

P A R T
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THE WHO AND THE WHY

*One's work usually occupies more than half of one's waking life.
Choosing work that does not bring happiness will lead to a life that
is mostly disappointing.*

—Bo Bennett

CHAPTER 1

Idea Brainstorming: Fun, Fast, and Easy

Everyone has plenty of ideas. In fact, you may have a great idea right now that you're itching to get started on, but wait! The real problem isn't coming up with a great idea, but recognizing when you have a good one. All it takes is one good idea and you can make a fortune.

So how do you know when you have that one good idea? First, you come up with lots of ideas and sift through them to find the best one. That's the first part behind idea brainstorming.

To help get you started, answer the following questions:

1. What are my hobbies and interests?
2. What are some of my life experiences and achievements?
3. What problems, big or small, have I solved in my life?

You may be thinking, "Gosh, that's cute, that's quaint. I would love nothing more than to have hobbies and interests, but I work so hard that I don't have time for any of that." So let me ask you, "What would you like to do if you did have more time?"

Maybe you don't get to do them right now, but don't limit yourself. You might be saying, "I would love to have my own business, and one of my favorite hobbies is kites. I love flying and building kites, and I would love to teach others how to do the same. I would love to do an inbox magazine on everything about kites. But who would want that?" Well, the answer is plenty of people. Did you know that hundreds of thousands of people search on the term

building kites each month? So put down every idea to start. Later, I'll tell exactly how you can determine whether your idea might make a good business.

When you think about your life experiences and achievements, don't overlook anything, no matter how simple or obvious you think it might be. Did you raise children, start a business, stay married for 50 years, plan your own wedding, learn a complicated software program, home-school your kids, or fly airplanes?

Whatever you did, that's something someone else would want to know about, so put that down, too. These are all good life experiences and achievements. You don't have to have climbed Mount Everest. Just think about the little victories in life. I knew a student who started a business that literally explained how to get your child into an Ivy League school. She had gone through every step from teaching the right way to study for the SAT test to preparing for the in-person interviews. Because she had already gone through that process, she wrote her first special report and sold it online. Later, she turned her idea into a working business.

Now think about some significant problems you might have solved in your life. Did you lose weight, help a loved one through an illness, find a great job, rebuild your home after a natural disaster, survive bankruptcy, or start over after divorce? Maybe you just know how to solve seemingly minor problems like getting rid of rodents from your house or garden. There may be some painful memories, but those areas in life where people feel the most distressed is where you can make the most money. Plus, you can help the most people by doing the most good.

Many people have been beaten down by life, so they may feel negative and say, "What? Are you kidding me? I don't have time for hobbies and interests. Life experience? Achievements? I haven't been able to do anything, and that's why I'm so frustrated. Problems big or small? I've got problems but I haven't solved them."

I knew a woman who kept resisting the idea of writing down her hobbies or achievements. Finally, I asked her, "Who is someone in your life that you really respect? Somebody in your life that you truly admire and love?" After much thinking, she finally told me about her friend, Cindy.

Then I said, "Okay, tell me something about Cindy. What are her hobbies and her interests? What are some of Cindy's life

experiences and achievements? And what problems big or small has Cindy solved?”

Suddenly, this lady started going through this exercise by thinking about other people in her life. Just by going through this exercise, she soon realized that ideas are limitless.

While you may not always like to give your friends credit, you probably know some pretty smart people. You might know somebody who is a really good salesperson, realtor, or mortgage broker who has survived this most recent downturn and are still making money despite all that.

Maybe you know someone who got divorced or lost 100 pounds. What process did they go through, and what is their life like now? As a matter of fact, most people have already forgotten great ideas until they make a conscious effort to recall them.

Ultimately, every business is about someone else, so it doesn't always have to be about you. When this lady started thinking about her friend, Cindy, she started thinking, “You know what? I've done something like that as well!”

So try to get out of your own head and think of someone else because that can get you thinking a lot bigger. Pretty soon, you will have several ideas to choose from.

Discover the Three “P’s”: Passion, Purpose, and Profits

Whatever idea you come up with, make sure it's something that you are truly interested in and passionate about. Tap into your inner calling. Don't just chase the money. When I started WorkingMomsOnly.com, I didn't do it just for the money but because I wanted to teach other working moms how to have a healthier, wealthier, more blended lifestyle. It is my firm belief that working moms have more responsibility than any other single group of people and that they have more influence as well. I knew this was a market I had to serve. That's why it's such a pleasure and an easy business for me.

If you're really excited and passionate about something, running your business will be a breeze. Not only will it be easy, but it will be a lot more fun as well. When you marry your passion and your purpose, the profits will follow.

Remember, you're never limited to just one idea. You can eventually have your own empire, so don't feel that where you start

today is necessarily where you are going to finish. If you have several great ideas, start with the one you are most passionate about, the one that defines your purpose. If you are still stuck, add the experience factor into the equation. Another reason why it was easy for me to start WorkingMomsOnly.com was that I was a working mom for 11 years, with multiple children. I had experience and knew I could help others.

For some additional ways to jog your brain for ideas, go to magazine sites on the Internet. If there's a particular market you're thinking about and it has its own magazine, then it's probably big enough for an inbox magazine. If the market is big enough to justify its own association, then it's probably a big enough market for you to go after.

Go directly to Amazon.com/magazines, or just go to Amazon and look for the search box in the left-hand column (see Figure 1.1). Look where it says magazine subscriptions, where it lists featured categories such as automotive, photography, brides and



Figure 1.1 Browse through Amazon.com's list of magazines.

wedding, business and investing, children's magazines, computer and Internet, cooking, food, wine, and crafts. You will see endless categories.

If you're thinking you don't have any hobbies, scan through that list. I'd be willing to bet that you find something in there that interests you. Look at any magazines you may subscribe to or that catch your eye on the newsstand. Obviously, you have some interests and hobbies, so browsing through magazines can be a great way to jog your imagination.

To browse through another list of magazines, go to Magazines.com and click the Browse tab. Now you can see all the most popular magazine categories such as Fashion, Health & Fitness, or Sports.

Besides scanning for magazine topics, look at the magazine headlines. Essentially, every cover story is a headline designed to grab your attention. Look at a men's magazine like *Men's Health* or *GQ* and you'll notice which topics are hot and how they grab your attention by the way they're written. Magazines have a big job. They have to grab the eye of someone walking by a newsstand; so don't forget to look at those cover stories and topics for ideas.

Here's a list of magazine sites to browse through in addition to browsing through your local newsstand:

- www.Amazon.com/magazines
- www.Magazines.com
- www.MagsDirect.com
- www.MrMagazines.com

Right now, I want you thinking in terms of market selection. Magazines.com is another great source. Just click on the Browse tab and you'll see so many different markets and groups that you can go after (see Figure 1.2).

Magazines.com is favorite source, especially if you want to focus more on business-to-business opportunities. As long as there's a magazine or a trade journal for a particular market, it's big enough to justify going into that field. If there happens to be an association for that field, then it's definitely going to be big enough. Here are two ways to find directories of associations:

- www.MarketingSource.com/associations
- www.weddles.com/associations (FREE!!)



Figure 1.2 Another source of magazines is Magazines.com.

There’s an association for practically anything—from agriculture to astronomy, automotive, career counseling, building real estate, or chemistry. Weddles happens to be free, although you can try MarketingSource.com if you’re willing to pay for information. Generally, I would stick with the free directory.

Is It Sellable?

When you think you have an idea of what you want to do, the next (and most important) step is to determine how sellable that idea might be. When I started WorkingMomsOnly.com, I knew it had to be a sellable idea. If it wasn’t, then it could have been my hobby, but it would not have been my business. So when I say “sellable,” I mean you will make money with this idea!

Use the following list to identify a sellable idea. The more categories you can check off for that idea, the more sellable that idea will be. Generally, the most sellable ideas are those that help others solve a problem fast such as making money or losing weight. I like to call these Big Money Categories (see Figure 1.3).

“Big Money” Categories

- Make money
- Save money
- Look good
- Improve health/longevity
- Increase popularity
- Increase security
- Give inner peace
- Increase free time
- Have more fun

Figure 1.3 Identifying a sellable idea.

When solidifying your idea, make sure that you can check off at least two of these boxes. You’ll know that you’ve found a sellable idea when you can check off multiple categories for what you want to deliver.

For example, when I look at WorkingMomsOnly.com, I know I can check off make money, save money, look good, improve health, increase popularity, increase security, give inner peace, increase free time, and have more fun. When you are talking about a lifestyle, you pretty much have all of these categories covered.

Of course, don’t feel like you have to check them all off. If you’ve got an inbox magazine on yoga, you might check off only look good, improve health, and give inner peace.

If you’ve got an idea on productivity, you might check off only make money, save money, increase free time, and have more fun.

Even if you can check off only make money, then you probably have a winner because everyone wants to make more money. That’s a hot spot that people will pay money to learn. People will always pay money to learn how to make money, save money, and look good.

They’ll also pay money for their health, pride, popularity, and personal development like inner peace, security, and free time. Don’t forget about those hobbies. Hobby sites are so popular because almost everyone wants to have more fun. So that’s one you will always be able to check off with a hobby-related idea.

Quick Start Summary

Remember, your idea should meet these criteria:

- You must be passionate about the idea.
- There must already be an existing market for your idea.
- The idea must be sellable.

Once you have an idea that meets all three criteria, you can move on to thinking about markets versus topics, which you'll learn about in the next chapter.

Step 1: Take out a piece of paper or open up your laptop and write three ideas that you have always wanted to do as a business. At this point, it does not matter how outrageous they may sound. You just want to start putting down your ideas.

Step 2: See who else is selling the same thing in your market. Remember, it is a good thing to have competition. Being the first one into a market is usually not what you want. If you have several companies selling the same thing to the same market, it means your idea is a sellable one.

Step 3: Pick the best idea out of the three. If all of the above criteria are equal, select the idea that you are most passionate about. Remember, you need to get started; once you have your first inbox magazine up and running, you can always come back to your other ideas.