

5 Businesses You Can Launch from Home and Scale for Less Than \$100

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Do you feel left behind? Inflation is soaring, and pushing the prices of your grocery bill higher and higher? Would you benefit from another income stream?

Developing what's often referred to as a "side hustle" is all the rage these days. You see them all over, especially if you're active on social media. Stay at home parents, teenagers, college students, corporate executives and retirees alike all seem to be building side hustle muscle. You may even be in a position where you're ready to launch your own, but it's easy to be daunted: If you do a basic search online to figure out what the ins and outs of starting a home-based business are, you may conclude that it's overwhelming, complex, or worse... expensive.

But I can tell you that with Internet access, a laptop, email, \$100 and determination to control your own financial destiny, it's entirely possible – and I'm not talking about average "get rich quick" schemes.

Before we jump in, however, it's essential to be mindful that yes, success can happen if you have drive, knowledge, persistence and passion, but there are also no shortcuts. Statistically speaking, most who attempt to build businesses fail. In my experience though, such failures aren't due to lack of ability or inadequate modeling, but instead are reflective of an unwillingness to crawl before running. You might dream of raking in seven figures every year with your

home-based enterprise – and that’s great; you need to aim high – but the key to success is focusing on the long-game. Too many people, myself included (at least early on), overestimate what they can accomplish in a month and further underestimate what they can accomplish in a year, or even a decade. The focus should be on making a hundred dollars, then leveraging that into a thousand-dollar success, then a ten-thousand-dollar success. Put simply, break those audacious goals you have into smaller ones and celebrate each victory as you progress.

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Five home-based service businesses that you can start today.

1. Graphic design company

Consider this: just about every person owning and/or managing a company (large or small) and their associated business needs graphic design support. And before you dismiss the idea because you don’t have a degree in that field, hold on: You’d be amazed at just how easy many of the graphic design programs out there are to learn. PC/Apple desktop apps like InDesign and Affinity Publisher, while sophisticated, are easy to approach at first. Experiment, explore, watch some YouTube videos and just be inquisitive. You’ll be stunned at how quickly you can teach yourself.

2. Web development business

The marketplace for web development is nearly infinite in size. While the competition is fierce, you can make great money building websites for clients who have no idea what they’re doing or simply don’t have the time to build and manage their own. (And later in this article, we’ll discuss how to properly invest in yours.) With a little bit of training in a platform like WordPress, you can collect

handsome fees. I like WordPress both because it's a market leader and because it's easy to learn to use. And here's a little secret: If you pick the right template out of the thousands available, most of the heavy lifting could already be done for you. Obviously, you'll have to personalize and otherwise provide your own touch, but you'll be ahead of the curve nonetheless.

3. Social media management agency

If you're a regular in posting pictures of your life, family, food, friends and activities, you're qualified to start a social media management business. Tens of thousands of companies exist out there that need someone to manage their content and social media activities. That could be you!

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4. T-shirt design and printing

You might be thinking that this sounds complicated, even more so than the other ideas listed thus far, but it's actually one of the simpler businesses to start. Custom T-shirts have never been more popular, and the market is ripe. Many years ago, starting this kind of company required a ton of work, including managing design, manufacturing, inventory and shipping. All you need today, however, is to come up with amazing design ideas and then market your products, because there are websites like Bonfire and Spreadshirt that will guide you through the process step by step. You'll never have to deal with manufacturers, inventory or even shipping: your job becomes creation and marketing.

5. Content writing service

Have you written an email to a friend? How about one to a potential customer or colleague? If you have, you can become a

freelance writer. The opportunities here are plentiful as well. You can generate blog posts, articles, resumes, copy and scripts for YouTube videos... the list goes on. It's helpful, certainly, if you have a natural talent and passion for writing, but as long as you're willing to take small steps, there are few barriers to entry in this market. The keys to getting started are persistence, patience and consistency.

Next logical steps

Every one of these business models can be started for less than \$100, but every situation is also unique, so you may choose to invest more or less. Based upon considerable experience, I would say that, at a minimum, you need to establish a website and a social media presence. Don't get overwhelmed with the groundwork, though: Slow and steady will help you win the race here.

Setting up social media profiles isn't going to cost you anything. Depending on your target demographics and marketing preferences, you may find that one platform works better than others. And if you're comfortable with recording videos, you may want to try YouTube or TikTok to highlight your company. Now that you've set up a social media presence, you'll need to build and launch a website that highlights your services. Although it isn't absolutely necessary, having a site which shows off work and testimonials gives you immediate legitimacy in the eyes of potential clients. To get one started, you'll have to pick and register a domain name (approximately \$20). You'll then pay an annual fee to host your site and for any email accounts that go along with it.

The next step in the process is design, for which you can spend anywhere from \$40 to \$4,000-plus. My advice is to keep it simple at the start. Register a buyer account on sites like Fiverr or UpWork and search for freelancers that can help you.

Some people tend to get wrapped up in establishing an LLC

before launching their business. This isn't necessary upfront, and will add complexity and cost to startup efforts. Further, adding red tape to the process will stand between you and your first sale. Some may disagree on this topic, but running your business as a sole proprietor for the initial stages is commonplace, simple and free.

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Now, where to get those first clients? Simple: you need to pound the figurative pavement. Don't overthink it, but get your message in front of as many prospects as possible, and don't spend money on marketing until you've established a steady stream of income and are truly ready to grow. It has *never* been easier to market a business for free; you can begin by joining groups and creating and sharing content on Facebook that relate to your service to become part of that community, then do the same on LinkedIn and Instagram.

Establish yourself as someone who adds value to the conversation before asking for sales. So many people fail to gain traction on social media simply because they spam others with services. Instead, identify as someone who shares content with everyone in your communities first, not someone who is simply looking to cash in.

When you are feeling like you have your pitch down and are really ready to sell, first conduct research on potential clients. Gather their emails and social media accounts, then direct message on Instagram and LinkedIn. You can even go so far as to email or cold call, but expect rejection; it's simply part of running any business. Remember, marketing yours is a numbers game: Even if you are rejected 99 times in a row, if you hit on that 100th try, you were successful! You don't need everyone to see the value you bring, just a few initially, and that success will build upon itself.

I want to reiterate the importance of controlling initial costs. Once you're on sites like Fiverr and UpWork, you'll be tempted to hire folks to do all sorts of things like business

plans, marketing strategies and social media ad management, etc. Don't fall into this early-stage trap. Remember that you're running a *business*: If you're spending more than you're making, you have a hobby, not a company, and controlling expenses in the early stages is key. And don't worry about establishing an empire; concentrate instead on taking one small step at a time.

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