Starting a home-based business in 5 STEPS

A SHORT GUIDE ABOUT SELF-EMPLOYMENT

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Starting a home based business is what many people dream of, especially the ones with small kids or people who want better work life balance. It seems easy when you see other people do it, but those people work very hard to accomplish it.

When I started my first home based business I was not aware of this whole process. Because of that I want to share with you the most important steps which will help you to start a successful home based business. I will try to simplify it so you can have a better overview of the whole process.

STEP 1

DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

For some people this is the hardest part of starting a business. It is not always easy to decide what you want to do. There are many reasons for that. Maybe you know what you want to do but you are afraid that there is no market for your products or services, or your chosen field is too competitive. I think you must choose to do something you like and you are great at, and you will find your audience. If you choose something you don't like or something that is not fulfilling you will probably give up your business.

There are many jobs you can do from home. I personally tried many of them and discovered what works and what does not.

I do not want to put too many ideas here so you don't get lost in it. Those are really the best in my opinion. If you choose to do something else you still can follow other steps from this book.

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

Almost anyone can become a virtual assistant. They handle various tasks for other businesses. Sometimes those tasks are simple, like data entry but sometimes there are advanced tasks like website editing or graphic design. The best thing is that you decide what services you will offer. I suggest that you start with simple services, but learn how to do advanced too so, you can help your clients with various tasks. That way you will be competitive.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

If you have an eye for the details you can learn graphic design. There are many graphic design courses online where you can learn everything you need to know. You can use various software for your designs, free like Inkscape or paid Adobe Illustrator. Most clients will expect that you use Adobe Illustrator. There are many free and paid tutorials where you can learn how to work with Inkscape or Illustrator. Every small business needs a graphic designer.

PHOTO EDITING

If photographers are busy with photo-shoots, they often outsource photo editing. You can contact wedding, events, or interior photographers and offer your services. You can edit photos with a free program like GIMP, but the industry standard is paid Adobe Photoshop. Photographers often want photos edited in Photoshop. There are many free tutorials on how to use those programs.

WEBSITE DESIGN

You can learn how to code websites from scratch, which will be more time consuming, or just create websites with some website builders like Squarespace, Wix, Shopify, WordPress.

Hand coded websites are more expensive and suitable for large companies. Most small businesses want to cut their expenses, so they go with website builders.

If you want to become a website designer I suggest that you learn at least coding basics (HTML, JavaScript, CSS, PHP).

For a start, I suggest you learn how to create a website with WordPress from WordPress.org which is free. There is also paid WordPress.com, but I recommend WordPress.org because it is more flexible, and at the end more affordable. In the WordPress.org repository you can find many free themes and plugins.

WEB SHOP, ETSY STORE

One great home based business is your own web shop. You can sell various things. It can be your craft or something you bought wholesale.

If you don't want to pay someone to create a web shop for you, then you can create it by yourself. Some people use Shopify because it is simple for beginners, but I recommend self hosted WordPress because it is SEO friendly, flexible, and affordable.

If you want to DIY with WordPress join my Facebook group.

If you do not want to invest in your store in the beginning, you can start with a Facebook shop or sell things on Instagram. That is not good in the long term because Facebook and Instagram can shut your profile if they want. That has happened to some people. Because of that, create your own web shop or pay someone to do it for you.

Etsy.com is also a great alternative to a web shop. People sell their crafts there.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Today, every business needs social media and digital advertising. You must learn how to create appealing ads and content for your client target audience. Copywriting is very important here. Great copy can influence customers.

INTERIOR DESIGNER OR DECORATOR

This is also a great job you can do from home, especially if the client can email you their ground plan so you do not have to move from home to measure their space. With various software today you can show them how the space will look like when it is finished and clients can give their feedback.

Your clients can range from homeowners to any kind of business. Before you get your first client you can create a portfolio with interior design software for some imagined place so you can show your skills to your potential clients.

WRITER

If you are good with words there are various ways to make money from it. You can work as a copywriter for other businesses, write articles, or you can self publish a book on Amazon.

CONSULTANT, COACH, TRAINER, INSTRUCTOR

If you are an expert in a particular topic, you can help other people with that subject. You can go from giving instructions to school kids and students to online fitness training. If you are a marketing expert you can become a marketing coach so you can give instructions on marketing to business people.

There are various ways you can earn from your expertise. You can publish videos on YouTube, and if it has many views, earn money. Maybe you would not make huge money that way, but you can advertise your paid services or courses through it.

STEP 2

DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Defining the target audience is often overlooked among small businesses. Your products or services do not fit everyone.

Start from your own business and problem you are solving for your clients. You must think of the person and how you will solve their problem.

Try to imagine as many possible details about your ideal client as you can.

- How old is that person?
- Are they female or male?
- Single or married?
- Do they have kids or not?
- Income?
- Location? Where do they live?
- What are their goals?
- What are their habits?
- How does he or she buy things?
- What brands do they use?
- And finally the most important one is how your products or services will help them.

If your clients are businesses, you must think in a similar way.

- Is it a small, medium, or large business?
- What is their budget?
- Do they have employees for certain tasks, or do they outsource it?
- How do they get clients?

When you get answers to these questions you will have an idea who your buyer or client is.

If you own a kids toys store, your target audience will be females between 25-45, because mostly females that age buy toys for their kids, or their siblings, or friends' kids.

Or if you provide photo editing services your target audience can be photographers who outsource photo editing.

Once you know your target audience you will know how to market your products or services. Find out where they spend time and connect with them. Get their trust by helping them for free. And finally target them with ads that will get their attention.

STEP 3

PRICES AND PACKAGES

When your target audience is defined it is easier to decide about prices and packages.

Think about your products or services again. Is it premium quality for a small group of people, or is it average?

Now think about your target audience. How much are they willing to spend on your products or services?

After that check your competition. Who are your competitors and what are their prices? Check their financial report if it is available for the public. If it is not, then check the number of their fans, likes, and comments on Facebook, Instagram, and other social networks.

And the most important is to calculate your expenses and time needed for providing that service or product.

When you define your general price range, then you can decide if you will offer some packages or special offers for people who buy more. You can, for example offer one product for free for people who buy two products. If you are a service provider you can offer more expensive packages with huge additional value.

STEP 4

BRANDING AND WEBSITE

When you decide who your target audience is, and when you determine prices you probably have some ideas about your brand. Is it luxurious or economical? Fun or professional?

What do your buyers/clients expect from you, your products or services, from your brand?

Imagine your ideal buyer. What does she/he prefer?

When you have answers to all these questions, you can choose brand colors, create a logo, and a website.

Sometimes all the above is too much for many professionals when starting a business. Because of that, it is ok to hire someone to do it for you.

There are some pros and cons if you DIY your branding, logo, and website, or if you hire a professional.

DO IT YOURSELF

PRO

- Minimal expenses.
- You will learn so much and develop new skills.
- When you want to change or adjust something, you can do it by yourself without depending on someone else.

CON

- In the beginning you don't know what you are doing
- Time consuming
- Wasted time if you can't make it look good.

HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

PRO

- Professional look from the start.
- Save time so you can focus on your business.

CON

- Costs money.
- Risk that you do not get the result you paid for.

Sometimes it is hard to decide if you need to DIY it or hire a professional. I suggest you DIY it if you will use that skill in the future. If you are, for example a virtual assistant, then you definitely should DIY it because your knowledge will pay off in the future, because you could offer your knowledge to your clients. On the other hand, if you are an accountant, you can think of hiring a professional because you probably will not use this knowledge in the future.

You must realize what is important for you. Do you want to cut your expenses, which is smart when you are starting your business, or you want to save time and have a polished brand from start?

If you decide to hire a professional, check their previous work and client testimonials. It is great if you can find someone specialized in your niche, someone who has experience with products or service providers like you.

If you choose to DIY it here are some tips:

CHOOSE BRAND COLORS

When you have a mental image of your ideal buyer you can choose your brand colors which are suitable for your brand and your target audience.

CREATE LOGO

Now it is time to create an eye-catching logo. It should be simple, memorable, and reflect your brand. Is it masculine or feminine? Strong and massive, or elegant?

You can create a logo in a paid program Adobe Illustrator or free program Inkscape. If you are a complete beginner and do not want to waste time on learning how those programs work, Canva is a great option. It is free, try it. You will easily figure out how to use it.

WEBSITE

If you decide to create a website by yourself, I recommend WordPress from WordPress.org which is free. You only need to buy your domain name (www.yourwebsitename.com) and hosting.(place where your website exists on the internet). For domain name I recommend NameCheap and for hosting SiteGround. Some cheaper options for hosting are Hostgator and Bluehost. They are fine too. I prefer SiteGround because they have better customer service and some features like automatic backup.

If you need help or advice about creating your website join my Facebook group: Website DIY for Small Business Owners | Facebook

I wrote a step-by-step tutorial on WordPress website DIY on my blog. Here is the first part of WordPress website DIY, here is the second part, and here you can see more about the WordPress administration panel.

STEP 5

GETTING CLIENTS

Getting clients is a vital part of any business because business can not exist without clients or buyers. That is why clients/buyers are kings. And you must do everything to make them happy.

You can start with building a community where you can help your target audience. The key here is to really help them and establish yourself as an expert, and gain credibility. Because of that, they can become your clients or recommend you to their family or friends.

You can for example, form a Facebook group with advice and solutions for your target audience problem. (Facebook groups have much better reach than pages.)

Also you can publish blog posts on your website, or create a YouTube video or eBook where you explain how to do something which can solve their problem. The more you publish, more people will see your content so you have more potential clients.

If you are good at your job, you will get some clients through referrals. I like that the most because that means that my clients are happy.

If you are a service provider, you can do some work for free and later ask for testimonials and referrals.

A great way to find clients is to partner with other businesses with whom you can exchange referrals.

There are many free Facebook groups today. Find groups where your potential buyers are and connect with them.

And remember, you are here to help them. If they are happy, you will be too, and you will have a successful business.

CONCLUSION

You need to work hard and believe in yourself if you want to start your home-based business. There will be ups and downs. As I said before starting a business is not easy, but it is very fulfilling and rewarding. It is better to try to be your own boss than ask yourself what would be if you did it.

Also, you need to know that client is always first and you must do everything to make the client happy. Your business future depends on it.

Be brave and start your business. You can do it!