



Before You Begin: Side Hustle Basics

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Many folks dream of building an income stream that's independent of their employment. Whether you are considering quitting your job and striking out on your own or are just thinking about building a little something on the side, there are a few basic things you should do while you still have an income from other sources.

These are the ultra basics. In the insanely depersonalized world of Internet marketing and sales, there are hundreds of things you need to get right to be successful. For every story about "How I made a million in Internet sales," there are at least 1,000 who made nothing and just wasted a bunch of time. Of course, we rarely hear about the failed attempts, so we all think it should be easy.

I believe there are four things that set successful folks above those that, in the end, will discover they have wasted their time.

1. You must have something, a product or service, that someone wants. An idea may be great, but before going into mass production, test it. See if you can find someone willing to pay you for it. If it is a product, then you need to convey its ultimate reality with either a test model or in vivid detail in some form of pre-production capacity. Don't go whole hog until you know that your supply will have a demand.
2. You must find those that want your something. I have heard it said that on the Web, there is a market for almost anything. Somehow, I doubt it, but with a slight modification, I would bet that with the millions of people logging on currently and the millions soon to log on, you could probably sell almost anything. But, you have to figure out how to find the people who might want what you have. You have to have a method of outreach, marketing and advertising that sends people to your door, then screens them for serious interest. The cheaper your product is, the more people you'll need to reach.
3. You must reach lots of them as personally and individually as possible. With all the noise out there — my inbox, and probably yours, too, has hundreds of emails every day — message quality matters and message personalization matters. If you send me something with my name spelled wrong or you shorten it from Jonathan to Jon, in an effort to either save yourself the keystrokes or seem more familiar to me, I will NOT READ YOUR MESSAGE. It is too easy for me to screen it out entirely. If you aren't genuine or don't get to the point quickly, your message quickly goes into the trash bin, and I

may block your address from all future communications. If I don't know you, then you probably don't know me, and don't presume that you do.

4. You must show them that your something is better than all the other things out there that might fill their needs. Once you have a something, a list and a personal, if possible, connection to folks on the list, then you can prove to me that your something is better than all the other somethings out there, or, at least, better for me.

Of course, there is a law of large numbers. You can just spam the universe and this will lead to some sales. But if you have to reach out to 10,000 people to get a sale you should remember that you are turning off the 9,999 who don't buy. You can't do this too often, since soon people will talk smack about you all day long every day. How often have you been one of the 9,999? How do you feel about deleting all the ads in your inbox?

If you can attract folks and limit the messages you send relative to the number of buyers you find, it will work much more in your favor.

Interestingly, these basic concepts are foundational for brick and mortar businesses as well.

Good luck on building your independent income.

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