work Less and Earn More Money*

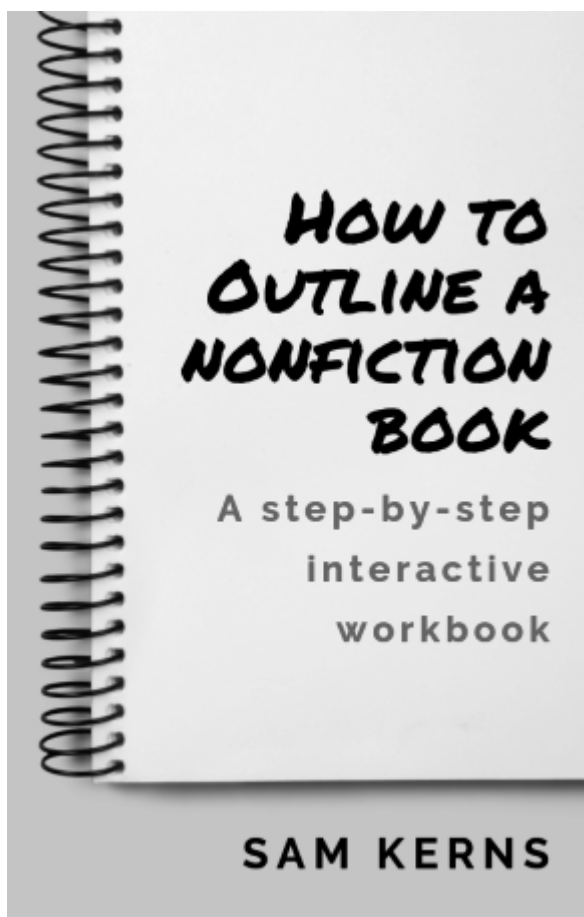
- Busting the passive income myths. What it really is and why going in with open eyes is important
- Define your expectations. You can't make a plan until you know what you want.
- Design your passive income roadmap. I'll show you how to do this in 5 easy steps.
- Ten passive income streams that really work. (I promise you won't find ideas like "Earn credit card rewards" or "Do online surveys" in my book. I only include legitimate ways to earn passive income on my list.)

I have included passive income ideas that take some startup capital and others that don't. In other words, there is something here for everyone. But remember, if you want to build real wealth, you need to approach it seriously. This book will get you focused, help you create a plan that works for your lifestyle, and give you ten realistic ways to earn passive income.

Available Here¹!

1. <https://amzn.to/2rZPPQC>

How to Outline a Nonfiction Book: An Interactive Workbook (Work from Home Series: Book 10)

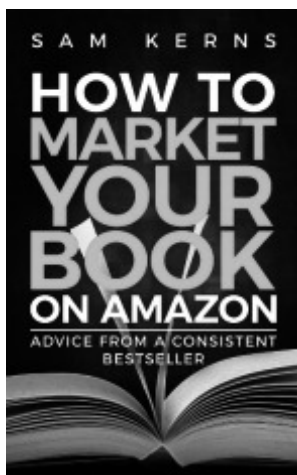


Don't pay hundreds of dollars for a course about outlining a nonfiction book. Instead, spend \$7 on this step-by-step interactive workbook that teaches you everything you need to know. Once you complete it, you'll have a detailed outline that will make writing your book fast and easy.

Get it here¹!

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1. <https://www.rainmakerpress.com/new-products/how-to-outline-a-nonfiction-book-a-step-by-step-interactive-fillable-workbook>

How to Market Your Book on Amazon: Advice from a Consistent Bestseller (Work from Home Series: Book 11)



Marketing Your Book on Amazon isn't Difficult. All You Need is a System that Works.

After reading my bestselling book, *How to Publish a Book on Amazon*, readers have sent me scores of emails asking me to write a follow-up book about how to market a book on Amazon. Although that book covers the subject in one chapter, the topic is large enough for an entire book.

But I resisted writing this book for some time because, in my mind, there are already numerous books written on the subject. But the emails kept coming with people telling me that they need a book on the topic presented in the comprehensive style I use to write my books.

And the truth is, I don't follow the advice found in other books: I have my own system.

So, how do my books consistently stay on top of the Amazon rankings? What do I do to keep my books in front of Amazon shoppers so they'll buy them?

I've decided to share my secrets, and that's the topic of this new book. After all, we're all in this together, and my motivation in writing books is to help others achieve the success I have.

Here's what you'll learn when you buy this long-awaited book:

- Why taking the long-view is the only way to sell books on Amazon
- Why “keywords everywhere” is the foundation of your book marketing efforts
- Samples equal book sales
- The truth about reviews (it's not what you expect)
- How to let your books sell your books on Amazon
- What's in an algorithm?
- First impressions count: how to make a great one with shoppers
- Why your book must scratch that elusive itch
- How to sell yourself to sell your books
- Your email list is key: learn from my mistakes and avoid some pain
- Yes, you can manipulate your Amazon rankings: here's how
- You don't have to spend a million bucks to make Amazon ads work for you

In addition to all of the above, I'll give you a step-by-step launch and maintenance plan for your book's success.

As we say in the RainMaker Tribe, it's time to pursue your dreams. And if becoming a bestselling author is your dream, you need to know how to market your books effectively.

Buy the Book Now!¹

1. <https://amzn.to/2sm91vA>

Be Better: The Complete Guide to Changing Your Habits, Reaching Your Goals, and Getting the Life YOU Want



Are You Living Your Dream? What If You Could Live the Life You Want by Making a Few, Simple Changes?

When we were young, we all had dreams of what our lives would look like when we got older. But for far too many people, those dreams dissolve into something that is at best mediocre. They go through the motions, and never reach their potential or accomplish their dreams. But here's the deal: It's never too late to get the life you want—both professionally and personally.

Some people believe that you have to undergo a huge transformation to change yourself so you can change your life. I disagree. With my **Be Better Plan**®, people can change one simple aspect of their lives and it will lead to a radical change for the better.

In other words, small changes in behaviors or thoughts can propel your life to the next level.

In this book, I will:

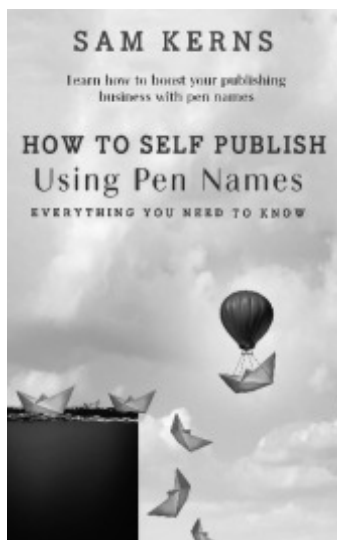
- Help you identify the areas of your life that may be holding you back.
- Delve into the **Be Better Plan**®. It consists of the habits and mindsets that allow most successful people to achieve all that they do.
- But I won't leave you there. I'll then walk you step-by-step through the process of making the small changes so you can take life by the horns and lead it—instead of the other way around.

Isn't it time to begin living the life you've always wanted? It's not out of reach, but you may have to change a few simple habits and mindsets. Read *Be Better: The Complete Guide to Changing Your Habits, Reaching Your Goals, and Getting the Life YOU Want* now and learn how to get the life you've always dreamed of!

Buy the Book Here¹!

1. <https://amzn.to/30qHRAP>

How to Self-Publish Using Pen Names: Everything You Need to Know (Work from Home Series: Book 14)



Are You Ready to Take Your Publishing Business to the Next Level?

Building a writing career is work – don't let anyone tell you otherwise – but there are some things you can do to put yourself ahead of the pack. And one of those things is to create one or more pen names.

How can you use pen names to build your publishing business? It's all in the numbers. The more books you write in different genres, the more sales you will make.

But you can't write romance and nonfiction under the same name, can you? Enter pens names as the perfect solution.

There are other reasons why you might want to use a nom de plume or pseudonym. Maybe you don't want your boss to know about your

“other career.” Or maybe you want to see how well your books sell before announcing to the world that you wrote them.

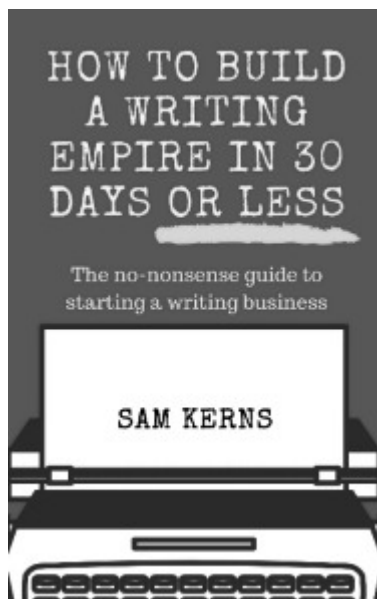
If you’re looking for a unique way to boost your writing career, this book may be the answer. Here’s what you’ll learn:

- • The reasons to write under a pen name
- • How to legally set up a pen name
- • What to do about author photographs
- • A step-by-step system that will help you create pen names and build your publishing empire

[Purchase the book here!](#)²

2. https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09TS6387Y?notRedirectToS-DP=1&ref_=dbs_mng_calw_13&storeType=ebooks

Bonus! Free Chapter Preview: How to Build a Writing Empire in 30 Days or Less



Chapter 1: Why Being a Good Writer Just Isn't Enough Any More The Big Lie

Let me guess—you're a talented writer who is willing to do whatever it takes to make a full-time living by writing. You've read countless articles and books on the subject, followed the suggestions in them, but you just can't seem to make the income leap. Or you may be a new writer who is convinced that you're missing something because your own experience just isn't matching up to what others say is possible. Or perhaps you've been moonlighting as a freelance writer for years, and

you're convinced that it's simply not possible to quit your "real" job and do what you love full-time.

Let me tell you a secret. You've been lied to. Yes, you heard me correctly. **Lied. To.**

Our culture teaches us that if we work hard enough and have at least some talent, we can become a success and accomplish our dreams. I'm not necessarily disagreeing with that. In fact, I wholeheartedly believe in the American Dream. But what I am saying is that the freelance writing business isn't like most other career choices, and the uniqueness of the profession requires you to think a little outside of the box if you want to make a real living from it.

Take me as an example. I've considered myself a writer my entire life. When I was ten years old, I knew that writing was the career—the only career—that I wanted. I took the first step when I reached my early twenties—after suffering miserably in an office environment for a few years—and sent queries to magazines and book publishers. (This was before it was possible to act as your own Indie publisher.) I was lucky because, unlike many of my peers, I didn't seem to have any trouble landing assignments, and I was even given a book contract with a publisher in my second year.

But there was a problem. Despite my early success, I was nowhere near making what I needed to do to earn a full-time living. I began to wonder what was wrong. I was working 50 to 60 hours a week, and even if I'd been able to secure more writing assignments, I wouldn't have had time to complete them. So instead of pursuing my writing dreams, I began to open other businesses, and while I achieved success with them, I couldn't let go of my desire to work as a writer. There had to be a way, the entrepreneur side of me said, but for the life of me, I couldn't figure it out.

Something certainly wasn't adding up.

The One Percent

Determined that it must be something I was doing wrong, I set out to find the solution. I read every book I could find about how to make a living as a freelance writer but was dismayed to learn that I was already doing everything the books recommended. The “experts” on the subject suggested that if I would only follow their time-proven plan, I’d be able to quit my day job in time and pursue my dream.

But that simply wasn’t true. I was working hard and following all the expert advice, and I still wasn’t earning an income large enough to support myself.

And then, I came across a startling statistic that changed the course of my writing career and eventually led to this book. Are you sitting down?

Only about 10 percent of writers earn enough from working full-time to support themselves. *Ten percent.*

And the figures haven’t improved over time. According to the Author’s Guild¹, about half of the full-time writers they surveyed earn less than \$12,000 a year in income, which falls below the federal poverty level. Not exactly what you had in mind when thinking about pursuing a writing career, is it?

And it’s not much better in the U.K. According to a study commissioned by the Author’s Licensing and Collecting Society², only 11.5 percent of freelancers who dedicate almost all of their time to writing earn enough money to support themselves.

Are you kidding me? What happened to doing our best and becoming a success? How about the fact that most writers end up working ridiculous hours just to keep up with the demand? What about that *American Dream*?

After I recovered from the shock, I became determined to uncover the secret of the ten percent. What made them so special? Were they

1. <https://www.authorsguild.org/>

2. <http://www.alcs.co.uk/>

that much above the cut in their skills? Did they have inside connections, or were they just plain lucky?

Here's what I found. A percentage of that ten percent are best-selling novelists, nonfiction writers who are experts in their field, or advertising and marketing copywriters who spent years building their reputation as the go-to person in sales copy.

The smallest portion of the ten percent are those writers who have managed to get in with the highest paying markets (sometimes thousands of dollars per article) and receive a steady flow of assignments from them. This generally takes years to accomplish.

But hey, what about the rest of the writers? Those who mostly work in the midrange markets and the internet? (In other words, the other 90 percent). Shouldn't they be able to make a decent living doing what they love, too?

That's when I discovered that it's all in the math.

It Just Doesn't Add Up

I decided to calculate how many hours I would have to write each month to earn a living that would afford my family and me a comfortable living. So I set a target income and worked backward from there. My bottom line base figure was \$100,000 per year. Yours might be different, and I encourage you to give this part of the process some serious thought.

First, add up your monthly obligations such as mortgage or rent, utilities, car payments, food, and the rest of your living expenses. Don't forget to account for property taxes, insurance, college educations, and income taxes.

Next, you should add in the amount of money you want for savings, entertainment, and the amount of disposable income you'd be content with. Remember, we're not just talking about "making it." I want you to write down a figure that will comfortably sustain you and your family while putting money away for your retirement. As artists, we have to get a new mindset. The old thinking says that if you're lucky

enough to do something you love, you will probably suffer financially. That's yesterday's thought process. I'm telling you, it is possible to do what you love AND make a good living.

As I said, my target goal was \$100,000, but yours should be individualized for your lifestyle. Now, take that number and divide it by 12, 52, and 260 (the average number of workdays in a year) to give you a rough idea of what you need to earn monthly, weekly, and daily. My \$100,000 figure looks something like this:

Yearly Goal = \$100,000

Monthly Goal = \$8,333

Weekly Goal = \$1,923

Daily Goal = \$385

Next, I figured the average price customers pay per article. Now, this can be tricky because the rates are so diverse, depending on the level of experience of the writer and the type of article being assigned. For this exercise, let's concentrate on internet content articles, as that's what most people will start within this business.

Typically, new writers start at about \$25 per article for internet content, and once they build a good portfolio, they can demand much higher rates. So, for this book, I'm going to assume that many of you are just starting and use that rate. Please feel free to substitute your higher rate if you've already surpassed this level.

So, using the target goal of \$100,000 and a \$25 per article payout here's what it looks like:

To earn \$100,000 per year, you would have to produce 4,000 articles a year. That means you would have to write 333 articles a month or 83 a week. And if broken down into the 260 workdays in a year, that means to earn the target income; it would be necessary to write just over 15 articles a day.

Are you still with me? I know it's discouraging, and at this point, you might feel like it's not even possible. But the good news is coming. Stay with me, okay?

Now that you understand how many articles it will take to get to your desired income, let's talk about how many hours you'll have to spend to write them.

Again, this will differ depending on your experience. A seasoned writer can complete an internet content article in a little under an hour, but a newbie may take two hours. Let's average that for our purposes, and use an hour and a half. Here's the amount of hours you would need to spend to meet the \$100,000 per year goal.

- You would need to work 6,000 hours a year to write 4,000 articles a year.
- You would need to work 499.5 hours a month to write 333 articles a month.
- You would need to work 124.5 hours a week to write 83 articles a week.
- You would need to work 22.5 hours a day to write 15 articles a day.

Hang on; it's going to get worse before it gets better. (But remember, I have a solution.)

The Other Part of Writing

Let me break this to you gently: when working as a freelance writer, writing is only a portion of the tasks you'll need to complete every day to run a profitable business. And your other responsibilities? You guessed it. They're time-consuming. Let's take a look at the other things you'll have to do to maintain your business.

Marketing

You will receive no assignments unless you sell yourself. We will go deeply into the how's and whys of marketing your writing Empire, but for now, you should know that you will need to spend approximately two hours a day querying editors, bidding on jobs, looking for new clients, and managing your portfolio. So, you can automatically add two hours per day to all of the above figures.

Accounts Payable and Client Communications

Two other areas you will spend a great amount of time on are client communications and ensuring that you're paid for the jobs you've completed. Your clients will want to communicate with you before you begin work on an assignment to make sure you understand the scope of the project. Many of them will also want you to check in during the project so you can ask any questions you may have or update them on the status of the project. And once the project is completed, the client will either approve the work or ask you for modifications. Some clients are fine communicating via email, while others expect you to be available on Skype or even the phone.

Effective communication with clients is critical to establish long-lasting business relationships. In other words, it will not only help you gain new clients, but it will also help you retain your hard-earned accounts.

And once you've completed a project, you'll need to invoice the client, and then stay on top of that invoice until it's paid. All clients are different in how they want you to invoice them. Many use PayPal, while others prefer to put a check in the mail. Some will ask you to create a professional invoice, while others will simply ask you to email them an invoice. If the buyer hired you via your website, they would have paid your fee before you started the project. And if you work with clients on bid sites, each site has its invoicing requirements that you'll need to learn.

So, how much time does all this take? Again, it depends on how many ongoing jobs you have and how many clients you work with, but it's safe to say that you should plan on about an hour and a half per day on these tasks.

Wait a minute. If we add three and a half hours to your workday for marketing, invoicing, and client communications, that means you'd have to work 26 hours a day to earn the target goal of \$100,000 per

year. That may be a problem, because the last time I checked, there were only 24 hours in a day.

That's not something all those other how-to writing books spend a lot of time on, is it? But now that I've uncovered the problem, we can talk about the solution. And there *is* a solution.

Thinking like a Twenty-First Century Writer

At this point, you must realize that there are simply not enough hours in the day to do all it takes to earn a real living as a full-time freelance writer. Time is the enemy. It's the number one reason so many writers spend years struggling on an "artist's" income (Sorry, but there's nothing romantic about that when you're trying to support a family), or end up taking a "day job" to help ends meet. If you're already a freelancer, how many times have you wished you could clone yourself several times over to be able to produce more content so you could earn a decent living?

Exactly.

What if I told you that you could double, triple, or even quadruple your time, allowing you to not only increase your income but also spend more time pursuing the types of writing projects *you* want to?

What I'm talking about is building a writing Empire—an organization of writers that all work for you under your direction. I'm talking about taking your passion, your skill, and making big business out of it. I'm talking about transforming the way you get business and the way you produce it.

I'm talking about finally bringing the freelance writing industry into the twenty-first century.

This is not just an idea—it's something I've done myself for years, and it transformed my professional life in a matter of months.

It can transform your world, too.

Read on and let me show you a step-by-step plan you can use to build your own writing Empire.

After all, why should the big boys have all the fun?

Want to keep reading? Download the bestselling book³ and get your writing on!

3. <https://goo.gl/C5Eiq7>

**Read my books for
FREE by signing up for
my mailing list! Click
here or go to
RainMakerPress.com**

