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Stay At Home Mom & CEO

By Michele Schermerhorn

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Gone are the days when a woman had to choose a career or her family. The Internet has changed everything! Now any woman can run her own successful online business while staying home with her children.

Imagine! You arise in the morning while the children are still asleep. Starting that pot of coffee, you start your computer. You have SALES! You begin the processing of the sales that came in overnight by way of your company's website. That's right! YOUR company. As the children stir, you set your computer to "standby", make their breakfast, and see them off safely to school. You're also there when they get home from school.

How can you live that dream? There are three key factors for you to be a successful online business owner and stay at home mom. They are determination, profitable products, and marketing skills. Do you have what it takes? Let's see.

Determination

Of the three critical components, only "determination" can't be taught. Not everyone is suited to be an astronaut or a truck driver. And, not everyone is suited to run one's own business. Determination is a single-minded drive that moves one beyond the minor setbacks of the learning curve. If you tend to start but never finish projects, an online business is not for you.

An online business takes staying power, much like motherhood. You can do anything you set your mind to and win. You are tackling the most difficult job in the world right now - motherhood. So, how do you find profitable products for your home-based business?

Profitable Products

Many people have tried their hand at online sales through eBay. Maybe you have too. After many unsuccessful attempts at finding products they can sell for a profit, they give up. Finding profitable

products can be learned but there are tricks of the trade.

Knowing this, many people get sucked into paying some "eBay guru" thousands of dollars to do it for them. Unfortunately, they find out quickly that they have to find the products themselves. An individual who wants their own online business needs to find their own products. But how?

Depending upon your financial situation, there are six proven ways to find profitable products to sell online. They start with those requiring no investment and end with those requiring thousands of dollars of investment capital. Regardless of the price of the product, the higher the investment, the lower the unit cost of the products. The lower the unit cost of the products, the higher the profit margin. The higher the profit margin, the more money the company makes.

Many people attempt to start an online sales business at the bottom of the product acquisition food chain, with dropshipping. Dropshipping requires little or no initial investment. With dropshipping, you sell someone else's product. When you sell the product, you pay the supplier to drop-ship the product to your customer with the fee coming out of your profits. Typically, the profit associated with dropshipping is very small or non-existent.

A better alternative for those people with little money to invest is consignment selling. Consignment selling is where you sell someone else's product, but you collect a fee of between 10% and 25% of the final sale price. Sounds good, right? It is but it takes a person who is a real self-starter and can negotiate with people. Family, friends, neighbors, local crafters, local businesses without a web presence are all candidates for consignment sales.

With your profits from consignment sales, you can move on to acquiring bulk and surplus products. Working with surplus brokers requires some initiative and internet surfing skills. There are hundreds of surplus brokers on the internet. Choosing the right one is a problem and requires some research skills. However, the profit margins are higher on surplus goods than the other two techniques discussed above. For instance, a Janome Memory Craft sewing machine was acquired at surplus for \$99.00 and sold on eBay for \$430.00, a very nice profit.

In addition to the three product acquisition methods discussed above, the biggest profit margins and more reliable supply of products is achieved by working with wholesalers or importers. Working with wholesalers, they require you have a legal business and a resale certificate from your state's taxation board. Working with imported goods is more difficult. If you attempt to go directly to the source in China, as a novice, you can lose a great deal of money very fast. Consider working with a reputable customs broker if you choose to acquire product in this way.

All of these acquisition skills can be learned; but without determination, you will not succeed.

Once you have acquired your product, marketing skills are needed to successfully sell your product.

Marketing Skills

Two people with exactly the same product for sale will not experience the same success. The one who

wins will have superior marketing skills. Marketing skills include the ability to find customers and then motivate them to buy your particular product.

Marketing starts with identifying the particular customer you will sell to. You do not sell a skateboard to a 13 year old with the same conversation you sell that same skateboard to his mother, or grandparents. Marketing requires you get into the mindset of your customer in such a way that you start to think like them. Without knowing their motivations and concerns, you will never sell them anything. Great marketing is targeted to a specific group of people.

After a thorough understanding of your customer is achieved, you need then to design your offer in a way that appeals to them and encourages them to buy now. All of these skills can be learned and must be learned to run a successful business, online or not.

With a great offer in hand, you need to find customers. Where does your targeted group of customers hang out? What do they read? Where do they go on the internet? You must get your offer in front of their eyes. They won't find you.

There are literally hundreds of methods for communicating your marketing message online and via traditional methods, like advertising. The only ones that will work will be those that find your target market. You can send marketing messages all day without success. If your potential customer is tuned into some other location, you'll miss them.

Marketing skills can be learned. Acquiring profitable products can be learned. But both of these critical skills rest on a foundation of determination. Can you teach an old dog new tricks? Certainly! If the "old dog" is determined to learn.

Conclusion

An online business is not for everyone. However, it can be your way to stay home with the children and still bring in a nice salary. Never again will you have to miss that first step or first word. Never again will you miss a child's recital because you couldn't get away from work. Never again will you sweat making your next house payment. Ready? GO!

Michele Schermerhorn has over 30 years experience in the business world and over 12 years running her own successful online businesses. She is President of Online Business Institute Inc. (www.obinstitute.com) and regularly conducts free online seminars. Online Business Institute Inc. exists to "Create Successful Online Business Owners One Person At A Time".

Beating The Stay At Home Mom Stereotypes

By Stephanie Foster

Everyone has a picture in their mind of what a stay at home mom should be. Sometimes it's fairly flattering – the perfect mother who is always there for her family, home cooks every meal and keeps a

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perfect house. Other times it's a picture of a woman lazing on the couch, watching soap operas, eating bon bons and spending her husband's hard earned money.

Most stay at home moms don't fit perfectly into either. Maybe you're great at cooking meals for your family, but when it comes to thinking of great ways to keep the kids busy, you struggle. Maybe your house is clean but you hate to cook. And maybe you do enjoy those soap operas as you help the kids with homework and projects.

Most people don't recognize the challenges your typical stay at home mom deals with. They see it as a kind of makework, nothing real.

As a stay at home mother you have many doors open these days. You can express yourself for the entire world to see on a blog. You can start a home business. You can volunteer. You can find a work at home job. Or you can just delight in being a stay at home mother and ignore your detractors.

Is a stay at home mom lazy? Rarely. Most try hard to contribute their fair share by budgeting money wisely, being there for their family, raising the kids, cleaning the house, cooking meals, and generally working what studies have shown to be the equivalent of two full time jobs. Next time someone calls stay at home moms lazy, just remind them of that.

You don't have to be June Cleaver to be a successful stay at home mom. If you don't enjoy cooking, that's just fine. Use the shortcuts available to you that fit in your budget. I would suggest keeping the food healthy for your family's sake, but otherwise it's up to you.

Despite what some feminists think, choosing to be a stay at home mom is not a betrayal of what the feminist movement fought for. Women now have options, and can choose what exactly they want to do with their lives. Saying that it is unreasonable to choose a traditional path is denying you the right to live your life as you choose.

Just take a look at what today's stay at home mom is like. Odds are you weren't raised to think of yourself as a future stay at home mother. Growing up, girls are now encouraged to think of having careers, not "merely" raising their families.

It's okay for a stay at home mom to have outside interests. They don't have to be the more or less traditional volunteering, cooking and so forth. You can keep up your skills so that when your children are grown or reach an age where you decide to go back to work you still have the skills. You can do real work at home.

There are more options out there for stay at home moms than there used to be. Even as you take the time off from outside the home jobs to raise your family you can maintain your own interests.

Stephanie Foster is one of the lucky ones who has been a stay at home mom since her children were

born. Visit her site at

to learn more about being a stay at
home mom.



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