



Start Your Own Profitable Home-Based *Craft* Business By Art & Dolly Kraft

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Introduction

One long day a few years back, Art and I began wondering aloud; how great it would be, to chuck the nine-to-five routine, be our own boss, and run our own business our way?

No more long, boring, and costly commutes. No more workplace hassles and workplace politics.

For one thing we'd start pocketing the profits instead of making profits for others, while taking a day off now and then *simply* because we wanted to.

That's possible, isn't it? Of course it's possible. It's even more than probable, if you put your mind to it, research the prospects, develop a sound plan, and stay on course. What's more, we are proof that it won't cost as much as you might think.

Look around you, no doubt you already own some of the necessary equipment and can afford to buy the required materials. You possess important knowledge and experience in at least one craft, or you're willing to learn.

In most ways, starting and running your own home-based craft business is probably easier and a lot more profitable than you think; in a few ways it might be a little tougher, but there are no obstacles impossible to defeat.

Best of all, as a home-based entrepreneur, you won't have to borrow a bundle to pay the lease of a shop downtown or at the mall.

In the pages that follow, you'll find a wealth of valuable business ideas and information, along with many helpful tips and tricks that will take the edge off that normal little twinge of fear and give you the courage to take the big step.

This book is not about any specific craft, more accurately, it covers the craft business and tells you what you need to know about operating your business from your home, as we have.

Art and I have filled the following chapters, with practical solutions to problems and plenty of solid advice on how to tap into your creative skills to earn a solid living.

We all, at one time or the other, had to face the sad truth that if you don't inherited millions or win the lottery, you're going to have to work for a living for the rest of your life.

Why not make a happy career of doing what you most enjoy? It won't just happen, unless you make it happen.

Whatever path you choose, best wishes;

Art & Dolly Kraft

Your Home-Based Craft Business

When starting out, you think how hard can it really be? You like making crafts, people "tell" you they like what you make and that you should start your own business.

So you say to yourself, "What the heck, I'll make a few bucks and start selling my creations."

Is it really that easy? Can just anyone make money in the crafting business?

While people may start their crafting business out as a hobby, it can soon evolve into a tidy money making operation. But first you must decide to change your attitude if you want to get serious about it.

You need to decide you want to make money and you need that money. The only people who can make a living in a crafts business are those who decide to get serious about money and profits.

So if you've been tinkering with the idea of actually selling your crafts, but haven't really put your heart into it, now is the time to decide if you want to continue as a hobby or make it a real business.

The biggest mistake crafters can make is to produce what they want to craft and not what people want to buy! As with any new product or service, test marketing is key to any crafter's success.

That fact is that among the many businesses that can be operated profitably from a home, craft businesses are particularly suitable.

There are many reasons; Most craft objects are relatively small and easy to store and transport, The tools are easy to use at home and won't disturb your neighbors, Needed manufacturing materials aren't gravely hazardous and probably won't pose any major storage problems.

Craft professionals shouldn't find working at home any more difficult than craft hobbyists already do. Depending on your craft, the transition from hobbyist to professional requires little or no fine-tuning in the way you construct your products.

You may already have sufficient work space in the form of a work-area at the start, however as you will be increasing production volume you will probably have to find or create adequate storage space, and you'll want an office of some sort for attending to all the details of running a business.

For many would-be entrepreneurs, it's difficult to muster the necessary confidence to approach the marketplace. Confidence is every bit as important as skill in your chosen craft. You must have faith in your craft, in yourself, and in your ability to run a business and sell your products.

Don't think of your products as homemade, but rather as meticulously handcrafted to exacting standards. Handcrafted products are in great demand today, because they provide customers with an intangible quality too infrequently encountered these days: good old American craftsmanship.

To be sure carefully handcrafted products are better made than assembly-line stamp outs and are unique because of their quality.

Before You Jump Into Business

Ahead of getting down to the business of business, you have some enjoyable groundwork ahead of you.

Begin by browsing the kinds of shops, galleries, and stores in which you would like to see your products sold.

While there observe the customers, talk to the proprietors, make an effort to attend local and nearby arts-and-crafts shows, Christmas bazaars, sidewalk exhibits, wine festivals, food fairs, and other events where there are craft booths and displays.

The point of all this is to look for ideas and take notes. Watch the customers to see what stops them and what entices them to buy. Talk to the exhibitors when they're not busy. Ask them about their experiences and don't hesitate to tell them of your plans. Seek their advice.

You'll be surprised how the ideas you'll come across will trigger others. All this will become a solid foundation upon which to build a profitable business.

After All, The Decision Is Your Alone

Only you can resolve whether or not you should start your own craft business, but certain indicators can lead you toward the right choice.

Naturally, if you have little or no skill in any craft, minimal manual dexterity and no interest in getting better, you needn't go any further find yourself another business. If, on the other hand, you're competent, yet lack patience or have no interest in managing a business, then you'd better work for someone else for the rest of your career and treat crafts as just a hobby.

Even where the idea of being self-employed as a home-based creator of crafts appeals to you, and you possess, or are willing to attain the necessary skills and knowledge needed, you still must question yourself thoroughly to learn where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

This is a vital part of the planning stage of your business: a process that's *never* too early to start and one that should continue throughout the life of your craft business.

One of the most fascinating characteristics of craftwork is the possibility of advancing from hobby to career, a progression that other professions rarely enjoy.

After all, we don't see amateur contractors building houses and office complexes for the joy of it, or hobby surgeons doing coronary bypasses evenings and weekends in their spare time.

Many in the craft field, work first for the fun of it, then study and master enough techniques to proceed to the level of serious amateur, and in due course put their knowledge and experience to work earning money. So can you.

Personal Qualities Required

The best way to turn your dreams of being successful in the craft business into reality is simply to focus all your energies on something you really love to do.

If you feel your ready for the challenge, now is a good time for you to do some serious thinking about yourself; what you've done in the past, what you're doing now, and what you really want to do with the rest of your life.

Where making money in the craft business is your heart felt goal, one of the first things you need to think about is the difference between merely a dream and a goal. For goals to become reality; they must be written, they must be measurable and they must have a deadline.

Once you have a firm goal in mind, you can begin planning how many hours a week you will allocate for making products to sale, figure out the maximum number of products you might be able to produce and sell in a year, calculate the costs of producing this merchandise, and then figure out what kind of prices you must set to actually generate this volume of sales.

Evidently these thoughts result in other questions, which I'll be dealing with all the way through this book. Remember, to *keep your goals reachable*.

Over your business life you'll need to keep setting goals, starting off you'll require a series of small gains and successes to keep going. Thus you need to set each of these goals within the guidelines of reality, always realizing it will require a certain amount of time, money and effort on your part.

Once you achieve your first goal, set another one, realizing along the way that the goals of a beginner and those of a "seasoned pro" will be quite different.

You may start with the simple goal of just wanting to sell a few handcrafts, but your goals are likely to become more ambitious after a while. In time you will strive for increased sales, greater profits, and continuing access to new market areas.

Or maybe you'll want to write a book, become a teacher, open a shop, or move out of the craft field entirely. Sometimes the experience people gain as a crafter convinces them they have other talents they want to develop.

Discover What You Do Best

You may be reading this book because you want to profit from your special creativity, but first make sure you've actually acknowledged all your special abilities, talents, skills, and know-how.

A lot of people go through life thinking they aren't very creative simply because they have always taken certain life skills for granted.

For example, people who say they are not artistic may forget they are using their talents every time they set a beautiful dinner table, arrange a bouquet of flowers, or select satisfying paint or decorator colors for a room.

Often, people who say they aren't very creative tend to overlook the fact that they may be able to make a scrumptious casserole without using a recipe, originate a game or toy that amuses a child, or find new imaginative ways to use antiques as decorative items.

In other words, you don't have to be able to paint a picture to be considered an Artist!

In the world of crafts the most profitable enterprises are generally those built on a combination of skills and past experience. Although these skills may seem unrelated in the beginning, they often come together in a unique way to make a successful business package.

On the other hand there will be times we start doing something we believe we can do well only to find out it's not our "natural bent.

Just think of it this way, because we get on the wrong train does not mean we have to stay to the end of the line.

Learn And Develop Your Craft

It's not a stretch to figure that most people who plan to start and operate a home-based craft business already possess some craft skills.

At the very least, you should have some grasp of the basic tools and techniques of your chosen area, and an unshakable interest in learning as much as possible about every aspect of the business.

Take Select Courses

My first suggestion is to search out and take courses from *good* teachers at your local college, technical school, or arts-and-crafts school.

Your first task is to find a course. Then you must determine the quality and ability of the teacher. Don't be shy. Phone or visit the teacher and ask for a summary of what the course will cover. Inform the teacher what you need and expect from the course and ask if this course will satisfy those requirements.

Also, find out what text books are to be used and examine them. Talk to the teacher's past students. You should be able to tell within the first one or two class meetings whether you've found what you want, or drop the course and go elsewhere for instruction.

Again, don't be afraid to ask questions, and don't think you'll appear foolish for doing so. As someone who has taught a variety of workshops, I can tell you that one of a teacher's greatest rewards is being able to work with probing and fascinated students who are there to learn.

Learn by Reading

An additional way to learn is by reading, even small public libraries in general have dozens of craft titles on their shelves. In the small town where we live, the public library has nearly 500 craft books covering most subject areas.

I am sure you probably already know about some of the general and specific crafts magazines, nevertheless you would do well to spend time learning what other periodicals are available.

I suggest that you subscribe to the best art & craft magazines in your field of knowledge and plan to purchase the better how-to guides and reference manuals as a way of building a solid business library.

Especially, in the absence of a good basic course, I advise a series of trips to bookstores, public and college libraries, as well as magazine stands. Browse through the craft titles until you find books on crafts you're skilled or interested in.

Take a few moments and skim through the books to settle on those that are worth borrowing from a library, and those that you'll want to buy for your own library.

You can do the same with magazines. At a good public library and at local magazine stands, you'll find periodicals worth reading, some even worth subscribing to.

As a budding crafts professional, you should subscribe to 'The Crafts Report,' a magazine that bills itself as "the business journal for the crafts industry:'

This handy monthly publication has regular columns, as well as feature articles on topics of interest and value to craft professionals. It tracks nationwide trends, announces shows and fairs state by state, and puts readers in touch with their peers.

Don't forget to probe the business-book sections and pay special attention to volumes prepared for home-based business managers. Also review the various business and computer magazines that are available.

If you maintain Internet access, you can browse the virtual bookshelves at giant on-line bookstores, such as Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. Once you're at the website you can make general subject searches for craft, business, and computer books.

The Internet offers you the opportunity to search for specific titles, examine their tables of contents, and read chapter excerpts as well as publishers' and readers' reviews.

Resign yourself, you'll have to continue reading books and magazines from now on, not only to learn what you don't yet know, but also to keep alert to the ever-changing technology.

Workshops and Seminars

All things considered, you should be able to come across various craft workshops and business seminars in your part of the country. You'll hear about these in national magazines and local newspapers, as well as through direct-mail promotion.

Another source for information about workshops and seminars is your local chamber of commerce, as well as, the business department of any nearby college or university, and your community's - Small Business Development Center.

By Way Of Apprenticeship

If you can tolerate low pay, often minimum pay and tedious chores, working as an assistant to a well-known crafter can also be a good way to learn a craft.

Bear in mind, that while your paycheck may be small, what you could learn on the job might be invaluable to you and your future craft business.

To Specialize Or Not, That Is The Question!

Your verdict to work as a specialist or generalist will depend largely on your; acquired skills, personal choice, and frankly the realities of the marketplace.

Most crafters begin as specialists because their skills are naturally limited. Those who decide to remain specialists usually do so because they enjoy working in one craft area and have found an eager market for their products.

A friend of mine has become rich producing Owls, all types of Owls and wouldn't have it any other way. She's found an enthusiastic market for her work.

As you can see, there's certainly nothing wrong with the single-craft approach to the business, as long as you are happy with what you are doing and are producing the kind of income you need or want.

On the other hand, branching out, is a good way to spread out your liabilities, reduce risks, and add other skills to your repertoire.

If you're a person who is easily bored, an array of products might be your only means to success in the home-based craft business.

Whether you specialize or generalize will be mainly up to you. The only counseling I will offer in this regard is to learn your craft well, then honestly appraise your circumstances in relation to the actual marketplace.

However, should you wish to begin expanding your product line, learn your set of crafts equally well, one area at a time.

You will also probably do your best to work in related or similar areas, as this will enable you to use some of your natural skills, tools and equipment required for one craft in other crafts.

For example, if you're a woodworker, you'll probably find it relatively easy and inexpensive to move into picture framing, and the like. The tools and materials you use for making wooden furnishings and fixtures will prove valuable if you start making wooden toys, puzzles, games, models, decoys, etc..

Country, regional, and holiday crafts are other possibilities for the skilled woodworker.

The World Of Crafts Can Be Yours

For the most part, the home-based crafter can work in any craft area. Your options are many and varied

You can pick the craft you're best at or most interested in and build a business around that or you can broaden your horizons.

Let's say you decide you want to compete as a specialist, say in ceramics, then you should go all-out to become the best ceramist in your district.

However, if you decide to work in several or many handicrafts, then you need not attempt to be, and probably won't be, the best in your community in each craft.

Still you'll have to be good in each and should strive to be outstanding. You might thereby prove yourself the most versatile crafter in your vicinity. It's important that you have some idea of the direction you want your business to take, and, again, planning is crucial.

Let the marketplace be your most controlling factor. You needn't set out immediately to specialize in anything or to generalize for that matter, as you could find in a year or two that the marketplace will pull you one way or another.

It doesn't really matter, as long as; you continue to remain in touch with your own true feelings and ambitions, as long as you continue to plan and set realistic goals, and as long as you continue to strive toward creative excellence.

Now all you need then is to acquire needed business wisdom.

Working At Home

Do You Really Want To Escape The Nine-to-Five Grind

More and more people yearn for the independence of running a home-based business, dreaming of the day when they can chuck the daily routine and have no more - Monday through Friday, nine to-five grind, and no more bosses.

If your one of those dreamers reality will quickly awaken you to the hard fact that your home-based craft business will probably require a Monday through-Saturday schedule, with plenty of Sundays thrown in.

And instead of the nine to five bit, you'll probably be hard at it from six to six and might have to work some evenings to keep up.

Correspondingly, those who believe being their own boss is the greatest benefit of a home-based craft business may be in for a rude awakening.

The objective of any craft business is to have customers, and loads of them and your job is to please your customers. In a true sense then every customer is your boss.

In line with the nature of your business, you will have orders to fill, have fairs and exhibits to attend, in other words, a life as full of deadlines as any job you may have had before starting your own business.

So if you are thinking of going into business because you don't like following your boss's orders or you hate the pressure of never-ending deadlines, you're doing it for the wrong reasons.

As a self-employed crafter, you must honor your promises to a countless number of people, and you must face their deadlines, for to do otherwise would be to your financial peril.

Can you work alone?

Loneliness is also something every home-based crafter must learn to deal with. Mysteriously, the reality of this often comes as a surprise to many people who decide to run a businesses from their home.

A quantity of people are truly disturbed by being cut off from the daily interaction with others, above all those who leave busy jobs where seclusion is rare or nonexistent. The rest of us drink in the solitude and the high level of productivity it encourages.

On the other hand, if most of your business is local you will end up coming in contact with many people. Even where your craft business is one that requires meetings with clients, you might consider luncheon meetings as a way of getting away from home for an hour or so.

Becoming Self-Employed

Most of us who have enjoyed being in our own business a while, firmly believe the advantages of home-based self-employment far outweighs the disadvantages.

However, you should recognize that some people just don't take to this kind of life. So approach your own business guardedly and weigh the options carefully.

I often get the thought from people I come into contact with that the two qualities most people fear they lack are self-motivation and self-discipline. These two traits go hand in hand and are essential to the success of any home-based business, although they are realities you simply must face.

These fears are normal and should not put you off unnecessarily. Certainly, you must be self-motivated, and disciplined. The very same qualities you must possess to hold a job, to get to work on time, to show up for appointments.

When my friends ask me how I can get up every morning without surrendering to the temptation to sleep in or take the day off.

My response is easy, as I have a natural aversion to poverty, hunger, and failure!

Of course, we all are tempted from time to time, and once in awhile we do give in. It's human nature, and there's nothing wrong with that.

What you can't afford to do, however, is to make a habit of yielding to all the leisure activities and risk deadlines and other commitments. To do so can be financially disastrous. So every time you're tempted, ask yourself if it's really worth it.



Thanks for reading these brief few pages, of one of the most successful and original career course manuals available on building your own home-based *Craft business*. Learning from an established professional is the best way to starting your own profitable home business.

If you'd like to consider the complete course, [click here...](#)

For information on our other career courses go to either anezbizz.com or ahow2.com

Note: To read another *sample edition* of our famous home study courses follow this link...

[Learn](#)

Whatever, your decision may I talk this opportunity to wish you the best of good fortune, and remember, don't leave your future to *the whim of others*.

Your friend;

Joe Myna