

The Top Five Questions Answered About Starting a Home Business



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#1. How much will it cost?

Well, this obviously depends on what type of business you're starting. If it is a direct sales position (you are joining an existing company and selling their product), there is usually a startup kit to purchase. This is so that you can acquaint yourself with the product and have some samples to show to potential customers. This is a legitimate cost and you should be familiar with how much it will cost to join the company you are considering.

If you are starting a business "from scratch", did you know that you can get started online with a website, domain name and web hosting? Let's look at the costs:

- Website – if you can do it yourself, you'll save yourself some money. If not, there are website builders out there that won't cost a fortune. You can build a site with [Internet Based Family](#) for under \$20/month. Or you can have it built for you by a web designer. Try [All Things Web Design](#) for a reasonably priced website. You can also start with a blog, which can be set up for free through Wordpress (wordpress.org) or Blogger (blogger.com) Ideally, you would want to have both a website and blog.
- Domain – this is your address on the web (www.xxxxx). You can purchase a domain for under \$10 per year.
- Web Hosting – this is how you get your website to be seen on the internet. Hosting with a reliable company is under \$10 per month. I recommend the host I use, [Hostgator](#). They are reliable and have up-to-date features.

So, let's look at the above costs. If you design your own website, you can be in business for a little over \$100 for the first year. If you need to have a website built, add in another \$100-\$200. **So, for an initial investment of \$10 for the domain and about \$10 per month (for hosting) you can get started in your very own business. Figure extra if you need to have a website built.**

If you think about it, you probably spend \$10-\$20 or more a month on fast food or something else that only lasts a short time. You can take that money and put it toward starting your business and be on your way to a life of flexibility and freedom.

There are many free ways to market your business. So you don't have to pay for advertising right in the beginning. If you want to try paid advertising down the road when you're making some money from your business, that is something you can decide at that point.

Of course, if you can invest additional money in the business, it will make life easier. You can automate things more by using an autoresponder, which makes it much easier to build an email list. You can pay to outsource some tasks that you don't know how to do or are just too busy to do.

But, bare bones, to start online, you need a website or blog, a domain name and web hosting.

#2. How Can I Avoid Being “Scammed?”

Well, one sure way is to start a business from scratch. You're not going to be scammed by yourself! Just make sure you do your research beforehand to determine if what you want to offer is something that people are looking for and spending money on.

If you want to join an existing company, check them out thoroughly. Here are some questions to ask about the company/opportunity:

- How long have they been in business? I recommend going with one that has been in business for at least 3-5 years.
- Are they profitable? Ask the leaders for past profitability information.
- Are they as concerned with selling the product as they are with recruiting new business owners?

- What is the compensation plan? In other words, know exactly what you need to do to earn money. Does this seem doable to be able to reach the earnings goal you have set? Can you explain it to others if they are interested in the opportunity? Look for a plan that isn't geared only for the seasoned consultant. If a new recruit isn't able to earn an income, they won't remain for long.
- What are the start up costs? Are there any monthly/quarterly or other quotas to meet or fees to pay? If you are required to purchase a minimum amount each month, you'll probably want to look elsewhere.
- Will you be given a website, and if so, what are the costs associated with it?
- Are the leaders accessible – can you contact them by phone if you need them?
- Talk to others who have been involved with the company for a while and glean all you can from their experiences. Ask them for the negatives as well as the positives about the company and the business opportunity.
- Are the products priced so people can afford them? Are they exclusive to the party plan company? If the products are exclusive to the company, make sure they are effective and competitively priced so your customer can purchase more in the future.
- Will the product bring repeat sales? Will the initial sale be the only one because the product isn't consumable? If the product you sell is worth the money, provides great results, and is consumable, it is likely you'll have a customer for a long time.
- Is there a money back guarantee on the products? With the problems that have been reported recently, it's important to find a company that will offer a 100% satisfaction guarantee. People will be more willing to make the initial purchase if they feel the company will fix any problem they might have with a product.

- Check the company out with the Better Business Bureau. Make sure they have a satisfactory rating with them.
- Does the company value the same things that you value? If you cannot stand behind what the company believes in, it might not be the right one for you.

If you do your research, you should be fine. Do not go with opportunities that promise you a ton of money for not much work. These are the things you need to run from.

If you go with a solid company and product, then it will be up to you to make it work. Hard work, time and prayer will make it succeed.

#3. Can I Make This Work?

Yes, you can! It is scary to leave what you know and go into something you don't know. But if you want to do it, you have to take steps.

I recommend starting a business part-time. If you're working outside the home, continue on with it and start your business on the side. This way you can "test the waters", both of how your product/service is going to sell and also how you like doing it.

If you're not working right now, and looking to make some extra money, remember you can get started for a low investment, depending on what you do.

Will it be easy? Probably not. But if you take these steps, it will increase your potential for success.

- Find something you enjoy doing. This will help greatly in your ability to keep doing it even if things aren't going as quickly as you had hoped.
- Do Market Research. Check the market to see if people are actually looking for what you want to offer and paying money for similar items/services. See my article on doing market research [here](#).

- Market consistently. There are many free ways to market your business which I go over in detail in my Home Business Startup Course. I will go over them briefly here.

1. Article Marketing
2. Search Engine Optimization
3. Forum Posting
4. Starting an Affiliate Program
5. Getting inbound links
6. Joint Ventures

- Do not give up! Decide you are in this for the long haul. Know that this will take time, but with consistency and perseverance, you can be successful.
- Be willing to get some mentoring and keep learning. Try some new ways or places to market your business.

#4. How Do I Decide What Kind of Business To Do?

I recommend starting with an inventory of your resources. Let's look at them.

1. Interests – list all your interests, whether you think you can earn money at them or not.
2. What do you absolutely love doing? What do you do that passes time without you even realizing it? What would you do whether you got paid for it or not?
3. Strengths and gifts – what do others comment on that you do well? What do others ask you to do?
4. Past experience and education – what area have you worked in the past or have received education in? This will only be applicable if you also enjoy doing it.

Now, go through the above lists and write down any type of business that you could do in each category. For example:

- Sell a product related to an interest
- Create a product related to an interest (physical or digital)

- Sell affiliate products related to an interest
- Write about a passion or an interest
- Speak about a passion or an interest
- Teach about something that is a passion, an interest or that you have past experience or education in.
- Do what you have past experience or education in. For example, if you have worked as a bookkeeper in the past, you can start your own bookkeeping business from home. If you have done secretarial work in the past, you can start a Virtual Assistant or Transcription business from home.
- Coach about what you know. If you have experience or education in the fitness industry, be a fitness coach.

Do some brainstorming and write down any ideas that come to mind. You can fine tune them later.

Ideally, if you can include a passion (or interest), past education or experience, and a strength or gift, with a market that is in need of what you have to offer, you have a WINNER! But even if you cannot get everything to come together like this, include as many of your resources as possible.

An all important aspect of this is to research whether there is a market willing to spend money on what you want to offer. If no one is looking for this kind of product or service, find something else.

#5. What Kind of Business Can I Start with No Skills and Little Money?

First, I believe we covered the money issue. Now you know you can get started in an online business for a very reasonable amount of money.

Next, everyone does have skills. However, if nothing stands out to you, consider one of the following. They fit both the “no skills” and “little money” criteria.

- Affiliate Marketing – sell other people’s products and earn a commission when you make a sale. You should have a website or blog and build up an email list.

- AdSense Sites – create mini sites centered certain topics of interest and place Google AdSense ads on your site. You and Google both earn money every time someone clicks on your ads.
- Create an Ebook – write an ebook about an interest or topic you have knowledge in. You can either write this yourself or hire someone to write it for you (this option will cost some money.) Then sell the ebook on your website/blog. You can create a one-page sales letter to promote the ebook.
- Ebay – sell items on Ebay.

Although these options can be done without a big financial investment, it will require your time and effort. When I am asked about something that takes no time, money investment or effort, I have to tell them that starting a business is probably not for them. It will take time and effort. If you don't want to put the time and effort into it, then it will require money to hire out the work.

Starting a home business can be a wonderful, challenging and fulfilling experience. Don't let fear hold you back. Pray. Research. Take a step!

For further resources on starting a home business, visit:

www.legitimate-homebasedbusinesses.com – listing of legitimate businesses

Laurie Neumann, owner of Christian Home Business Connection (<http://www.christianhomebusinessconnection.com>) offers personal coaching to help you choose and get going in a successful home based business. Visit <http://www.christianhomebusinessconnection.com/small-business-consulting.html> for details.