



HOME-BASED AND MICRO BUSINESSES

CASHING IN ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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HOME-BASED AND MICRO BUSINESSES

CASHING IN ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ASSESSING SELF-EMPLOYMENT SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

PREFACE

This lesson focuses on teaching current and potential home-based and micro business owners how to evaluate their personal and business skills, experiences, and how to explore their business interests/ideas (if they have not already made a decision about the type of business they want to start).

Typically, this session is part of a larger educational program targeted to current and potential business owners. This curriculum can be adapted to meet audience needs and the time allotted for the presentation. The guide is developed for a **one-to two-hour time period**. Throughout the text, [Slides] are indicated as well as [Worksheets/Handouts].

Before the presentation begins (if possible), distribute copies of Handout 2, “Do You Have What It Takes to Start a Home-Based or Micro Business?” Have participants complete it (if time allows) so they will be prepared to participate more fully in the session.

Additional option: Invite an individual or panel of home-based or micro business owners to speak to the participants. Before the session, give the business owner(s) Handout 1, “Suggested Questions for Home-Based or Micro Business Owners.” These questions will serve as a guide to presenters as they develop their remarks. If an individual speaker or panel is included, the remainder of the program content will need to be adjusted to comply with time restrictions. Depending upon the panel size, allow up to one hour for the panel presentation and have a moderator ask the questions from the sheet. This will help keep the panelists “on track.” Inform the panelists that they do not have to respond to all questions, only the ones that they have significant information to contribute.

Goal: For current and potential business owners to identify their personal and business skills and to examine possible business ideas or types of business interests as to the feasibility of the ideas. The overall intent is to help put business owners on the road to success in their home-based or micro business.

Objectives: As a result of this program, participants will do the following:

- Assess their entrepreneurial skills.
- Assess their business management skills.
- Evaluate business ideas as opportunities based on their identified interests and abilities and the market potential.

HANDOUTS

Handout 1 — Suggested Questions for Home-Based or Micro Business Panelists

Handout 2 — Do You Have What It Takes to Start a Home-Based or Micro Business?

Handout 3 — Business Ideas

Handout 4 — Rate Yourself: Are You Ready to Start a Business?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Allen, K. (2011). *Entrepreneurship for Dummies*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brabec, B. (2003). *Homemade Money: Bringing In the Bucks*. Lanham, MD: M. Evans and Company, Inc.

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Edwards, P. & Edwards, S. (1999). *Working from Home* (5th ed). New York, NY: Tarcher.

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WEB RESOURCES

Cooperative Extension (*also various states will have other supportive sites*)

www.extension.org/entrepreneurship

Internal Revenue Service (Starting A Business)

www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=99336,00.html

National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO)

www.nawbo.org

Service Corp of Retired Executives

www.score.org/

U. S. Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/start/

Check also with various state agencies such as the Dept of Commerce, tax office, etc.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

OPENING DISCUSSION - ENTREPRENEUR & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ask the audience to list what words come to mind when they hear the words **entrepreneur** and **entrepreneurship**.

An “**entrepreneur**” is someone who organizes, operates, and takes the risk in a business venture expecting to gain a profit. The word “**entrepreneur**” comes from the French word “**entreprendre**,” which means “**to undertake**.”

Entrepreneurship refers to the process of planning, organizing and operating a business.

You might also want to discuss the participants’ ideas as to whether or not an entrepreneur and a small business owner are the same thing. The literature is mixed but often the entrepreneur is seen as somewhat of a risk taker and an innovator while the small business owner is more likely to be viewed as operating a business in order to achieve a certain life style.

RESEARCH

TEACHING HINTS

Discuss current research information that shows the skills needed to ensure business success. The information that follows will need to be updated periodically to keep it current. This information may be included in an overall introduction to a conference or program and omitted from this segment. While much information is included below, there is no intent that all of the information will be used in each presentation.

From both national and state perspectives, the need has been identified for current and potential home-based business owners to develop business management skills. According to a 2010 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of all businesses fail within the first three years as a result of: (1) inadequate evaluation of possible business opportunities; (2) no business plan; (3) inadequate working capital and cash flow; (4) financing; (5) lack of management skills; (6) errors in judgment; and (7) a lack of knowledge, skills, and desire. It has been found that 90 percent of owners who shut down a business either go into another or indicate that they would go into business again.

The desire to open a business is driven by a variety of interests. Often the owner is not driven by just one of these reasons but to a degree by several reasons. Only 46 percent of owners cited making a lot of money as a primary motivation for starting their own business. Seventy-eight percent stated that having more control over their lives was an important reason. Other reasons included lifestyle, more family time, being able to be creative, and being in control.

More people are starting home-based and micro businesses than ever before. It is difficult to get an accurate count regarding the number of these businesses since typically these businesses do not report that they are also home-based. According to the Small Business Administration, there are approximately 25 million micro businesses (those having less than 10 employees or no paid employees other than the owner). Research would suggest that half of these businesses operate as full time businesses with the other half being part-time businesses.



Approximately 75 percent of all new business owners are employed with a wage/salary job when they start the business. Approximately half of small businesses are home-based, but it is important to understand that home-based business numbers vary widely as they are not specifically tracked by any agency or group. Approximately \$503.8 billion dollars are generated each year by small businesses. While the average home-based business earnings are estimated to be about \$31,246, for home-based businesses, the income distribution is like two humps of a camel—many make less than \$20,000 with a smaller, but significant portion making more than \$60,000. A 1996 Money Magazine survey found that 20 percent of home-based businesses gross between \$100,000 and \$500,000.

While owners vary in age and experience, the fastest growing home-based and micro business segments are owned by women and minorities. The National Foundation for Women Business Owners (NFWBO) reports that, from 1987 to 1999, the number of women-owned firms (not just home-based) in the United States increased 103 percent. As of 2008, there are 10.1 million women-owned businesses in the United States, accounting for 33 percent of all firms in the country. Women-owned businesses employ over 13 million people and generate over \$1.9 trillion in sales. Over 60 percent of the women-owned businesses were operated out of the home when first established and more than 70 percent of these businesses are in the services and retail trade sectors.

As stated by Carol Morello, The Small Business Administration reports: from 2002 to 2007, there has been a 44 percent increase in the number of Hispanic-owned businesses; a 41 percent increase in the number of Asian/Pacific Islanders/American/Alaskan Native owned businesses; and a 60 percent increase in the number of Black-owned businesses.

Historically, home-based businesses lacked credibility. Home-based businesses are finally getting the respect which they deserve. The growth of home-based businesses is evidence of a fundamental shift in the economy. The home has been called “the new American work place.” If the industry’s unprecedented growth continues (and it is expected to), the majority of Americans will work at home in the 21st century. It is important to distinguish, however, that “working at home” does not necessarily mean involvement in a home-based business.

TEACHING HINTS

So why do people want to be in business for themselves?

The advantages may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Seeking and setting personal goals
- Having more control over one's life
- Increasing personal fulfillment
- Having control over the quality of work
- Working independently of supervision
- Enhancing creativity
- Controlling working conditions
- Remaining in a community or moving with spouse to a new community even when jobs are scarce or not available

Reasons why you may not want to be your own boss also abound. Some include:

- Need to know a lot of information to operate a business successfully
- Risk involved in operating a business; many businesses fail and owners lose their income and money invested
- Conflict in ownership of time (When is my “own” time and when is “business” time?)
- Lack of guaranteed employee fringe benefits (paid sick leave, paid vacation, health insurance, retirement fund)
- Many competing roles and responsibilities—producer, promoter, bill collector, customer service representative, accountant, secretary, janitor
- Lack of job security—“the success of my business depends on me”
- Long, hard hours required (at least in the beginning)
- May find it difficult to discipline oneself to work or stop working, and not over commit

SKILLS NEEDED

Home-based and micro business owners need three types of skills:

Entrepreneurial skills. These skills include many of the traits identified in the “YOU” section of Handout 2, “Do You Have What It Takes To Start a Home-Based or Micro Business?” (Refer to the worksheet distributed earlier. Encourage participants to complete this worksheet later if they have not done so already.) The “YOU” section includes skills such as self-discipline, creativity, determination and perseverance, enthusiasm, self-confidence, and responsibility. Each business owner needs to develop or enhance entrepreneurial skills to be successful. Without entrepreneurial skills, the business will be successful only with a lot of luck!

Management skills. These are the skills included under the “Life Experiences” section of Handout 2, “Do You Have What It Takes To Start a Home-Based or Micro Business?” These business management skills include planning, organizing, record keeping, problem solving, and managing employees. Business owners who have limited management skills need to work with someone who can help them develop skills in this area. A lack of business management skills is a primary cause of business failure for many owners.

Technical skills. These include skills and qualifications to be able to operate the type of business that one prefers. Examples include plumbing, electricity, catering, hanging wallpaper, and tutoring.

After looking at one's personal skills and abilities, the prospective owner must also consider where to locate the business. Many people think about the traditional places businesses operate, on main street or in a commercial area of town. Yet it is possible for many business owners to operate their business from home. E-commerce has made this idea a more viable opportunity.

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HANDOUT

4-8

SLIDE

HOME-BASED BUSINESS ADVANTAGES (SLIDES 5-6)

TEACHING HINT

Slide 5 contains the heading "Advantages of Home-Based or Micro Businesses." With this slide revealed, ask the group for what they see as advantages from operating from their home. After group participates, reveal slide 6 and see how many were named.

The advantages may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Seeking and setting personal goals
- Having more control over one's life
- Increasing personal fulfillment
- Having control over the quality of work
- Working independently of supervision
- Enhancing creativity
- Controlling working conditions
- Remaining in a community or moving with spouse to a new community even when jobs are scarce and not available

For home-based businesses, additional advantages may include the following:

- Reducing the time, expense, and hassle of commuting to and from work
- Meeting family obligations while generating income
- Working flexible hours
- Reducing overhead cost
- Testing a business idea with a minimum financial risk
- Limiting the need for a special wardrobe

DISADVANTAGES (SLIDES 7-8)

TEACHING HINT

Slide 7 contains the heading "Disadvantages of Home-Based or Micro Businesses." With this slide revealed, ask the group for what they see as disadvantages from operating from their home. After group participates, reveal slide 8 and see how many were named.

The disadvantages may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Need to know a lot of information
- Financial risks
- Conflict in ownership of time
- Lack of guaranteed employee fringe benefits

- Competing roles and responsibility
- Lack of job security
- May require long, hard hours

For home-based businesses, additional disadvantages may include these:

- Zoning laws that may inhibit or prohibit home-based businesses
- Lack of a “business” address
- Home is no longer a refuge from the work place
- If the home environment causes tension, there is no opportunity to escape
- Loss of social and business contacts, feedback, and ideas for doing a job differently
- May find it difficult to take working at home seriously and become distracted by household tasks and family activities
- May not present a business or professional image
- Family members and friends may not take the business seriously and may make additional demands on time
- Family conflicts can arise—conflicts over expectations of family members to help with the business, family privacy and house cleanliness (if customers or suppliers come to house), and use of space and household items (telephone, storage space, computer)
- Current insurance company may not cover a business in the home; and you may need to increase liability insurance coverage (if clients come to the home)

SLIDE

9

CHOOSING THE BUSINESS

Another important question is deciding the type of business you should start. For some individuals, choosing a business is not a problem. You may already have a marketable skill or you may enjoy a hobby that has profit-making potential. The bottom line on business selection is there must be a market for whatever you want to do. The challenge may be to decide how one of your skills or abilities can be developed into a business type that the market desires. Basically the type of business you start will be one of two types, either a **product-oriented** or **service-oriented business**. Your business may also be a combination of both of these.

Product-oriented businesses are usually two types: 1) Selling products made by you, family members, and/or employees; or 2) Selling products manufactured by others and either purchased by you for resale or sold on an order basis.

Service-oriented businesses may involve the performance of a service at the place of business (word processing, tutoring, book keeping, child care) or performing a service at another location (house painting, carpet cleaning, consulting). To determine or confirm your business idea(s), examine your interests, skills and abilities, education/training, and experiences. (Refer participants to the “Interests, Skills, and Experiences” section of Handout 2.

SLIDE

10

When considering the type of business you may want to start, the following points form a place to start in determining or confirming a business idea:

- Age
- Years of education or training completed
- Favorite school subjects
- Types of informal education
- Current and/or previous jobs and duties
- Reason for leaving each job
- Job(s) enjoyed the most
- Favorite recreational activities
- Hobbies
- Community work enjoyed
- Environment preferred: indoors or outdoors, city or rural area
- Personal goals to be achieved by operating a business.

Look again at Handouts 2 and 3 to make sure you think broadly about what skills and talents you have and how they can be translated into viable business opportunities.

SUMMARY

(Distribute Handout 4, “Rate Yourself—Are You Ready To Start a Business?” Allow time for participants to complete the worksheet. Review with participants the scoring process on the last page of the handout.)

After considering the information covered in this session, answer the following questions:

- Do I like the business I plan to enter enough to work long, hard hours and make personal sacrifices?
- What would I be willing to give up or change in order to give the time and commitment needed for this business?
- Do I understand that I am engaging in speculation and am willing to take the personal and financial risk involved?
- Knowing myself, would I hire someone like me to run a business in which I have invested my life savings?

REFERENCES

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- Small Business Administration www.sba.gov/
- Viek, C. (2012, Feb. 3). Government action needs to target microbusinesses. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/on-small-business/government-action-needs-to-target-microbusinesses/2012/01/30/gIQAZHfonQ_story.html

HANDOUT 1

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR HOME-BASED OR MICRO BUSINESS PANELISTS

(Each person does not need to answer all questions—just respond to those that most directly involve his/her business.)

1. What were some of your reasons (personal goals) for wanting to start a business?
2. What are personal qualifications the business owner needs?
3. What are advantages/disadvantages of operating a business in the home (for those who operate from the home)?
4. How are family relationships affected when the business is in the home?
5. How did you solicit family support with your business?
6. How do you keep home and work responsibilities separate?
7. What are major problems you encounter in operating your business?
8. What advice would you offer a prospective business person?
9. How did you establish fair and competitive pricing?
10. How did you advertise and promote your business?
11. What training did you acquire to get started with your business?
12. How do you keep up-to-date with customer trends, demands, tastes, and preferences?
13. What outside help did you seek and find helpful in getting your business organized?
14. What resources have you found helpful to you in your business?
15. Your business record keeping—has it required more or less time than you had expected? Who assumes that responsibility?
16. How is your business structured? (Sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.)
17. What satisfactions do you derive from your business?
18. How well do your home, neighborhood, and community accommodate your business? (Customers, zoning, laws, etc.)
19. What other suggestions would you give to a prospective business?

Prepared by Ann Lastovica, Extension Family Management Specialist, Virginia State University

HANDOUT 2

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO START A HOME-BASED OR MICRO BUSINESS?

Resource Checklist

You: Check the traits you think you have.

- ☐ Skills and knowledge in your field
- ☐ Determined and persevering
- ☐ Self-discipline
- ☐ Creative
- ☐ Organized
- ☐ Enthusiastic
- ☐ Like people
- ☐ Ability to set goals, make decisions, and solve problems
- ☐ Trustworthy and responsible
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Self-confidence
- ☐ Physical energy
- ☐ Willing to take calculated risks
- ☐ Self-motivated and a self-starter
- ☐ Strong desire to achieve
- ☐ Patient

Life Experiences: Check the experiences that you have, including volunteer work.

- ☐ Budgeting
- ☐ Organizing
- ☐ Delegating
- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Directing
- ☐ Coordinating
- ☐ Evaluating
- ☐ Presenting
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Selling
- ☐ Problem Solving
- ☐ Raising Money
- ☐ Buying
- ☐ Shipping/Delivering
- ☐ Communicating
- ☐ Keeping Books
- ☐ Goal Setting
- ☐ Customer Service
- ☐ Managing Employees

Skills, Interests, and Experiences: Consider the following points when determining or confirming a business idea:

- Age _____ Years of education or training completed _____
- Favorite school subjects _____
- Types of informal education _____
- Current and/or previous jobs and duties _____
- Reason for leaving each job _____
- Job(s) enjoyed the most _____
- Favorite recreational activities _____
- Hobbies _____
- Community work enjoyed _____
- Environment preferred: Indoors _____ Outdoors _____ City _____ Rural _____

Personal goals to be achieved by operating a business _____

Commitment

What is important to you regarding your work future? _____
How much time will these priorities take? _____
How much time can you give your business? _____
To other family members? _____
Outside activities? _____
Other special circumstances? _____
Now that you have answered the above questions, how many hours per week will you devote to your business? _____

Community Contacts

Whom do you know who can help you set up your business?
____ An attorney
____ An accountant
____ A banker
____ A friend
____ Members of your family
____ Someone who is in the same business

What other types of people do you need for help, advice, and support? _____

What professional groups can you go to for the information you need? _____

Money: *Check the statements that are true.*

____ I know how much of my own money I have to put into the business.
____ I know how much money I need to get the business started.
____ I know how much money I will need to operate the business once it is started.
____ I know how much credit I can get from suppliers.
____ I have a lawyer, banker, and accountant I can talk with.
____ I know the tax implications of my business.
____ I know my insurance needs and costs.

How do you measure up? If you have checked all the above points, you've done your homework. If you have missed a few, you need to seek additional information.

Prepared by Ann Lastovica, Extension Family Management Specialist, Virginia State University

HANDOUT 3

BUSINESS IDEAS

The following list of possibilities for businesses is provided to stimulate your creative thinking regarding income-producing ideas. Many of these ideas have been tried successfully by business owners and may help you identify one of your personal skills that could be profitable.

PERSONAL / INDIVIDUAL / SELF IMPROVEMENT

Accounting

Adult care - day, residential and post-surgery health care, adult in-home foster care

Animals - grooming, sitting, exercising, training, boarding, breeding

Apartment guide

Attorney

Automotive - rental, painting, cleaning, and repair

Beauty services - nails, hair care, facials, massage, beauty products

Bicycle, moped, motorcycle sales and repair

Books - binding, sales, collecting

Bridal consultant plus gowns for rent or sale

Calligraphy

Chauffeur - limousine service

Clock repair

Clothing and sewing-related -

alterations, monograms, exchange, needlework, hemming, re-weaving, tailoring, refurbishing vintage clothing, custom sewing, clothing for disabled, clothes for hard-to-fit, drapery making, custom window treatments, baby specialty items

Correspondence for others

Costumes - design, manufacturing, sales, repair

Counselor - marriage, family, career, children, rehabilitation, financial, and investments

Coupon mailer service

Day care - child day care center, group

family day care, family day care home

Designing and painting murals in churches, homes, offices, and restaurants

Digital watch repair

Get-away weekends for couples, families

Genealogical research

Greeting cards/notes - design, sell

Health improvement - exercise, body toning, electrolysis, stop smoking clinics, weight control, diet preparation, recreation for older adults

Hospitality services - catering, mobile catering, clowning, parties for children and adults

Image consultant - color analysis, wardrobe analysis and planning

Income tax preparer

Jewelry design, sales, repair

Laundry and ironing

Messenger service

Shopping service - clothing, groceries, interior design, maintenance services

Towing

SERVICES TO THE HOME

Appliance repair

Appraisals - antiques, books, collectibles, objects d'art

Architecture

Auctioneer

Awnings - design and make canvas awnings and shades, installation

Building storage sheds

Burglar alarm sales and service

Carpet installation and cleaning

Carpentry

Cement casting - curbing, patio blocks, etc.

Chain saw service**Chair caning****Crystal and china repair**

Custom rug making - braided, hooked, woven

Electronic sales and repair**Energy consultant****Fence installation and repair****Firewood****Floor refinishing**

Furniture - build, design, repair, refinish, upholster, sell

Garden furniture - rewebbing, repainting, repadding, reupholstering, reweaving

Home handyman service

Home repair and maintenance - painting, wallpapering, chimney cleaning, etc.

Household cleaning**Household moving****House-sitting****“I’ll finish your project” service****Interior design and decorating****Lamp repair****Mobile lock service**

Musical instrument maintenance and repair

Organizing, cleaning basements, attics, eliminating junk

Oriental rug repair**Pest control**

Plants - potting, sales, care at home

Pool cleaning and repair

Porcelain refinishing (tubs, sinks, etc.)

Real estate sales

Rental agency - furniture, tools, appliances, party items, etc.

Screen and storm window service - sell, repair, install

Security patrol**Small engine repair**

Tree service - treat, trim diseased trees, tree removal, replacement

Welding**Window and wall washing**

Yard/Lawn maintenance - landscaping, pruning of shrubbery, flower bed preparation, fertilizing, specialized outdoor lighting, design and installation

SERVICES TO OTHER BUSINESSES

Accounting or book keeping - setting up books, keeping records, completing tax forms, payroll

Advertising - write, copy, layout, artwork

Advertising specialist - sell calendars, pens, bumper stickers and other items imprinted with business names and advertising message

Aerial advertising - skywriting, towing advertising banners behind airplane, balloon signs

Agent - literary, sales, insurance

Answering service

Aquarium service - design, install, clean, and maintain

Art rental - plan and display art in businesses

Booking agent representing musicians, models, actors, actresses and other temporary help

Builder’s cleanup service**Burglar alarm sales and service****Business chauffeur**

Calligraphy - diplomas, scrolls, certificates

Clipping service - newspapers and magazines

Computer - analysis training, programming, repair, sales, hardware, software, web site developer

Computer-generated visuals

Consultant and deliverer of professional development seminars

Copy center

Credit investigator - check on history of people applying for credit

Data and word processing**Delivery/messenger service**

Employment agency - match workers with job opportunities. Teach classes in

developing resumes, interview techniques, etc.

Event planning

Free-lance writer

Home-based business directory - publish directory of home-based businesses in area. Charge for listing and give directories free

Income tax preparation

Jewelry and watch repair - contract with jewelry stores to repair jobs they take in

Mailing list - develop/print labels

Marketing research

Money broker

Newsletter research, writer, editor

Notary public

Office machines repair

Parking lot maintenance - sweeping, striping, coating, snow removal, installation of signs, replacement of light bulbs
Pest control

Printing - layout, edit, operate

Proofreader

Public relations

Rubber stamp making

Sales representative

Secretarial service

Security patrol

Sharpening service

Shopping service - shop for busy executives- purchase and ship or deliver gifts to their customers or employees

Signs - design, build, install

Translator - if fluent in foreign language, may escort foreign business executives

Travel agent

Trucking - long/short distance

Typing pool

Welcome new residents - provide community information and referral

Window and wall washing

SMALL BUSINESS

Art - prints, original art

Bait and tackle sales

Balloons

Director sales - candles, cosmetics, seasonings, household items

Fiberglass molding

Firebacks - design and manufacture cast iron plates that absorb and radiate heat

Florist

Greenhouses - design, build, install

Homemade food products - Specialty processed foods, breads, cakes, cookies, pastry maker for restaurants and delicatessens, candy, catering gourmet meals for delivery or pick up (Be sure to check your state regulations regarding food related businesses)

Household items

Insurance

Mail order

Personalized products

Used clothing

CRAFTS AND RELATED ARTS

Candlemaking

Ceramics

Decoys

Dollmaking, doll clothes, collecting unique dolls, dollhouses

Dried flower arrangements

Framing

Glass blowing

Jewelry - design, repair, restyling, sales

Lampshades

Leather work

Metal design

Miniatures - manufacture and sales

Ornaments

Personalized sketches of house, boat, animals

Pottery

Quilting

Selling crafts supplies

Silk screening

Soft sculpture

Spinning

Stained glass

Teaching crafts

Toys

Weaving
Woodworking

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Career counseling - resume writing, tutoring, dressing for success
Children's camp
Educational services
Historic or educational tours
Sports camp for children
Teaching classes or individual lessons in the following: time management, typing, study skills, test-taking, public speaking, computer, foreign languages, photography, music, voice, natural childbirth, dancing, physical fitness, first aid, self-defense, weight-loss, quit-smoking clinics, specific crafts skills, games skills (bridge, chess, etc.), cooking and sewing, etc.

OTHER BUSINESSES

Bed and breakfast
Beekeeping - keeping hives, selling honey, making beeswax candles
Blacksmith
Boat rental - rent boat only or conduct charter fishing trips
Christmas tree farm
Coin dealer
Coordinate exhibitions - organize antique shows, art fairs, flea markets, fund-raising drives, special promotions
Goat production - sell meat or milk to ethnic markets, health food stores, and coops. Make cheese and fudge to sell.
Gun repair
Herbs - grow, dry, sell. Teach classes on "how-to."
Holiday greenery
Organic vegetable growing
Pick-your-own operations
Restorations - antiques, artifacts, cars, boats, and home
Roadside vegetable/fruit stands
Sheep raising
Sod farm

Taxidermy
Trailer and camper maintenance and repair
Underground sprinkler systems - installation and repair
Unusual transportation - carriage, horse and buggy rides, etc.

IDEAS I WANT TO CONSIDER:

Prepared by Ann Lastovica, Extension Family Management Specialist, Virginia State University

HANDOUT 4

RATE YOURSELF: ARE YOU READY TO START A BUSINESS?

*Under each question, check the answer that says what you feel or comes the closest to it.
Be honest with yourself!*

Are you a self starter?

- ☐ I do things on my own. No one has to tell me to get going.
- ☐ If someone gets me started, I keep going.
- ☐ Easy does it. I don't put myself out until I have to.

How do you feel about other people?

- ☐ I like people. I can get along with most anyone.
- ☐ I have plenty of friends—I don't need anyone else.
- ☐ Most people irritate me.

Can you lead others?

- ☐ I can get most people to go along with me without much difficulty.
- ☐ I can get most people to go along if I push them.
- ☐ I let someone else get things moving.

Can you take responsibility?

- ☐ I like to take charge of things and see them through.
- ☐ I'll take over if I have to, but I'd rather let someone else be responsible.
- ☐ There's always some eager beaver around wanting to show how smart he is. I say let him/her.

How good of an organizer are you?

- ☐ I like to have a plan before I start. I'm usually the one to get things lined up.
- ☐ I do all right unless things get too confused. Then I quit.
- ☐ I just take things as they come.

How good of a worker are you?

- ☐ I can keep going as long as necessary. I don't mind working hard.
- ☐ I'll work hard for awhile, but when I've had enough, that's it!
- ☐ I can't see that hard work gets you anywhere.

Can you make decisions?

- ☐ I can make up my mind in a hurry if necessary and my decision usually turns out okay, too.
- ☐ I can if I have plenty of time. If I have to make up my mind in a hurry, I usually regret it.
- ☐ I don't like to be the one who decides things.

Can people trust what you say?

- _____ Yes, they can. I don't say things I don't mean.
- _____ I try to be on the level most of the time, but sometimes I just say what is easiest.
- _____ Why bother if the other person does not know the difference?

Can you stick with it?

- _____ If I make up my mind to do something, I don't let anything stop me.
- _____ I usually finish what I start—if it goes well.
- _____ If it does not go well right away, I quit. Why beat your brains out?

How good is your health?

- _____ I never run down!
- _____ I have enough energy for most of the things I want to do.
- _____ I run out of energy sooner than most of my friends do.

****** Now count the checks you made.**

- How many checks are there beside the first answer to each question? _____
- How many checks are there beside the second answer to each question? _____
- How many checks are there beside the third answer to each question? _____

If most of your checks are beside the first answers, you probably have what it takes to run a business. Make sure your answers are truthful and not a result of wishful thinking! If your checks are mostly by the second answer, carefully examine your weaknesses to see if they can be overcome. Also, you may need to find a partner who is strong in the areas in which you are weak. If many checks are beside the third answer, it may be in your best interest not to start a business at this time.

Adapted from "Checklist for Going into Business," Small Business Administration.
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