



Your Own...

Gift Basket Business



How To Start Your Own Gift Basket Business

By Lillie Louise

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Introduction

Hello, my name is Lillie Louise, you might confuse me with my twin sister Millie, that is, if you have read any of her best selling books on how to start a successful cleaning business.

Frankly, I decided to pick up the pen after watching Millie turn her personal success in business into such an appealing set of books that has aided others in fulfilling their dreams of owning their own business, in a field they love.

I won't bore you with my life story, or early attempts at office jobs and bookkeeping, which by the way is still a subject of gentle humor from my good natured husband.

When I first alerted him to the fact that I wanted to start my own business, he replied, "Under two conditions; first, you select something you really love to do, and second, hire a good bookkeeper!"

But what would I do? While I always have been a little klutzy, I did possess a flair for creating and designing small projects.

My first inspiration was a flower shop, yet though I do love flowers, I could not see myself sharing a cold room with my favorite flora, on a daily basis

One day, while my husband and I were wandering through a small gift shop, I was admiring a beautiful gift basket and told him so. He paused a moment and said "Honey, you could do that better!"

At first, I thought he was kidding me, but he seemed serious and it started me to thinking. Then a few days later I bought a book on gift basket creation and how to make it a fun and lucrative business, and as they say, 'The rest is history'.

I have never looked back, mainly due to the freedom and income I've discovered, along with the support my husband has given me. I had never realized what a rewarding and lucrative business gift baskets can be.

Moving on, let's talk about what happens when you decide to start your own gift basket business.

As with any type of business, opening a Gift Basket business is taking a risk. Generally, this has become a very competitive field.

As to becoming financially successful that will be established by many different workings: your planning, your resolve, your ability to actively market your baskets. Also, your careful buying of basket items, along with your ability to be better than your competition.

On the bright side, your rewards both financially and emotionally can be wonderful, so take heart.

The business of Gift baskets is not a "get rich" quick business. In fact, most 'experts' recommend having at least six months estimated business expenses in savings, before beginning any business.

Never let anyone tell you a Gift Basket business can be started on a "shoestring." But, you can start small and grow.

If you fully use your creative side and make do with what you have, and what is affordable, you can build your business slowly. A year from now, you can be established in your community, and have a client base and a very clear future.

The first thing you'll discover is that your mind will race in many different directions.

You'll ask yourself; Where will I find baskets and goods, plus that other stuff that makes them look so attractive, should I set up shop at home or in a store location, can I sell my baskets on the Internet, and more notably - will I make money!

This book will show you a rule that ensures a profitable enterprise year after year. But first you must decide if you have the drive and self-determination to enter into and succeed in your own business.

Whatever your decision I wish you the very best in life.

Lillie Louise

Overview Of The Gift Basket Business

Creating gift baskets is one of the fastest growing types of businesses today that you can start from home. Gift basket sales are estimated between 3-4 Billion in a year.

Gift baskets have enjoyed remarkable growth in popularity over the past several years as the number of home-based businesses and independent shops catering to the corporate market has increased.

In fact, businesses and individuals looking for that “perfect gift” now choose to give gift baskets, this because of their convenience, pleasant appearance and the ability to theme them to the occasion.

Gift baskets can be fully customized to suit the giver, the recipient, the occasion and the desired price. For this reason, it has become a gift of choice for birthdays, weddings, special events, anniversaries, housewarmings, and romantic occasions.

In fact, gift baskets have become a way of communicating a thank you , sympathies, and congratulatory message for a new baby, and other commemorative high point in life.

Businesses, are now recognizing gift baskets’ versatility. Today these occasions shape a large part of the gift basket business, as companies are sending them to their; employees, sales force and business clients.

The home-based gift basket business is a low cost, low overhead business that depends primarily on your own creativity and imagination. The more creative you are, the greater your chances to do well.

Like any other business, however, success in this business requires marketing skills, business acumen and financial savvy.

In addition to the fun and creative part of making the baskets, you need to combine the skills of running a business, record keeping, purchasing, cash flow management, marketing and advertising, along with a strong dose of excitement and enthusiasm.

Starting any new business, presents new conditions and requires you to make a number of judgments.

Considerations such as;

Will you be working at home or leasing a retail space?

If you decide to will work from home, is there an adequate amount of space for creating your baskets, as well as, running your business?

What kinds of gift baskets will you offer?

Exactly, who is my target market; and how will you reach them?

These a few of the questions that you need to think about when starting this business.

If you are planning on starting on a "shoestring budget," it is advisable to go slow and start your business from home. Working from home will allow you to save on many expenses.

Added to this you can work your hours, on a full or part-time basis.

Be sure to register your business name and get the needed requirements and licenses that your city or county mandates.

Should you make your mind up to lease a store or office space, consider being near your target market. If you are aiming for the business sector, try looking for a space in the downtown area or where most corporate offices are located.

In this event, a good location should be; accessible, and have the benefit of substantial walk-in traffic, along with ample parking space, and naturally within your budget.

What's more consider the presence of competition and retail regulations governing that area.

Income Potential

Opportunities for homebased and small companies abound in the gift basket business, almost everywhere. Your income potential will mostly depend on how hard you work, your design ability in creating products, and marketing your business.

Printed survey's have stated that approximately two thirds of the respondents reported annual gross sales of at least \$50,000 - \$60,000. In fact, some reported that their sales reached \$200,000 or more.

Types Of Gift Baskets

It's up to you, to either offer a wide selection of gift baskets or focus on a smaller sector. Some of the common baskets being offered;

Shower Baskets. These are perfect for either, weddings or baby showers. Many online sites focus on a single market. For example, you can find a number of retailers selling exclusively baby gift baskets.

Food Baskets. These are the most popular gift baskets that customers give to their clients, friends and family. These gift baskets can be filled with gourmet foods, snacks, chocolate, wine and cheese, etc.

Bath and Body Baskets. Also very popular, common ingredients of these baskets tend to include toiletries items like scented soaps, fragrances, oils, lotions, and new candles scents, etc..

Customized Baskets. As luck will have it, a number of your customers will want items in their gift baskets that are not currently included in your item list. Instead of your current offerings, they want a customized gift basket.

Be sure to properly price your customized gift baskets, given the added cost of shopping specially bits and pieces for your basket.

Inventory Considerations

Your initial inventory should be small and your stock should grow as your sales grows.

You can buy your items for gift baskets either through wholesale or retail means. Yet it is advisable that you buy at wholesale price, especially the items and supplies that you use in large quantities, such as baskets, 'filler' items such as tissue paper, and items common to numerous baskets.

Retail purchases will in general consist of the merchandise you accrue when you go shopping for customized basket requests.

In general, try as much as possible to buy your items for your gift baskets in bulk. Many retailers give quantity discounts.

I hope you like shopping, as it is a major pursuit for a person in the gift basket business, and may take you anywhere from one to four hours a day.

You may find your craft suppliers and 'hard to find' gifts; by attending local and regional gift shows, various trade publications, and telephone directory listings under "wholesalers."

A first-rate idea is to add your name to supplier mailing lists to hear of new products and those that are on sale.

Spreading The Word (Marketing)

Your marketing strategy should be to broaden the word about your business, create a desire for your products, promote the image that you want for your business convincing buyers that your gift baskets are the best.

The two best techniques for marketing your gift basket are favorable word of mouth, and customer's satisfaction.

Determining factors are the quality of your creativity in producing your products, the selection of items in the basket, how you do business with your customers, and the promptness of delivery will determine the level of your customer satisfaction and kind of word of mouth that is generated.

Other marketing strategies that work for this business include typical advertising, particularly in the Yellow Pages and newspapers, direct mail, and brochures.

If you are targeting businesses, you can request for a personal presentation of your business and products. Be ready to do some cold calling.

You can even send them a complimentary gift basket, with your sales materials to help ensure that your business will be at the top of their minds should they need to send a gift to their own clients or employees.

Your Prices

Pricing your baskets is always a taxing proposition. If you price your baskets too low you run the risk of cutting your profits. If you set your prices too high and you run the risk of losing your customers.

You may be able to set higher profit margins for some baskets, and low in some others to keep your inventory moving.

You should expect to net 15 to 30 percent of their gross revenue, and you typically reach this goal by employing a 100-percent markup to the cost of the items in the basket.”

Don't short change yourself, be sure to cover your profit, labor, materials, cost of merchandise in the basket, a percentage of your overhead costs, and all other expenses that you incurred.

A good guide when setting your prices, is to check the prices of your nearest competitor to ensure that you are not pricing yourself out of the market.

If you are offering similar types of baskets, yet the competitor can offer much lower price, search out ways you can reduce your costs. This will allow you to price your baskets within a reasonable amount relative to your competitor.

The above is a rough outline of the elements you face in this business, I will go into detail throughout the book.

Why Gift Baskets Are Popular

If you give someone a beautiful gift basket, consisting of selected quality items in an attractive hand designed arrangement that perfectly fits the occasion, your providing a mood altering experience.

You can tell by the expression on the recipient's face, you'll see a look of pleasure and excitement all at once. That's what separates presenting a gift basket from just giving a gift.

Also, don't be surprised if the beneficiary doesn't open your gift basket - ever, as for some individuals the creation is just too superb to disturb.

This has happened to me frequently. I love it when a person enjoys the basket's contents, and I also consider it an honor to have make a design that becomes a collector's item.

On the other hand, a few designers don't feel the same way, as they want the person to devour or use the contents. Yet, once you've designed and delivered the basket it's time to move on to other designs.

In spite of their outward expression, people never tire of receiving or giving gift baskets, as the container is different, the contents change, the trappings depict the occasion or season, and there's always a surprise inside.

No other gift promises such delight, this is why you'll find making gift baskets to be fun and rewarding.

A gift basket business is perfect for a home business. Few small operators could withstand paying the monthly rent, salaries, and other fixed expenses that come with maintaining a store front or office space..

Gift baskets are sold in variety stores, specialty shops, and other places where they are bought by the masses, since individuals will venture to a place where they can buy many things at one time, not just a gift basket.

The main reason why most gift basket professionals set up shop at home is that they can perfect their craft in a relaxed environment while earning a good living without the pressure of rent, salaries, and high taxes.

Relaxed does not mean that you make baskets in the morning and watch television in the afternoon.

This is a serious business, with income potential that has exceeded the wildest dreams of many longtime designers.

Here are a few more reasons why a home-based gift basket business can be gratifying:

- You control your hours, clients serviced, and work schedule.

- Your inventory can be is keep in a handy location.

- Shipping sources can pick up and deliver boxes and other packages to home base.

Working out of your home makes networking important to find corporate customers who need baskets to maintain business relationships. As a homebased professional, you must be committed to do everything for your business, even where its work you don't like to do.

The money making opportunities are boundless because they are so popular 'Gift Baskets' are a multi-million dollar industry. You can sell gift baskets for all occasions and themes.

Gift Baskets can be sold to individuals, to businesses and for fundraisers, to name just a few ideas. They are a gift with a personal touch that people are willing to pay a little extra for.

Such occasions, as:

| | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| A New baby | Golf | Get Well |
| Baskets for Pets | Graduation | New Home |
| New Mom | Mother's Day | Romance |
| Christmas | Father's Day | Chocolate Lover's |
| Easter | Birthday | Pasta Lovers |
| Valentine's Day | Wedding | Fondue, etc... |

The above is only a few of the gift giving occurrences, and gift baskets could well be the closest thing to the perfect gift for these events because they can be totally customized to suit the giver, the recipient, the occasion and the desired price. For some people, creating them is the perfect business: an opportunity to be artistic, creative and entrepreneurial.

It's clear that this business is the perfect small business and may be right for you, only you know if you are right for it!

Who Buys Gift Baskets

In the beginning, as this was my first venture into my own business, I thought the only qualifications of a potential buyer was that he or she breathed.

I soon learned that every type of business has a target market. Of course, they also breathe, however there is a little more that qualifies them.

As To Individuals

Overall, the average buyer is female and usually a white-collar professional. She'll fall into one of three categories:

Because of job and personal demands, she retains little time for a wide-ranging gift search and prefers working with a company that will create and deliver the gifts.

Also, she prefers shopping by phone or Internet, and no matter where she lives, gift baskets will fit this category.

Additionally, she recognizes the value of gift baskets personally.

Naturally, there will be others outside of this profile who will also become loyal customers, such as working professionals, who are ardent gift basket lovers. Men are coming on strong as regular buyers; and teenagers seeking baskets for Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and other holidays.

As To Professions

Independent professionals with their own practices make up a large group of individuals who buy gift baskets.

For example, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, attorneys, accountants, contractors, computer specialists, veterinarians, consultants, surveyors, therapists, insurance agents, landscapers, real estate agents, cleaning services, etc..

Further, these are people who provide the types of services that are required periodically by you and other friends and family. For instance, lots of doctors order healthy snack baskets to send to their colleagues who refer patients.

These are people who are in business for themselves and need gifts to thank others in their field for referrals, to give to their staff for special occasions and holidays, to introduce themselves to other businesses with which they want to have relationships, and to increase their sales on the whole through intermittent gift giving.

Also, independents love ordering gift baskets for other reasons. Gift baskets can help accomplish such goals as;

Showing appreciation

Congratulate births, weddings, etc.

Expressions of remorse

To welcome a new customer, or to the area, new home, new job, etc.

To mend past misunderstandings.

These, together with other reasons, make good talking points for you when approaching these prospects as to the benefits of gift baskets.

Draw attention to how your gift baskets will enhance their personal and professional lives. You will sell many gift baskets to this large segment of buyers if you fully inform them how gift baskets will bring joy and comfort in good and bad times.

When marketing to prospects within this group, include making presentations to their associations and to other groups with which they may belong.

As To Corporations

A corporation presents multiple sales opportunities:

Companywide orders from management,
Each department signify possible vendor and staff orders, and
Individuals embody personal orders.

By making contact with corporate personnel through mail, phone, e-mail, or approaching them at social and business functions increases your sales opportunities.

Corporations buy all types of gift baskets for births, new employees, relocation, and every occasion and holiday.

Articles published in sales and marketing trade journals highlighted the following industries as frequent corporate customers for your gifts;

Large Communications Companies that provide telephone services are buyers of gift baskets. These businesses are located in every state, and each is usually staffed with a human resources department, which are excellent prospects.

The Human Resources Department is where all employee interest is centered, including the giving of gifts for birthdays, new births, get well, and other sentiments.

These buyers favor most gift basket designers that can create something different for each employee, no matter how many times the same theme is brought into play.

Office-supply Companies. *Here* these corporations are retailers that you come across on major highways across the country.

This is where you purchase paper, pens, computer supplies, and general office products.

While we are buying small items, the sales executives of these supply firms are visiting large corporate offices in an attempt to secure corporate accounts. After meeting with a purchasing agent, many of these executives send gift baskets to their contact.

The office-supply business is very competitive, and giving gift baskets to budding clients is considered an essential factor to stay ahead of the competition.

Concierges. *While* this business, usually associated with lodging, is expanding from hotels and basing itself in the country's largest corporations.

This because it's tough for corporate employees to manage personal needs. Corporate concierges make employees' lives easier by finding and scheduling services, rentals, and reservations *and* by ordering gift baskets.

The big money is found not only by selling employee baskets but also in making sales to departments such as purchasing and human resources which handle out-of-town guests.

Additionally, corporations maintain impermanent lodging sites with dinner and snack gift baskets. A few years ago, one gift basket professional recounted in an article how one of her clients purchased Italian dinner baskets filled with pasta, sauce, breadsticks, olive oil, and biscotti for delivery to a housing unit where executives lived while visiting or relocating.

There are publications, such as "Corporate Choices," that list where these units are located in each state.

Other Good Promotion Places Includes:

Hotels. Dignitaries, Newlyweds, and convention visitors are a few reasons that places hotels at the top of the list. The best buyers are sales and marketing executives, along with the concierge.

Furthermore, **Real estate companies.**

Here welcome and thank you baskets are often purchased. Both small and large companies have equal needs, which sometimes means using less expensive containers.

Some Other Good Leads, Consist Of:

Contractors. Landscapes are changing every day, this due to national home-building boom.

Try getting in contact with owners and their assistants.

Another good source of basket sales is with **Interior Decorators,** as they usually order higher-priced gift baskets to show gratitude to customers and referrals.

As you can see the marketplace is filled with corporate sales opportunities, besides those listed above. For illustration there are, new car, car repair, and custom car service providers As well as, home-based

businesses in all industries; radio, television, and cable station executives; entertainment firms; Internet and software companies; beverage giants; and pharmaceutical companies.

Search the nature of firms are in your region? Discover if new companies recently opened for business? Be on the outlook for corporate changes through newspapers, television news, business journals, and Internet news.

You'll always find basket-selling opportunities where these companies would like to introduce themselves to a new client, or to say thank you for previous business, or reestablish a relationship.

Even unpleasant news offers potential sales. Corporations often use baskets as peace offerings to customers to make amends for errors or negative press coverage.

Of course you don't want to neglect other sources, such as, nonprofit organization, hospitals, colleges, universities.

In sort there are many wonderful starting places for you to examine and mine business, your patient persistence and attitude are the keys that will unlock these places for you.



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 **Gift Basket 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...](#)

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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