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Entrepreneur
MAGAZINE'S

ULTIMATE



START-UP

DIRECTORY

**JAMES
STEPHENSON**

*with
Rich Mintzer*

*Homebased • Between \$5000 and \$25000 • Computers • Retail
Advertising • Manufacturing • Instruction • Services
Travel and Tourism • Recreation • Sports and Fitness
Health • Security • Transportation • Food Service and Hospitality
Arts and Crafts • Real Estate • Photography • Recycling
Desktop Publishing • Construction • e-Commerce*

My Special Skills	Excellent	Good	Needs Work
Sales and negotiation skills			
Record and bookkeeping skills			
Organizational skills			
Computer and software skills			
Technical troubleshooting skills			
Ability to listen and seek expert advice			
Problem-solving skills			
Ability to handle stress			
Ability to stay motivated and committed			
Planning and research skills			
Ability to budget and manage money			
Ability to speak in public			
Decision-making abilities			
Ability to manage and motivate others			
Ability to multitask			
Strong communications skills			
Ability to self-start and work independently			
Creative skills, such as computer graphics, PR writing, etc.			

sadly disappointed. However, if one of the many motivations for starting a business is to build and maintain a long-term, comfortable income level, then I will also guarantee that this can be accomplished by using sound business judgment.

Income desired per year: \$ _____

Income required per year: \$ _____

Short- and Long-Term Goals

The only way to know if a business venture has the potential to meet or exceed your short-term and long-

term personal and financial goals is to know exactly what your goals are. The best way to identify them is to compile a list of your goals and expectations for yourself and for your family. Keep the list close so that you can reflect back to it in times of business, personal, and financial decisions. If the end result of your decision will mean sacrificing a short-term or long-term goal, then it is safe to assume this would not be a wise decision to make.

Business Location

Where will your new business be located or operated from, and how will this affect your and your life and that

national level. The goal is to find a comfort zone in which you are confident that such a business can be profitable in a given market. Sometimes a certain market is overcrowded or an industry is struggling. You will want to know this before proceeding full steam ahead. In other instances, you may be entering a crowded industry with a marvelous new twist on an existing business idea, one that can give you the competitive edge.

Planning is typically the result of doing solid research and having determined that the information you have discovered indicates that you can make this a successful business venture. You will need:

- Action plans
- Financial plans
- Marketing plans
- Long-and short-term business goals and objectives.

While this directory does not include detailed information specific to the research and planning aspects of starting a business, a new section, on the importance of a business plan, has been added as an incentive that will help you think through your prospective business opportunity.

The Business Plan

There are books, articles, web sites, and software packages designed to guide you through the steps of putting together a business plan, complete with templates to follow. The inclusion of some business plan basics here is to start you thinking about possibilities. Once you have decided which business is right for you, the many pieces that go into the jigsaw puzzle that comes with starting a business will all be part of your business plan.

Whether you are opening a small part-time pet sitting business, or launching a limousine rental company complete with twenty limos and a host of drivers and employees, a business plan is worthwhile for several reasons.

First, a business plan is a way of organizing, on paper, all of the pieces of the pie, from your equipment needs to the weekly schedule of hours you will be open for business. It allows you to have a "blueprint" so that no stone is left unturned. A business plan is also a way of showing other people, from friends and family to investors (who may be friends and family), that you have crossed all the "t's" and dotted all the "i's." A well thought out business plan tells the

story of a business and details your vision in such a way that can help you generate the necessary funding. Finally, it is a living, breathing document that can not only serve as a benchmark, but also be altered and expanded as the business grows and changes over the years.

A typical business plan includes the following:

1. *Executive Summary.* This is a short, broad, yet enticing, summary of the business. What is it all about and why are you excited about it? Although it usually appears first, this part is often written last, after you've put all the pieces in place.
2. *Business Description.* How does the business work? Can you describe what this business will be doing? Give the basics of what you are selling or manufacturing and the service you are providing.
3. *Products and/or Services.* Here you can include specific items that you will sell, or services you will perform. Include products and services you expect to offer down the road. Explain their value and why your customers will seek them out.
4. *Industry analysis.* Here you will paint a picture of the overall industry in which your business will be a player. From your research, talk about the "big picture."
5. *Competitive analysis.* This is a biggie. Do your research carefully and know who you are up against. Be realistic and list the strengths and weaknesses of the most direct competitors. Then, see if you can provide something—a product, a service, customer service—that your competitors do not provide. This can be your competitive edge.
6. *Marketing and Sales.* Now that you have plenty of details regarding what the business does and the products or services offered, you need to explain how you will let the world know that you are in business. In this section, you discuss your plans for marketing and promoting your business as well as how you will sell your products and services. Are you selling strictly over the internet? Through a retail outlet? By mail order? Catalog? All of the above?
7. *Management and Organization.* Another very important section—this is where you will let readers know who is running the business. Potential financial backers will be particularly interested in this section,

since they want to know to whom they are lending their money. Include all of the key people involved in making this business happen.

8. *Operations.* From hours of operation to who oversees which aspect of the business, this explains how the business will be run on a day-to-day basis.
9. *Financial Pages or Forms.* The goal here is to make realistic projections based on researching similar businesses, with help from your accountant or financial planner. You want to show when you see the business turning a profit and how much you believe the business can make in three or five years. Include a cash and balance sheet for a year to show a cash flow. Hint: Be conservative in your financial estimates.
10. *Financial Requirement.* This is a very important step, if you are seeking funding; it is where you include the amount of financing needed, based on the previous sections, to reach your goals. Be realistic, research costs carefully, and indicate how much money you anticipate putting into the business venture. Hint: You stand a much greater chance of getting investors interested, or bankers to approve a loan, if you have invested your own money into a business.

Add to this supporting documentation, which will include various financial reports, and you will have a business plan. Do not try to dazzle prospective readers with hype, just provide the real story of the business so that it is clear on paper how it will operate and make money.

Of course, this is just a very basic outline. Before you sit down and start writing, you will need to do research and look at other business plans in books or online to see the phrasing and style of such a business plan. If nothing else, thinking about each aspect of the plan will force you to start thinking about all of the many details that go into starting up a business. That's when it gets exciting, and a little scary, as you see all of the pieces come together.



Entrepreneurs and small businesses drive the economies of the United States and Canada. Joining the estimated 30 million business owners may be easier than you think. You have already taken the first step toward becoming an entrepreneur by investing in the most authoritative business start-up directory available. The next step is to harness the power of this book and put it to work for you to find and start the right new business.

parties take place every day, and tapping into this very lucrative market is easy. Simply develop samples of your products, create (and distribute) brochures, and set up a web site. I will guarantee that you will find little resistance to your product, and chances are the biggest business challenge you will face is trying to keep up with the demand for the piñatas. I suggest that you strictly focus on the wholesale market and establish accounts with retail children's stores, party planners, and online retailers of children's products. Try to get your product into as many mail-order catalogs as possible.




REQUIREMENTS: The largest is creativity, in both manufacturing the piñatas and how you will market them. Of course there are always the safety concerns, so be sure to place prizes inside that cannot harm, spoil, or create potential liability for you.

START-UP COSTS: It should cost you less than \$200 to develop your samples and possibly another \$500 to begin marketing your products. This is the ultimate quick return on investment business.

PROFIT POTENTIAL: I purchased a piñata that retailed for \$80 and was based on a birthday sports theme. Upon returning home and careful examination, I determined that it would require about an hour to make the piñata using \$5 worth of materials. Inside this particular piñata I found hard candy and a toy prize, maybe another \$2-3 worth. Even at \$25 per hour, the total cost to manufacture this product would be in the \$30 range. This still allows for a 30 percent markup on your material costs and labor, while the retailer can maintain a 100 percent markup. Now you see why there will be no problem in establishing wholesale accounts with retailers, especially if you can come up with some colorful, unique looking piñatas.

WEB RESOURCES: www.bry-backmanor.org/holidayfun/pinata.html and www.coolest-kid-birthday-parties.com/make-pinata.html
Piñata making instructions.

PERSONALIZED STORY TIME BOOKS

★★★ \$\$\$   

The market for personalized story time books for children is enormous. Every child in the world loves to hear

stories, and the best aspect of this new venture is the fact that this business enables you to create books that include children in the story. This is a business that once you have established a relationship with a client you will want to keep that relationship strong as the product has the ability to almost be classified as a consumable. This means that once you form the relationship with the client, it is a given that the relationship will continue to generate revenues for the business, providing the quality of service and product remains excellent. The average child can easily have five or six favorite books, and these books change on a year-by-year basis. This can add up to 20 to 30 different story time books that can be sold to the same client, and that number can multiply by the number of children the client has. There are software applications available including the reprint rights for creating this type of book, or of course you can use the customer's and your imagination to create original stories. A marketing technique that can help get you started is to pick relatives and friends with children and customize books using their children's names. Once you have the books produced, simply show the story time books to your friends and relatives. It will be nearly impossible for them to say no once they see the finished product and how much work you put into creating the book.

REQUIREMENTS: You will need a good computer system and printer if you plan to produce the books yourself. It can be very costly to have a print shop run a single copy of one item. Additional requirements will include software that legally allows you to reprint the books or good writing skills to create your own stories. The latter is more fun, and you can base the stories on your local community and community events.

START-UP COSTS: The business can be started on a modest budget of less than \$10,000, which will include all the necessary computer equipment, software programs, and an initial supplies inventory.

PROFIT POTENTIAL: Once you have established a solid client base, this business venture has the ability to return excellent profits on a part- or full-time effort. As with any business, be sure to use a bottom up approach to product pricing. Factor in all costs, including materials, labor, and overheads, and multiply by the desired markup. The

end result of price.

WEB RESOURCES: Distributors of equipment.

COLORING

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The market to personalize coloring pages to meet the requirements of that of traditional market design a re community tion will e books right to generate produce c mats, and also be so and fairs,

CHILDREN'S

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The market for this business, this hard-to-find ing around the softw applicati dren. Go instructi will not items th can't for is locate nity. Fur a "retail this type clothing centers. mize yo

end result of this formula will give you your retail selling price.

WEB RESOURCE: www.hefty.com

Distributors of create-a-book software and printing equipment.

COLORING BOOKS

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The main focus of this business enterprise is to personalize children's coloring books. The equipment requirements and approach to marketing are very similar to that of the story time book venture. However, an additional marketing technique that can be employed is to design a retail sales kiosk, and locate the kiosk in a busy community mall on weekends. This kind of retail location will enable you to personalize and sell the coloring books right on site. Remember, do not limit your ability to generate revenue. With the right software, you can also produce children's "u-color-it posters," restaurant place-mats, and even specialty greeting cards, all of which can also be sold via the sales kiosk, as well as at flea markets and fairs, to increase revenues and profits.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND SOFTWARE STORE

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The name says it all. In terms of a specialty retail business, this is one of the best. On the book side, try to stock hard-to-find titles covering a wide range of topics revolving around children's interaction and involvement. On the software side of the business, try to include software applications for children and for parents to do with children. Good topics include games, education, how to, instruction, music, sports, and family relationships. You will not need a lot of floor space for the store as all of the items that are stocked are very compact. Of course, you can't forget "location, location, location." Be sure the store is located in a high-traffic and visible area of the community. Furthermore, you may even want to consider being a "retail store within a retail store." Excellent matches for this type of retailing arrangement include large children's clothing retailers, toy stores, and family entertainment centers. To compete with the mega-stores, you can maximize your success by having various in-store promotional

activities, such as inviting children's authors to come and read from their books. You can also have a story-telling room where an adult can read to children after school, and even various children's reading clubs for all ages. A web site and/or newsletter (e-mail or printed) can feature your upcoming in-store activities as well as your latest arrivals.

WEB RESOURCE: www.abfc.com




Association of Booksellers for Children

CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY CHILDREN

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Starting a publishing business that specializes in publishing children's books written by children is a very unique and interesting business enterprise to set in motion. In addition to the books being available in print, they can also be on CD-ROM as well as in an e-book format sold via the internet. The books can be on numerous topics and subjects such as puzzles and games, short stories, and comics. Marketing the books can be by way of establishing wholesale accounts with retailers as well as establishing alliances with children's charity groups, schools, after school and community centers.

NURSERY DESIGNER

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I recently visited a designer who works from her home and exclusively designs baby nurseries for expecting parents. During this meeting, I gained great insights into this business and how to market this service. First lesson is to throw away everything you know about marketing and promote your service solely on "goo goo ga ga" (as the designer puts it). What she means is that most of the decisions expecting parents make in terms of a baby nursery defy logic and are made on an emotional basis. Her secret to business success is to promote her design talents using elaborate displays at any trade show that is even closely associated with babies and children. This method of marketing enabled her to build a solid client and referral base, with very little (if any) competition at these trade shows. Of course, there are additional marketing options that are open to you in terms of promoting the design service, including working with archi-

WEB RESOURCE: www.airheadairbrush.com
Suppliers of airbrushing equipment and supplies.

NATIVE AMERICAN ART

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Native peoples of the United States and Canada create some of the most beautiful art available and these artworks are in high demand, especially in overseas markets such as Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The demand for native art creates a great business opportunity for you, if you have a good contact base in foreign countries. This business allows you to work as a highly compensated broker by representing native artists locally and using your international contacts to set up distribution channels in foreign countries. The business can also work in reverse. You can set up distribution channels in North America representing artists from foreign countries. The business does require a lot of research and set up time, but the potential rewards can justify the effort.

WEB RESOURCE: www.iaca.com
Indian Arts and Crafts Association.

MOBILE ART GALLERY

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Once again, art is big business, and starting a mobile art gallery can put you on the road to riches. Take a traditional art gallery, place wheels on it, and you have this business opportunity in a nutshell. Maybe it is not that simple, but pretty close. In this enterprise you will want to work with perhaps a hundred artists or more. This is a volume-based operation. Once you have selected the artists, begin to establish locations where the artworks will be featured. Good locations include doctor office waiting rooms, office lobbies, restaurants, shopping malls, hospitals, and all other high-traffic gathering places. The art can be displayed in these locations with a small place card on each piece, which reads, "This art is for sale, for further information call (your business name and a toll-free number)." When a potential customer calls to inquire about a particular piece of art for sale, you would simply sell the art over the phone and arrange delivery to the purchaser. If a piece sells for \$100 then you would give the artist \$50, the host location \$10 and keep \$40 for yourself. As you can see, on a volume basis there

is enormous potential for profit. Imagine if you had only 100 locations selling just two pieces of art per month at an average sale price of \$150—you would stand to make more than \$10,000 every month.

REQUIREMENTS: Operating a mobile art gallery business requires excellent cold calling, presentation, organization, and negotiation skills. You will also need reliable transportation and a computer to track and maintain customer files and inventory lists.

START-UP COSTS: The investment to set this business enterprise in motion is minimal, in the range of \$8,000 to \$10,000 will be sufficient to purchase any required equipment and leave enough working capital to operate on for a few months while the business is being established.

PROFIT POTENTIAL: Charging a flat commission of 40 percent for you, and generating gross sales of \$250,000 per year will generate business revenues of \$100,000. Once again, I stress that you must secure as many art installation locations or "silent salespeople" as you possibly can.

HAND-PAINTED CALENDARS

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Small business and large corporations alike give away millions of calendars every year in hopes that they will be posted in a visible area and remind customers of their products and services. Starting a business that produces hand-painted calendars enables you to fill the growing market demand for calendars while making excellent profits for yourself. Hand-painted calendars make wonderful gifts for business owners to give to special customers and clients. Using watercolor paints to depict landscapes or pictorial themes, you can create the calendars quickly and inexpensively. Marketing the calendars can also be inexpensive. All that is required are a few samples of your work and some time to stop into businesses and present your talents. Or in other words, simply go out and ask for the business.

REQUIREMENTS: Watercolor painting techniques can be learned very easily, and there are many instructional classes available in almost every community to assist you in learning this painting technique. You will also need calendars to practice with, as well as providing you with an initial inventory. Of course if you find that your particular

talents are better suited to the marketing side of the business, you can always enlist the services of hungry art students to produce the calendars.

START-UP COSTS: Even if you factor in the cost of art classes and materials to get started, the initial investment into this new venture will still be less than \$500. If you choose the route of having others create the calendars for you, the start-up costs could be cut in half, unfortunately so will the profits.

PROFIT POTENTIAL: Hand-painted calendars retail in the price range of \$60 to \$100 each, and can go even higher if the theme is very elaborate. If you are painting the calendars yourself, you can keep your costs down to around \$2 or \$3 per calendar, including all materials. In terms of time to paint the 12 pictures required for the calendar, I am told by an artist friend that it would take about three to four hours in total to complete. Based on these figures you would expect to earn about \$25 per hour, which is excellent for a business that can be started for less than \$500.

HAND-PAINTED GREETING CARDS

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Like hand-painted calendars, there is large market demand for hand-painted greeting cards and postcards. Once again, if you have the ability to produce the finished product yourself, that's great. If not, there are many artists who will be glad to assist you for a fee. The greeting and postcards can be wholesaled to retailers or sold directly to companies to give as corporate gifts to clients. If you plan to specialize in hand-painted postcards, you will want to sell them in high-traffic tourist areas like airports, tourist attractions, and beaches. Whichever you decide, this business can be both fun and profitable, and best of all, it can be started for peanuts. Using some digital photographs of your work, you can easily market greeting cards, of calendars for that matter, on web sites, whether it is your own site or on the sites of other online businesses. While they may take a percentage of the profits, they also provide great exposure.


WEB RESOURCE: <http://dmoz.org/Shopping/Gifts/Stationery>
This large portal of mostly hand-made greeting cards is an excellent place in which to link your site for greater exposure.

PORTRAIT ARTIST OR ARTIST REPRESENTATIVE

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Once again, artistic talent does not need to be on your side for this new business enterprise. Person, pet, or object, many people wish to have something immortalized on canvas for a myriad of reasons. The first step will be to establish a working relationship with a few professional portrait artists or art students seeking income opportunities. Next, you will want to acquire some samples of their artwork and start to market your new business. Simply put, start asking around for businesses, professionals, pet shops, animal breeders, sports celebrities, and anyone else who may be interested in a painted portrait of themselves or of a loved one. The only requirement to get started is a good camera so that once you have secured a paying client you can take a picture of the subject for the artist to work from. This can also be accomplished by using a digital camera and emailing the photos to the artist. Revenues for your business will be by way of a 30 to 40 percent commission of the total selling price of the completed artwork.

ARTIST AGENT

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An artist agent is the same as any other industry agent. You represent and market the talents or skills of one artist or several. Remuneration is by way of a commission charged on work sold; generally the commission rate is between 10 and 20 percent of the total selling value of the art. Why would an artist seek to be represented by an agent? For greater exposure and recognition, negotiation experience, privacy, marketing abilities, contacts, and various other resources that may not be available to the artists themselves. If you are considering becoming an artists' agent, you will definitely need the aforementioned skills and have to be prepared to research the art industry in great depth. This type of business does have a very steep learning curve. With proper preparation, working as an artist agent can be a very rewarding profession, both financially and personally. However, you must have connections, or establish them, in galleries and any places in which buyers gather. Additionally, you need to be a very good judge of what might sell commercially. It will take some time to establish yourself in this field and gain a reputation.

T-SHIRTS IN A CAN

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Designing novelty T-shirts, and the can in which the shirt will be sold, is a very interesting business opportunity to get rolling. The T-shirts can feature jokes, images, or messages based on a variety of themes from political humor to children's cartoon caricatures. Once the silk-screening is completed, the T-shirts can be packaged in tin cans that have a slot in the top to serve a second function of a piggy bank. T-shirts in a Can make a terrific novelty gift, or party gift, and can be sold to retailers on a wholesale basis or directly to consumers at flea markets, fairs, local outdoor events or through your own web site or those of other online retailers. Furthermore, to keep initial start-up costs to a minimum, the silk-screening aspect of the business can be contracted to a local silk-screener as opposed to purchasing the equipment. In addition to selling T-shirts in a Can, larger sweatshirts can also be printed with humorous messages and packaged in larger one-gallon paint cans.

WEB RESOURCE: www.interchangecorp.com
Distributors of new and used silk-screening equipment.

COLLECTIBLE CLOTHING

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The value and popularity of collectible clothing has been on a steady increase for the past decade, and the demand for collectible clothing from the 1940s to the 1970s (also now known as "vintage" and "retro") show no signs of diminishing. Starting a business that sells collectible clothing from a retail storefront location is a good business venture to set in motion. Start-up costs, including business setup costs, banking, legal, initial inventory, office equipment and supplies, initial advertising and marketing budget, and working capital, could run anywhere between \$30,000 and \$70,000.

PROFIT POTENTIAL: Like most businesses, the profit potential for a retailer of collectible clothing will vary based on factors such as operating overheads, volume of sales, etc. However, a markup of around 100 percent should be maintained, and a higher markup on rarer collectible clothing items is certainly not out of line. Maintaining annual sales of \$200,000 will create a pretax and expenses

profit of \$100,000 with good marketing. To test the waters, since internet collectible sites are providing significant competition, you might start such a business as part of another retail location or as a part time business, selling at fairs, flea markets or from a booth at a mall.

WEB RESOURCE: www.rustyzipper.com
Online vintage clothing and a good place to get an idea of pricing.

WORK UNIFORMS

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There are a few options available when starting a business that retails work uniforms and work clothing. The first option is to establish a retail storefront location to stock and sell work uniforms, and the second option is to establish a mobile business that sells work uniforms from a cube van or delivery truck. Both options have drawbacks and benefits in terms of the business. However, the second option of being a mobile retailer of work uniforms will be less costly to establish, as well as to operate on a monthly basis. The types of uniforms and work clothing that can be sold include work overalls, health care uniforms, fire and police service uniforms, food service uniforms, and school sportswear. Also stocking and selling specialized work footwear, such as steel toe work boots, can earn additional revenues. Regardless if the business is operated from a fixed location or on a mobile basis, one of the main marketing tools required will be to design and produce a full-color catalog and a web site that feature the work wear available for sale.

WEB RESOURCE: www.naumd.com
National Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Dealers.

USED WEDDING GOWNS

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Sell secondhand wedding gowns from home as well as on the internet for a profit. In a nutshell, the main objective is to purchase secondhand wedding gowns and accessories at bargain basement prices and resell these same gowns for a profit. The gowns can be sold from a home-based location as well as on the internet by developing your own web site. In addition to purchasing gowns, you

options for the operator in terms of marketing methods. Profit potential will vary; however, markups of 100 percent are not uncommon in this industry. You could also make this a mobile business, making it easier for your customers to see your merchandise.

WEB RESOURCE: www.apparesearch.com/Apparel_Search_2.htm

The apparesearch portal includes opportunities to purchase maternity clothing in bulk at wholesale prices.

CUSTOM NECKTIE SALES

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Here is an interesting approach to starting a business that sells custom made and even hand painted neckties. Negotiate an exclusive distribution contract with a manufacturer of quality neckties, create a basic marketing brochure describing the neckties along with the retail prices, and distribute samples of the neckties you stock along with the marketing brochures to offices throughout your community. The purpose of this type of direct marketing sales is to leave the samples at offices for a few days along with an order form. Customers wishing to purchase a necktie for themselves, or as a gift for others, would simply complete the order form and leave it with the receptionist for you to fulfill when you return to pickup the samples. It's unique and could prove to be very profitable.

DRY-CLEANING SERVICE

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At one time it was said that the dry-cleaning industry had created more millionaires per capita than any other industry. While I am not sure that this statement still holds true today, one thing is for sure: starting a dry-cleaning service is an excellent business venture to set in motion. Ideally, a dry-cleaning service should be strategically located to be able to take advantage of the target market, and the best locations are generally built-up urban areas in office districts or storefronts with excellent parking facilities in suburban strip malls. Additionally, as a method to increase business revenues, consider providing clients with a free pickup and delivery service as well as establishing satellite locations or depots where customers can drop off and pick up their dry cleaning the next day.

Work this into your fee structure to account for the extra time it will take you to go back and forth to these locations. Also, many dry cleaners offer alterations as a way of making additional income. If this is not something you excel at, you can find a tailor or two in the area (who does the work you like) and subcontract the alterations end of the business. Dry cleaning businesses are easy to promote through local ads and fliers in the neighborhood.

WEB RESOURCE: www.cleanersonline.com

Directory service listing information and links to the dry cleaning industry.

LINGERIE SHOP

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In the new millennium, specialization is the buzzword for retail "bricks-and-mortar" businesses, and opening a lingerie shop fits the bill perfectly. Get started by selecting a highly visible store location for your business. Malls are a good choice and you will require less than 1,000 square feet, so the rent should be reasonable. Next you will want to establish accounts with lingerie manufacturers and distributors. Harness the power of the internet to locate these companies. The rest is pretty straightforward; you stock your store and sell your products. In addition to selling lingerie from the storefront location, also consider hiring sales consultants to host in-home lingerie parties as a way to bolster sales and profits. A direct mail campaign, mail-order catalog, and web site can also be used to increase revenues.

WEB RESOURCE: www.lingeriemart.com

The largest worldwide distributor of wholesale lingerie.

FABRIC SHOP

★★★ \$\$\$\$

A fabric shop retailing numerous styles and types of fabrics can be opened in a fixed storefront location or even from home, providing you have the space required and the proper zoning in place. Fabric shops have traditionally been very profitable specialty retail operations and the markups applied to fabrics for retail sales can exceed 100 percent or more. The business needs little in the way of specialized equipment, thus keeping the operating overheads to a minimum. To get going in this business

you will need to contact manufacturers. North American research and patterns, button machines can selection of g increasing revenue

WEB RESOURCE: Directory services, and distributors

LEATHER FA

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Selling leather goods is an interesting business to start. You can contact manufacturers or secure a wholesaler. Proving to be difficult by way of catalog sales. Potential is high for fashions, as is each and the for less than

WEB RESOURCE: Leather App

WESTERN

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Like cowboy apparel is consumer demand. Retailers can business very unique, cowboy and western ment. Try country and lishing the type of joint often facilities monthly o



Anticipated Aid- Regu
You may subtract the
paperwork. Please c
or paperwork. paper

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DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Businesses You Can Start



SPECIALTY GREETING CARDS

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Millions of greeting cards are sold annually in the United States, and starting a business that designs and produces one-of-a-kind custom greeting cards for clients is a terrific desktop publishing business to set into action. However, today you are competing against greeting card software and numerous online greeting card opportunities. Therefore, you need to offer a higher quality card and sell your ability to design and create something original and distinctive for your customers. In addition to a high-quality color printer, you will also need top-of-the line computer design software. Ideally, marketing efforts should be focused on potential customers that would send a lot of greeting cards each year, as well as clients who would benefit the most from sending customized greeting cards. Give them some ideas of what you can do for them that is conceptually above and beyond the basic online cards. Potential customers would include corporations, associations, organizations, professionals, and individual consumers who would be prepared to purchase the specialty greeting cards in minimum orders of 50 at one time. Potential income range is \$20 to \$30 per hour.

WEB RESOURCE: www.greetingcard.org
Greeting Card Association.

COMPANY NEWSLETTERS

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Designing and printing newsletters for companies, salespeople, and stockbrokers is a fantastic low-investment business start-up that can generate a great income. Monthly newsletters are a terrific way for salespeople and business owners to stay in contact with clients, promote monthly specials, and help secure new business. Many businesses and organizations still prefer a newsletter you can hold in your hand rather than an electronic newsletter (although you can offer both). The key is to show business owners that you have the time and ability to do a newsletter for them. To succeed in this type of venture you will need the following:

- Creativity and writing skills
- Computer aptitude and desktop publishing software
- Strong marketing and presentation skills
- A well-equipped home office
- Clients

The first four requirements are easy to acquire or learn. However, it is the last that is the most important—without clients there is no business. To secure business, you should pre-design three newsletter mock-ups, or samples, featuring local companies, then set presentation meetings at these companies to explain the values and

KEY


RATINGS	★
START-UP COST	\$\$
HOMEBASED BUSINESS	
PART-TIME OPPORTUNITY	
LEGAL ISSUES	
FRANCHISE OR LICENSE POTENTIAL	
GREEN BUSINESSES	

mediums, and all required equipment necessary for building a host of various products. The following steps can be taken to establish and market this type of new business enterprise:

1. Decide if the business will focus on designing and building manufacturing prototypes in general or cater to a more specified segment of the manufacturing industry, such as mall kiosks.
2. Design a complete marketing and promotional package including previous experience, capabilities, and specialized equipment and know-how.
3. Determine a range of rates and the approximate timeframe for each of several types of jobs. While this is difficult considering the vastness of this business, you can set bottom line hourly rates for your time and work.
4. Join manufacturing and business associations.
5. Acquire membership lists of the associations and initiate a direct mail and introduction telephone call campaign utilizing the newly designed promotional package.
6. List your company in manufacturing directories and trade-related publications.
7. Start a well-designed, professional looking web site that details how you work.

Following these seven steps will place you in front of your potential market for this type of business venture. Generally, clients will want an estimate for their projects prior to awarding the contract, and this can be extremely difficult given the nature of prototype design. However, this is one of the few industries that allows for a certain percentage of gray area, in terms of a cost estimate. The objective is to always enter into the contract with a clear and concise estimate that includes a scope of work, product details, manufacturing time lines, and the potential pitfalls associated with the client's project.

ROOF TRUSSES

★★ \$\$\$\$ 

Most new home construction now utilizes pre-engineered and built roof trusses, as opposed to traditional

rafter framing to form the roof structure of the house. This type of framing construction is faster and generally costs less money to install than rafter framing, making it a popular construction choice for contractors. While this is one of the more costly manufacturing businesses featured in this chapter, it also has the potential to be one of the most profitable. The target market for this product is general contractors, home renovation companies, and architects. Setting up introductory meetings with the owners of these firms is the best route to take in promoting and marketing the business. Additional considerations in establishing a business that manufactures roof trusses will be business location, equipment requirements, and most importantly, learning local building codes and regulations.

WEB RESOURCE: www.sbcindustry.com
Wood Truss Council of America.

FLOATING DOCKS

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Building floating docks and swim platforms is a manufacturing business that can be started by just about anyone with construction knowledge and a well-equipped woodworking shop. Most of the components that are required to build a floating dock, such as the floats and anchors, can be purchased on a wholesale basis from the manufacturers of these products. To locate manufacturers of dock floats, etc., simply refer to one of the many directories available for a detailed listing of parts suppliers or go online. The market for floating docks includes marinas, waterfront campgrounds, homeowners, and government agencies, such as the local Parks Department. While this business enterprise may take some time to establish and build a solid customer base, the potential financial rewards can be well worth the wait.



CANOE PADDLES

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Millions of people around the world enjoy canoeing as an outdoor recreational sport, and as a canoeist I can attest to the fact that the search for the perfect paddle is a never-ending quest. A business that manufactures wooden canoe and kayak paddles can be established right from a homebased garage workshop, and requires only a

small investment in going. The canoe paddles to recreation retail stores by displaying the paddles at trade shows, manufacturing businesses, and selling them as yokes, canoe repair kits, and canoe trim kits.

CD RACKS

★★ \$  

Like many of the manufacturing CD business ventures, this business venture manufactures CD racks in various shapes and sizes. The materials used will affect the lifespan, so be careful considering the method of marketing CD racks is to establish relationships with furniture retailers and sell them at local fairs.

ART EASELS

★ \$  

Hobby artists can start a business that builds inexpensive enterprising easels can be sold on a consignment basis. Furthermore, if you have finished and all ironed out, a progressive painting kit, an art easel with a built-in approach school, and a senior center, and are providing you with a steady income.

small investment into woodworking equipment to get going. The canoe paddles can be sold on a wholesale basis to recreation retail stores, as well as directly to consumers by displaying the paddles for sale at outdoor and recreation trade shows. Additional revenues for this type of manufacturing business can also be gained by manufacturing and selling related canoe and kayak products such as oars, canoe replacement seats, and custom wood gunwale trim kits.

CD RACKS

★★ \$  

Like many of the products featured in this chapter, manufacturing CD racks is a very easy and inexpensive business venture to set in motion. The CD racks can be manufactured from wood, plastic, or iron in various shapes and sizes and CD storage capacities. Like many manufactured specialty products, the design and type of materials used will often dictate the products' popularity and lifespan, so be sure to give this aspect of the business careful consideration and be creative. Ideally, the best method of marketing and distributing the finished CD racks is to establish wholesale accounts with both CD and furniture retailers to stock and sell them. You can also sell them at local fairs and flea markets.

ART EASELS

★ \$  

Hobby artists rank in the millions, and starting a business that builds and sells art easels is a very easy and inexpensive enterprise to get rolling. The business can be operated from a small homebased workshop, and the art easels can be sold to art supply stores on a wholesale basis. Furthermore, once the business has been established and all of the manufacturing bugs have been worked out, approach various manufacturers of all-in-one painting kits to check out the viability of including an art easel with these painting kits. Another option is to approach schools, after-school centers, community centers, senior centers, and other places that may have art classes and are in need of new easels. Doing this could provide you with twenty to thirty or more easels to build, keeping you very busy while generating a very nice income.

PICNIC TABLES AND BENCHES

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Building and selling picnic tables is about as easy as a manufacturing business start-up can get. The business needs only basic construction knowledge, and can be readily operated from a small homebased workshop. In the spirit of being unique and as a method to separate the business from competitors, consider adopting a different method of manufacturing the picnic tables or a different type of raw construction material, such as beach driftwood or recycled building materials, making you a "green" business, which is environmentally friendly and excellent for marketing. The key to success in business often lies with the ability to carve your own niche in a proven, and existing marketplace. Market your picnic tables to parks, universities, local schools, historical sites with significant grounds, or any place else where you think picnics could be held—including the backyards of homeowners.

WEB RESOURCE: www.kitguy.com/#PLANS

Plans for all sorts of things, including picnic tables.

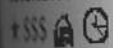
WOOD MOLDINGS

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One of the most popular and least expensive ways to upgrade a home's interior appearance is to install new wood trims and moldings. Starting a business that manufactures custom wood moldings with standard profiles, as well as made-to-order wood moldings, is a terrific business start-up for the skilled and well-equipped carpenter to initiate. Customers can include home renovation and construction companies or sell the moldings on a wholesale basis to local home improvement centers. Additionally, to capitalize on the heritage home renovation market, antique replica wood moldings can be manufactured from recycled wood and sold directly to do-it-yourself homeowners via product advertisements placed in newspapers and related trade magazines. To gain additional revenues and profits for the business, a wood molding installation service can also be offered to clients. Potential profits for a molding manufacturing business will vary based on a number of factors, such as sales volume, overhead, and product markup. However, a well-established wood molding manufacturing business

atural finish. Once this has been accomplished, place clear or tinted mirrors into the wooden window frame, and presto!—you have a highly saleable product ready to command top dollar. The mirrors can be sold at flea markets, craft shows, and through retailers, such as antique shops and gift stores, on a consignment basis. This is an ideal business venture to be started by someone who is seeking a low-investment homebased business opportunity that can generate a fantastic part-time income and still allow you to maintain a full-time job.

MAGNETIC SIGNS



Magnetic signs are an incredibly handy advertising tool, especially for the business owner or sales persons that uses their automobile for both business and pleasure, as the signs can be quickly installed or removed for storage in the trunk. Magnetic signs are also very easy to design and produce, making this an ideal business venture for just about anyone seeking to start a homebased business enterprise that requires little in the way of start-up capital and experience. The signs are actually manufactured from a vinyl material with a magnetic backing, which enables the signs to be lightweight and pliable. The signs are then cut to size and shape, and vinyl letters are glued on them to finish the sign making process. The only equipment required for manufacturing the signs is a computer, page layout and design software, a vinyl cutter, and a plotter that cuts the letters. Required equipment can be purchased used or new in most communities through printing and sign supply companies. Currently, small to medium magnetic signs are retailing for \$30 to \$50 each and cost about \$8 to \$12 each to make.

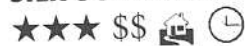
MAILBOXES



Want to build custom-designed mailboxes? Flexible homebased work hours and a wage of \$20 per hour offered? If this is the type of employment advertisement that would attract you, then why not start your own mailbox manufacturing business? The business can be launched on an initial investment of less than \$500 and operated on a part- or full-time basis right from home. Completed mailboxes can be sold on a wholesale basis

to retailers or directly to consumers via a booth at a busy weekend flea market or craft show. Remember, the financial goal of operating a business does not always mean that you necessarily desire a \$100,000 per year income. Sometimes just the fact that you are making a few extra dollars operating your own business is all you need.

SILK-SCREENED MOUSE PADS



Purchasing silk-screening equipment and a few hundred blank mouse pads is all that is necessary for starting your own business that produces mouse pads emblazoned with printed images, logos, and slogans. The business can be operated from home and does not require a great deal of special skills or investment capital to establish. The silk-screened mouse pads can feature generic images and slogans and be sold to retailers on a wholesale basis. Or, since mouse pads are so often “giveaway items,” you can create them for companies that use them for marketing purposes, with corporate logos printed on each one. Blank mouse pads can be purchased in bulk for about \$1 each, and the cost of ink to silk-screen an image will also be less than \$1. Providing you can sell 1,000 mouse pads each week at a wholesale price of \$3, the business could potentially generate profits in excess of \$1,000 per week, prior to overhead and taxes.

WEB RESOURCE: www.printusa.com

Distributor of equipment and supplies for screen-printing mouse pads.

STAIRCASES



Starting a business that manufactures and installs residential and commercial staircases not only has the potential to generate enormous yearly profits providing you have the necessary skills and equipment. You can build and install staircases made from various construction materials, such as hard and soft woods, steel, concrete, or any combination of these materials. The stairs can be sold directly to homeowners who are renovating their homes or building new homes. However, a more suitable marketing approach is to establish alliances with contractors, architects, and renovation companies, and sell your staircase building services to these firms, as well

PHOTO BUSINESS CARDS

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Designing photo business cards is a fantastic home-based business to set in motion. The equipment needed to operate a photo business card enterprise is inexpensive and includes a computer, scanner, design software, and a digital camera. Potential clients can include any person who is in business, or requires a business card for their job. The most efficient way to operate the business is to simply supply the service of taking the photograph to be used in the business card and designing the layout for the card. Printing the cards should be done by a professional printer as it will cost less to produce mass quantities and the overall quality will be far superior. Currently photo business cards are retailing for approximately \$150 to \$200 per thousand, and cost around \$40 to produce that same quantity. Quick math will tell you that leaves around \$100 to design the cards and take the picture, or about \$50 per hour, making this a potentially very profitable business venture to start and run from a home-based location.

HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS

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Love them or hate them, holiday greeting cards featuring employees of a business or a family standing in front of a fireplace at Christmas are here to stay. Some people find picture greeting cards to be silly, while others swear by them and have them created every year. Starting this type of photography business does not require a great amount of photographic experience as most of the digital images can be improved or cleaned up with basic computer software programs, like PhotoShop. Gaining clients for this type of business can be accomplished with the use of a sales and promotion kiosk that can be setup in malls and trade shows to demonstrate and promote the service. Keep in mind that if you are looking to do a lot of Christmas cards, get them started in August or September because it will take some time to get them printed and shipped. Overall, a photo greeting card business is a good choice for a homebased business opportunity that has the ability to create a part-time income of \$20,000 or more each year.

SCHOOL AND BUSINESS YEARBOOKS

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Each year millions of school yearbooks are sold across North America, and business photo yearbooks are starting to become popular for medium to large companies to have produced as gifts to their valued employees. The best aspect about starting a yearbook photography business is the fact that you do not have to be a photographer to make the business work, as the photography aspect of the business can be subcontracted to a professional photographer. The real key to success in this type of photography service is to possess excellent marketing abilities, as this is a very competitive segment of the photography industry. Once again, potential clients for a yearbook service can include grade schools, high schools, colleges, universities, companies, clubs, sports leagues, associations, and charity organizations. As a method to separate your yearbook service from the competition, perhaps you could specialize in digital yearbooks and supply the final product on a CD-ROM or DVD.

WEB RESOURCE: <http://pspa.pmai.org>
Professional School Photographers Association International.

PHOTO KEY CHAINS

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Once again, here is a fantastic photography business opportunity that can be started simply by purchasing a digital camera, notebook computer, the right software, and a couple hundred blank key chains. Photo key chains are very popular with tourists, who can't resist a picture of themselves with a loved one while on vacation. The key to success with this type of business venture is to be located in high-traffic areas with loads of tourists. Utilizing the above-mentioned equipment will enable you to produce a finished photo key chain in less than five minutes, and for less than \$1 in costs. Considering the photo key chains sell for \$10 it is a very good return on investment. Good locations for this mobile photography business include pubs, restaurants, comedy clubs, beaches, malls, amusement parks, sports events, concerts, and just about every other high traffic community-gathering place. You can also sell photos on buttons as well.