

From Corporate America to Work at home mom... who knew it would be a promotion?

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By Caryn FitzGerald

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When my daughter was born, I had no second thoughts about going back into the work place. After all, I had spent 6 years in college getting both a bachelors and masters degree in the field I had wanted to make my career. I spent many years in the prison system as a mental health counselor for medium security male inmates. I enjoyed what I did, but in the back of my mind I was always thinking, is this really it for me? Is this really what I want to do with the rest of my life? Do I really want to be working for someone else? When my daughter was about 18 months old, I started thinking more about leaving corporate America and branching out on my own. I jumped at the first direct sales option that came along without doing research, what a mistake. In the end, I think it cost me more than I had earned and I was still in the same career I was trying to get out of. My husband, although very supportive of my desire to get out of the workplace and be able to be home to raise our daughter, said this to me, "honey, you can do whatever you like as long as you are happy and you are earning money." We have a lifestyle that we enjoy, so if I were to leave the workplace and my salary was gone, we would have had serious financial issues and that scared me. What if I caused our family to be out on the street because of my selfish desire to be an at home mommy?

In the end of 2002 I decided to make a serious effort to be home with my daughter and have my own company generating an income for our family. The only thing was, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had heard about different direct sale companies over the years, but for some reason everyone I knew that was involved with them was still in corporate America in one way or another as they were only making enough to provide a little extra. I was seeing these people working 40 hours for someone else PLUS 10-20 hours for themselves giving them a small financial gain and less time to spend with their families. This was not what I was striving for.

Then in early 2003 the answer came to my door, literally. I received a jewelry catalog from a friend in another state. She was selling this jewelry and was passing the catalog on so I could see what she was offering (and buy something of course). I glanced at the catalog and realized I wanted a lot of the jewelry that was in it. As I read through it, I saw a paragraph about earning money and immediately

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called my friend. I wanted to know more about it. She gave me the information and it was great - 50% on my orders immediately, low start up cost, all items guaranteed and the company was over 20 years old, I was sold! I talked to everyone I know and generated an order for my start-up costs. From there things went slowly but steadily upwards. I was still working in corporate America, but each month I was getting more and more customers and my confidence was growing. I was also able to take my daughter with me when I did my home shows, which made this even more appealing, plus it was nice to be able to get her that special something she wanted when we went to the toy store. She and I were spending our weekends together as my company began to grow. In the summer of 2003, my husband got word that he was being offered a promotion. However, this also meant we were going to be transferred. At first, the thought frightened us, but then we realized that this was not only a great opportunity for him, but if all went well this could be the answer to growing my business even larger as we were moving from a small rural area to a large city which would have an incredible client base. For the next few months, I worked my fingers to the bone, marketing my products and doing research on

how to increase my visibility and income. My bookings increased as did my return customers, and I began to really hear what they were saying. As people can only buy so much jewelry for themselves, I heard my customers saying "I'm going to get this for my daughter...my friend...my boss." I soon realized that many of them were buying these items as gifts. My mind started working overtime gifts need cards, why should my customers have to go to a store for their cards? I could offer those as well. The end of 2003 was fast approaching, and the move was drawing near, I acted fast and decided to do research on expanding my offerings.

The last few months of 2003 and the first month of 2004 are basically a blur as things happened so fast. We moved from Georgia to Texas and I never did return to corporate America. Instead I listened to what my customers were requesting and between February & March I had added a wonderful line of personalized cards called PS I Love You as well as Arbonne, the most amazing skin & health care products I have ever used in my life, to my company's offerings. In addition, my years of playing on the computer finally paid off in that I was able to build websites and network to build my personal and professional relationships through the Internet. My company finally had a name as well ~ FitzByDesign and the motto of "You know it Fitz your budget if it's from Fitz By Design." The products I offer are high quality at low cost and that is what makes it the success it is today.

It was a long hard struggle to be able to get to where I am now. I learned that yes, it is a big leap of faith, but with the proper guidance you can create a business for yourself that you truly enjoy offering to others. I would like to take this opportunity to share the main questions I have found to be helpful in making a life change and going from employee to your own boss and earning what is referred to as "life changing money."

~What do I really want to do? ~Where do I see myself in 1, 3 and 5 years with this endeavor?

~How much time am I willing to invest? How much money do I need to invest? ~How much money do I have to invest? ~What is the best possible return I could see?

~Will I be truly happy with this endeavor?

Once you have decided to take the leap into direct sales, here are a few helpful questions to ask when choosing a company to represent.

~Would I use these products? ~Would my friends use these products?

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~What are the guarantees on these products? ~How long has this company been in business?
~What is the saturation rate for this company? ~What kind of success are others having with selling these items? ~How can I market this product? There are some companies that do not allow their consultants to market on the Internet, so if this is something you are interested in, ask the corporate policy before you sign. ~Will customers return? If you are planning on selling a larger item such as vacuums or furniture, people will not be back soon for a second one. If you are selling a food or cosmetic product that is consumable, your customers should return quickly.

There are many different opportunities out there for individuals who wish to either leave the corporate world or add to their current income, and the only way to find out what is right for you is to ask questions, research and most importantly take your time. Use the products you are considering selling, as it is much easier to sell something you fully believe in, than something you have no opinion on and have never used personally. Remember, people are in sales for that very reason, to sell. The best sales person, whether they are in a store or a work-at-home-mom, is going to be excited about what they are selling and what they can offer you. Getting caught up in their excitement is great, but not when it costs you \$500 and you are now signed as a consultant for a company you know nothing about and may not be interested in representing. Be confident in your decision; do not be afraid to say "no thank you" if you feel the opportunity is not for you. Remember, this is a life changing decision and

when made in haste the negative can outweigh the positive. Talk with others, do not be afraid to ask lots of questions and take your time. Offers that are here today and gone tomorrow are usually not worth the time and effort. In the end, the decision is yours and regardless of what you choose to do, I wish you joy and happiness along with much success in your endeavors.

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Caryn is the owner of FitzByDesign.com, VendorCentralUSA.com and HeresMyImage.com. She holds a Masters in Counseling and has worked as a therapist prior to becoming a work-for-herself parent.

Missed Once, Twice, Thrice Got It!

By Susan James

Missed Once, Twice, Thrice Got It! by Susan James

Like many of you, I am one of those Entrepreneur types.
Give me Line, and I'll Step Over It. Tell Me I Can't, Just Watch Me! Big Dreams In My Heart Comin' True ? You Betcha !

I missed the first chance. Why? The *They* People said:

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Lifes Success Looks *this* way.

One of my many career/livelihoods was owning & franchising my own Fitness Centers, from which I also developed a Unique Approach to weight loss. I loved being who I was when I was doing that.

But, I went back to *work* for Corporate America. Did that for 5 years. Made good money, had great perks, was optimistic and enthusiastic, but not happy. Only then I did not know what happy in my livelihood meant because of what the *they* people said Success is supposed to look like and how you get there.

While I was in corporate America & also being an Entrepreneur, I started my own mail order business. And I started getting checks in the mail for something I loved and was good at. Wow, what a Feeling !

Corporate America changed, and I, because of the *they* people conditioning went with another Corporation, more and better big bucks and perks, still not happy. And again for the 2nd time, I gave up what I loved doing, because of the *time* needed to devote to the corporate thing, and because *success and financial security* was supposed to*look like this*.

Then It came. No More. I could not take it. I knew there was more, I just did not know what it was. I quit reading all of the Business & Marketing stuff that I used to love & absorb like a sponge, it was my hobby reading all of that great stuff.

Instead, I chose to find out how stuff really works, and not how we are *taught* it works. And this now 3rd time, I am working totally for myself. I have a very profitable E-Media Business that is fun and full of money and the momentum

increases daily.

My Moral to this story: Forget the *they* people and what you've been *taught*. *Swing for the Fences*, and then just watch what happens to your life ! (sj)

Susan James, writes of *User Friendly Physics* to design our lives by; from Dreams Come True to Weight Loss: Visit Susan's website for more details!

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