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*How Teenagers Can Start their own Businesses,
Become Successful in Life, and Have a Ball Doing It*

By Stacy Fox

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About the Author

Stacy Fox is a successful internet marketing entrepreneur and a former high school economics teacher.

After leaving the educational field, Stacy launched an executive recruiting firm, a marketing firm and an internet publishing firm.

Stacy knows the satisfaction entrepreneurship brings and wants to share it with as many people as possible, especially young people.

That is why Stacy prepared this step-by-step book, "Teenpreneur: How Teenagers Can Start their own Businesses, Become Successful in Life, and Have a Ball Doing It". She believes that this guide carries all the information needed for young people to start their own businesses.

Her web site, <http://www.TeenpreneurSpace.com/> has many resources for teenage entrepreneurs.

Section I: About Teenage Entrepreneurship

Teens Who've Done It

In this chapter, I want to introduce you to seven teens that have actually done it – they started their own profitable businesses on the Internet and in their communities.

Some of them are making CEO-type incomes while others are “merely” doing much better than minimum wage. All of them have an ownership interest in a real business that is making them a significant amount of money.

And, as you will see, they still have an active, normal teenage lifestyle.

Ashley Qualls

The first person I want to introduce you to is Ashley Qualls. When Ashley was 14, she borrowed \$8 from her mom to buy a domain name.

WhateverLife.com was the domain name. She put up free myspace.com layouts for teenage girls on this website.

At first, WhateverLife.com was a hobby. But, she quickly became aware of the opportunities to make money off the site.

Keep in mind that the site has always provided the content to teenage girls for free. So, how does she make money?

Advertising

Just like network television is free for the viewer, the content that Ashley provides is free for visitors to her site because it is supported by advertisements.

When she was getting several hundred thousand clicks a day, ValueClick approached her about placing ads on her site. At first Ashley was reluctant, but she quickly saw this as an opportunity.

WhateverLife.com attracts more than 7 million individuals and 60 million page views a month. That's a larger audience than the combined circulation of Seventeen, Teen Vogue, and CosmoGirl! magazines!

One survey had her getting more hits on a daily basis than CBS.com.

Fast Company Magazine had this to say about Ashley; "Ashley is evidence of the meritocracy on the Internet that allows even companies run by neophyte entrepreneurs to compete, regardless of funding, location, size, or experience - and she's a reminder that ingenuity is ageless.

She has taken in more than \$1 million."

In addition, she had an opportunity to sell the company for \$1.5 million and the car of her choice.

She declined.

WhateverLife.com is her creation and she wants to see it through.

That doesn't mean that there haven't been sacrifices though. The honors student with a 3.9 grade point average dropped out of high school after her sophomore year to focus on her business.

She did finish her diploma through a combination of computer-based courses and classes at her local community college. Also, she is planning to work on her college degree starting this fall.

The wealth has impacted her personal life. Her divorced parents' legal problems spilled over into her business and a Judge appointed a business conservator to handle her money. This led to her applying for legal emancipation.

She has been able to buy a home and travel to exotic places (often speaking to audiences of adults eager to replicate her success). She also employs several people, including her mother (at \$500 a week) and her brother's fiancé. She calls her best friend, "my right hand woman."

She was featured as one of Crain's "20 in their 20's" (which she technically wasn't old enough to qualify for).

She has also been profiled in Forbes Magazine, Entrepreneur Magazine, Fast Company Magazine, and Seventeen Magazine.

She's appeared on ABC's The View, Live on CNN, and ABC News.

Finally, she's been one of Yahoo's "People of the Web."

WhateverLife.com has been a success beyond Ashley's wildest imagination. She did not set out to run a multimillion dollar business, but Ashley's success shows us just what is possible in the "Age of the Internet".

Nori Evoy

Another teenage entrepreneur is Nori Evoy. Nori is the daughter of Ken Evoy, the founder of [Site Build it](#).

On vacation on the island of Anguilla (in the Caribbean) in 2002, 15 year old Nori asked her dad if she could use the software he had created to develop a website about Anguilla. The result was [Anguilla-Beaches.com](#).

Ken gave Nori his ten day "Action Guide" and the software, then let her run loose. She says he did give her nudges at times ("but that's more because he hovers --I could have done it all on my own.")

Nori created a meaty content site about her favorite vacation spot. Soon, she started getting traffic. At first, it was a few clicks a day. Then, hundreds of people were visiting her site.

She continued to build pages adding to the "bulk" of the site. Google began to pay attention and she was ranked higher than the Anguilla National Tourist Board in Google's search engine.

Ken had told Nori not to worry about money right away. That would come after she had generated traffic and it did.

Some of her revenue comes in the form of referral fees to hotels, real estate agents and car rental agencies. Other income comes in from Google's Adwords program.

The best part of Nori's business is that it accommodates her active teenage lifestyle. She put a lot of effort into getting the site up and running. But, when it was time for finals in her difficult college prep high school curriculum, she could "set it and forget it" for a few weeks to accommodate her studies.

Toward the end of her high school career, she estimated that she spent just an hour a week on the site and made thousands of dollars a month.

Nori's in college now. She jokes that she has enough revenue coming in that she could just move to Anguilla and forget the whole "college thing."

Ken frowns at this idea and reminds Nori that she's got "a good safety net."

Peter Foti

Not all teen entrepreneurs work on the Internet. Some of them build the computers that run the Internet. Peter Foti from North Syracuse, NY owns Power PC Online. Started in 2004, when Foti was a freshman in high school, Power PC Online is an on-site computer repair company. "On the side," he and business partner William Lim also build computers from scratch.

To get the business off the ground, Peter invested most of the initial profits back into the business – most of it going to advertising.

"I've always been interested in starting my own business because I love the idea of being my own boss," says Peter.

But, being in business for himself doesn't mean that Peter is not a traditional teenager.

A recent entry on Peter's blog reads: "My biggest time consumption activity at the moment is Track and Field. I am a shot put thrower for my high school; my season best is 50'01 which has earned me a #26 state ranking."

In a column for the website, Syracuse.com, Peter gives his advice to other teen entrepreneurs: "If I had to give one tip of advice to aspiring teen entrepreneurs, it would be to find a mentor, someone that has been there, done that, and is willing to help you do the same.

"For me, it was my grandfather, Peter Asterino. He spent the earlier part of his life working hard --a modern day go-getter of sorts --running businesses, delivering newspapers, always looking for another way to advance himself. He has taught me the importance of perseverance, hard work, and commitment, all of which are important factors for an aspiring business owner."

Peter's business - building computers - makes him a sizeable income, and it is a business that he can take to college with him.

Brian Hendricks

Brian Hendricks is another teen who used the computer building and repair model to start a business. His company is StartUpPC.com.

He was "fed up" with his "slow, boring, and unoriginal computer," and decided to build one that met his needs.

He now earns nearly \$2500 a month from his business.

Brian became an entrepreneur at age 12 when he started doing freelance web design for companies. "Sixth grade math homework only takes about ten minutes. After someone online gave me a small monetary reward for fixing their website, I began offering my services to other people," he says. Brian started his existing company, StartUpPC.com, after a bad personal experience with a big company's technical support.

"I was working on a website one night, on my name-brand PC and, all of a sudden, it crashed.

I lost everything.

Tech support didn't help me.

I researched how to build a PC. I built my own computer, then my parents', and then finally got a tip for building my friend's computer.

I find it funny how both my businesses spawned from getting unexpected money. Anyway, because the computers I built were very successful and I was good at fixing old ones, the idea for StartUpPC was born.

I wanted to provide the community with a friendly, reliable, cost-effective alternative to computer shops and expensive competing on-site support companies."

When he leaves for college this year, Brian wants to begin franchising StartUpPC in college towns across the country, using college student labor to provide excellent technical support locally.

His advice to other teen entrepreneurs? "Instead of setting huge goals and putting every last penny in your pocket to reach them, I believe in starting small and just not giving up," says Brian.

Nicole Knothe

Most high school athletes hope that their accomplishments will land them a scholarship at a Division I college.

Swimmer Nicole Knothe had high hopes of her own. But she wasn't going to settle for a few thousand dollars off her tuition money.

She wanted to start a business of her own by using her swimming talent.

She started a children's swim school during her summer vacations in high school. She helps kids from kindergarten to high school learn to swim and develop their swimming skills.

"The reason my business is different than other swim programs is because it's more personal," claims Nicole. "I grow to be more of a friend with the children and their families than just someone who teaches swim lessons."

The business was something she was able to take with her, even when she became a swimmer on the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh's swim team.

During her summer breaks, she went back to her hometown of Eden Prairie, MN and ran her swim school.

Dain McKeon

When Dain McKeon was still a pre-teen (12), he started a successful business that turned him into a finalist for the Junior Achievement's National Teen Entrepreneur Awards.

Now a 17 year old senior at Payton High School in Colorado Springs, CO, he knows that the savings from his lawn-care service is going to help him pay for the many years of schooling needed to become a physician.

His company, TYW (Teenage Yard Workers), started with borrowed equipment and a few friends' lawns. He re-invested his profits in new, upgraded equipment and started advertising.

He soon had a base of 15 regular jobs and was getting 10 calls a week from potential new clients.

When he couldn't handle the load himself, he hired friends to help him on a job-by-job basis.

He was able to keep his business humming year round by offering snow removal services in the winter.

Dain didn't let being an entrepreneur stand in the way of a "normal" teenage life either. He was a star in his senior year on his school's winning season baseball team.

Justin Avery Anderson

When Justin Anderson was 16, he went on a hiking trip that would change his life.

While hiking in the mountains of New Mexico, the Texas native had a breakfast food, similar to Granola[®], that was moist, at a bed and breakfast “It didn’t break my braces,” he says.

Justin asked the owners of the B&B if he could buy some of it to take with him. They said no – it was a special recipe served only at the inn.

So, when Justin got home, he started experimenting with making his own moist breakfast food. He went through many burned batches before he found the right mix.

From there, he took a sack of the mixture on a camping trip and asked his pals if they would buy it if he made more. Before morning, it was all gone, and Justin had his first customers.

At first, Justin only sold it to his classmates in individual sized bags. When a clerk at HEB’s Central Market – a Texas health food chain – asked why he wanted the special ingredients, he said he was making a special type of moist breakfast food which he hoped to market to the store.

The clerk put him in touch with HEB’s specialty food director, F.B. Godinez. Godinez liked the product and encouraged Justin to continue developing it.

“This 17-year-old kid approached me about his product and it just coupled with the fact that it is a growing category,” said Godinez. “And, with the great quality product he had and the story behind it, I couldn’t pass it up.

Central Market is all about great products but also about the stories and events behind the products.”

From there, the high school senior had to purchase business insurance and a barcode, and then get a nutritionist to come up with the fact box that contained the information about calories and fat content of the product.

He said his total start-up cost was \$10,000. Half of that was from what he made selling the moist breakfast food at school and the other half consisted of a loan from his grandmother and a business credit card.

The product was deemed successful by July of this year and was placed in all of the store's Texas locations, but Anderson's goal is for the product to eventually be the nation's best-selling moist breakfast food.

Justin is currently a freshman at Texas Christian University. He selected TCU because he was the winner of the school's Youth Entrepreneur Award. He is an entrepreneurial management major.

How to Do It

If you think entrepreneurship will provide you with more long term economic security than working for a big company, you're not alone.

More teens (41 percent) believe "owning your own business" provides greater job security than "working for a company" (32 percent), according to results from the 2003 JA Enterprise Poll on Teens and Entrepreneurship. The rest (27 percent) said they were "not sure," according to the survey recently administered by Junior Achievement to 1,101 teens between the ages of 13 and 18.

Nearly three quarters of the teens that responded to the survey indicated that they would like to start their own business someday.

Additionally, the poll indicates a greater percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders (89 percent) and African-American teens (86 percent) expressed a desire to start their own business one day than did Hispanic/Latino (79 percent) or white (69 percent) teens.

Overall, more boys (80 percent) expressed a desire to start a business than girls (71 percent).

As you saw in Chapter 1, many teens aren't waiting until after college to start their businesses.

So, what is essential to starting your own business?

The Difference between Babysitting and a Babysitting Business



Many teens are asked to provide services like babysitting or yard work for neighbors and extended family members.

So, what is the difference between occasionally babysitting your 7 year old niece and having a babysitting business?

It comes down to mindset. If you have a babysitting business, you are actively marketing it, not waiting for the odd phone call.

Marketing can be as simple as knocking on your neighbors' doors and letting them know you are available to baby-sit, or your marketing could include advertising.

You could also develop skills and equipment to "add value" for the people who use your service.

For instance, if you were to stock some small unusual toys or craft equipment to take with you to babysitting sessions, you would "add value" to the experience for the children.

You might also develop a network of sub-contractors to handle jobs you can't do yourself. You would have to screen other babysitters and then place them, if suitable, in those jobs.

You might charge the client \$8/hour and pay the babysitter \$6/hour. Your \$2/hour comes from developing the business.

Business Basics: Land, Labor, Capital (and Knowledge)

Basic economics tells us that there are three things that go into any business, **land**, **labor**, and **capital**.

Modern economists have added the fourth category of **knowledge**.

Most teen businesses do not require a substantial amount of land. The work is typically performed at the client's site (yard work, computer repair) or from your home (Internet marketing.)

Some teens do, however, rent facilities for their businesses, like Nicole Knothe had to rent time at a local swimming pool for her swimming business and Justin Avery Anderson was required by law to secure a commercial kitchen to prepare the moist breakfast food for his business.

Labor is the work you put into the enterprise. But, if you hire any subcontractors or employees, you should make a profit off their labor as well. As the employer or contractor, you have to spend time screening the employee, supervising him or her and handling the blowback if he or she does not perform.

You should be well compensated for the labor risks you take.

Capital is any investment you make in the business.

For Ashley Qualls, the capital investment was \$8 borrowed from her mom for a domain name and use of the family computer.

Justin Avery Anderson required \$10,000 in start up money to get his product into health food stores.

Knowledge is an important factor in today's economy. If you know something that someone else is willing to pay for, you have a business advantage.

For instance, if you have the knowledge to design a website, you can sell that service to business people who want to put their company on the web.

Ashley Qualls had superior graphic design knowledge.

Justin Avery Anderson had developed a "secret formula" that he alone knew.

If you can develop the right combination of Land + Labor + Capital + Knowledge, you are on your way to a winning business formula.

Business 101: Buying and Selling Goods and Services

We could get philosophical here and wonder what the nature of business is, but really all business is the buying and selling of goods and services.

In order to be successful in business, you have to have customers; people who will pay you for what you're selling.

That means you have to have something to sell. There are only two things you can sell: goods or services.

Goods can be something physical, such as a breakfast food, or it can be digital, like a layout for myspace.com. A service is an activity you perform for another person for money like babysitting, swim lessons, or tutoring.

Why Be a Teenage Entrepreneur?

There are as many reasons why a teen might choose to be an entrepreneur as there are teen entrepreneurs.

This chapter is going to explore several reasons.

Too Young for a “Real Job”

Some teens are too young for a “real job”, so they start their own businesses.

McDonalds requires that their workers be at least 16. Most stores in the mall have the same policy.

Teens who want to get a job before they're old enough to drive have a hard time of it. That's why many, like 12 year old Dain McKeon, choose to start their own business instead.

Babysitting and lawn care are the two most common entrepreneurial activities for the under-16 set.

Most, however, fail to develop them into real businesses. They remain content to trade time for money and allow business to come their way as it will.

But, some young people see the value in starting a real business – even if it is babysitting or mowing lawns.

They develop a business strategy and a marketing plan.

They invest in capital equipment and, they hire their friends when their business gets busy.

By the time these teens are old enough to get a “real” job, they don't need it!

Make Money

The primary motivation for the young business person (as it is for any capitalist) is to make money.

Teens who become entrepreneurs find that they can either make more money working for themselves or they can have freedom and flexibility that a traditional job doesn't allow.

Some find both.

Ashley Qualls has \$70,000 paydays every month. That's a lot more than she could make flipping burgers.

But, even a modest success story can net the teen entrepreneur \$12 to \$20 an hour which is well above the minimum wage typically paid to teens.

All of the teenagers featured in Chapter 1 of this book make a significant income. They make far more by running their own business than they would if they provided the same services for an adult business.

They've taken the risk and they reap the rewards.



A teenager working 30 hours a week at \$8 an hour (typical summer job) will make \$2880 in a 12 week period. That same teenager, having 10 lawn mowing jobs which each pay \$25 a week will make about the same --\$3000. However, he will only work 7.5 hours a week based on a 45 minute average. If he were to work that same 30 hour week, he'd make a whopping \$12,000. And, if he were to hire other workers at \$8 to do more lawns ... well, you get the picture.

If a teen is serious about making money, he or she should develop a strategic plan to do so.

While some stumble into the winning formula, planning for success is the best route to the most money.

Life's Too Hectic

Between AP classes, after school sports, and trumpet lessons, many of today's high schoolers find themselves too busy to commit to a weekly work schedule.

Entrepreneurship allows them to make money, develop leadership skills and build a business all around their own schedule.

Nori Evoy developed a successful web business around the Caribbean island her family frequented on vacations. She put a lot of effort into developing the 200 page site when her schedule allowed it.

But, when finals time came, she was able to put her project on the back-burner and still make money.

In fact, as she entered her very busy senior year, she estimated that she put less than an hour of work a week into the project and still was able to make over \$100,000 that year.

But, teens should realize that any business does require a time commitment.

And, when you're the boss, you can't "call in sick" when you want a "ditch day" or you'll let your customers down.

An entrepreneur should feel as much or more of a commitment to his or her customers than he or she would to a boss.

Fail Small

Imagine you're a 40 year old man with a wife and three kids, age 13, 10 and 6. Your wife works part time, but likes to be available in the afternoons so she can shuttle the kids to their various activities.

You've got a mortgage, two car payments, and are looking to send your kids to college someday.

You also hate your job.

You have a dream. You want to start a magazine.

So, you take half of the money out of your retirement account and take the plunge.

Four family members are depending on you to provide food and shelter for them. A lot is at stake.

Now, imagine you're Ashley Qualls. Your major expenses include dinner at Chili's with your friends and designer jeans that your mom makes you pay for out of your own allowance.

You borrow \$8 from your mom to buy a domain name.

What's the worst thing that could happen if you fail? You forfeit half of next month's allowance and skip the Chili's dinner.

The very best time to start a business is when you're still a kid and your parents are footing most of your bills.

Most teen businesses don't take a lot of capital to start up. Many teens can fund their businesses from gift money.

Others start providing services on an ad hoc basis and develop a business from the capital they build as they go.

It may sting a little to fail as a teen business person, but it's not the worst thing that could happen to a kid.

The best thing about starting a business as a teen is that, if you fail, you fail small.

But, if you succeed – the world is at your door.

College Bonus Points

Competitive colleges look for students who are successful in many endeavors. Grades and SAT scores tell part of the story.

But, activities and leadership sparkle in an application too.

Last year, more than half of the applicants to UCLA had grade point averages above 4.0 because many high schools award "bonus points" to students taking honors and AP classes.

Some students have the opportunity to take a dozen or more AP classes while smaller schools may only offer 3 or 4.

Because "4.0" and "straight A" are no longer synonymous, it becomes more difficult for colleges to determine exactly what grades mean.

That's not to say grades aren't important. They are. But they're not enough.

Teens are going to extremes like volunteering for a week in Nepal to get a college's attention.

And, if your grades aren't the best, having a successful business may give you an edge to make the cut. It's much more impressive to say that you ran a business than it is to say you worked at J.Crew.

So, why would colleges care if you've run a business?

It shows that you have the creativity, leadership skills and vision to be successful in many facets of your life.

You've balanced school and work before. You've had some "real world" experiences that will allow you to add to the classroom environment.

Also, having a successful business makes you interesting. More and more colleges are adding Entrepreneurship programs and colleges hope that students with entrepreneurial experience will enhance all students' experience.

There's also the cool factor. Kids who run businesses are interesting. They add vibrancy to the campus.

Finally, a successful business shows that the teen did something.

Unfortunately, all too many "volunteer projects" (especially the more exotic and expensive ones) accomplish little. A teen spends \$5000-\$7000 to go to Nepal and basically watch other people dig a well. You could take that \$5000 and make \$50,000 by running a successful business.

Have a Business to Take With You

Maybe the best reason to start a business in high school is that it doesn't necessarily end when you graduate. You've built something that will bring you income throughout college and beyond.

When adults in middle age start a business, many hope to pass it on to their children.

Teens aren't thinking succession plans yet. At 17, you've got your whole life ahead of you. This business can be part of it.

Ashley Qualls turned down a \$1.5 million offer for her business. It's something she wants to develop. WhateverLife.com is her baby. She hopes to make money from it for years to come.

It's popular for anti-capitalists to comment that spending a lot of time on a business is foolish because "you can't take it with you." Fortunately for teens, they can take it with them – at least into their adult life.

Funding a Teen Business

As I pointed out in the last chapter, funding a business is much less challenging for a teen than an adult. This chapter will look at sources of funding for teen businesses.

Gifts, Allowance, and Savings

Michael Romero routinely received gifts of \$50-\$100 from relatives on his birthday and at Christmas. His mom, Janelle Romero, required him to put half of that into a savings account.

“He doesn’t have any real expenses,” Janelle says. “We pay for school, his clothes and most of his video games. So, his father and I decided that the best thing for Michael and his brother to do with the money is save it. We hoped to teach them a little bit about financial management in the process.”

When Michael decided that he wanted to start a lawn care service, it became apparent that he would need some equipment.

“We decided that letting him invest some of his savings in his yard work enterprise would be a good lesson for Michael”, Janelle says.

Most teens have access to a not-unsubstantial amount of money that they have received as a result of gifts, allowance and other savings.

Considering that it only costs \$8 to buy a domain or \$40 to buy craft supplies for a babysitting business, the startup costs for many teens can come out of gifts, allowance and savings.

Building Capital as You Go

Some teens’ businesses develop out of an existing service-for-money experience.

For instance, Katryn Smith, a 15 year old, started babysitting when she was 12. When she went to high school, she realized that she wouldn’t be able to buy a car when she was 16 if she didn’t develop a more strategic approach.

Katryn spent \$12 on flyers that she put on all of her neighbors' doors announcing her availability and paid \$35 for a babysitting certification course at the YMCA.

Where did she get the money to take her babysitting to the next level? From her existing babysitting contracts, of course.

Ashley Qualls has invested far more than the original \$8 in her business. But, she didn't have to do it all up front. As her web site began generating income, she was able to reinvest in her business.

As many teens "stumble" into their business by first providing one-off services for neighbors and friends, they find that building capital as you go works well.

Once you see that you can get customers, reinvesting any profits in the business will look more of a good idea.

Loans from Relatives

No bank in this country can afford to process micro-loans for teenage businesses.

Teens that need more than a few hundred dollars to start their business will need to look to relatives to assist them.

Justin Avery Anderson had built over \$5000 in capital reserves from selling his breakfast food to schoolmates. But, he needed another \$5000 to get his product into a health food chain. The money came from a loan from his grandmother.

Nori Evoy didn't purchase the software to start Anguilla-Beaches.com. Her father provided the \$295 program for her. But, that small investment meant that he wouldn't have to pay her college tuition bills.

If a parent or relative feels that a teen has a solid idea for a business which has been developed through a business plan and a marketing plan, an investment may be in order.

But, parents should consider how they are going to invest:

- Is this essentially a gift?
- Is it an investment that needs to be repaid at a competitive interest rate?
- Is it a silent or not-silent partnership in the business?

It's a good idea to have a contract that spells all of these things out ahead of time. Parents who require a contract are treating their teens like the business people they are.

Conclusion

There are two lessons to be gained in this chapter. The first is that it doesn't necessarily have to be expensive to start a teen business. Most successful teen entrepreneurs start out with relatively little money.

The second lesson is that there are ways to finance almost any teen business.

Marketing a Teen-Owned Business

When you're just starting out, proper marketing is essential to launch your business. You need to market.

But, you also need to market smart.

Define the Audience

Who is your target market?

For Ashley Qualls, her market was teenage girls who were much like her.

Nicole Knothe was targeting the parents of school-age children. While her work would deal mostly with the children, it was their parents that she needed to reach.

When you define your market, you will need to figure out how to reach them.

Ashley Qualls' and Nori Evoy's businesses were Internet based and they figured out how to draw Internet traffic from around the world.

Nicole Knothe and Brian Hendricks are marketing to adults in their local communities and need a targeted, local marketing campaign.

The Internet



Many teens who read this book will consider starting an internet-based business. Indeed, there are thousands of teens doing the same thing – and being very successful at it.

If you have a business where your audience will find you only on the Internet, you need to figure out how to generate traffic to your site or sites.

[The Traffic Manifesto](#) is a good book on how to do this. Other teens need a web site because their audience expects it. For instance, if you're offering web design services to local businesses, you'll want to have an excellent site that serves as a kind of portfolio for you.

But, does a local babysitting business really need a website? Probably not.

The problem is that it is very difficult to run a successful website for an offline business because it is hard to get targeted traffic to your site. If you learn how to do this, you're probably better off running an Internet business rather than a babysitting business.

If you do decide to build a small website for your local offline business, you should plan to promote it through the other means listed in this chapter. Customers are probably not going to find you through a search on Google. They might, however, visit your website after seeing a flyer you've given them.

Flyers

If you've got an offline business, flyers are a great way to reach your target audience.

Some teens are able to get their parents to make 100 copies of a flyer at work.

Others print out 100 copies on their printer.

If you're going to need more than 100 flyers, Kinkos and Staples both offer inexpensive photocopying services.

What should you have on your flyer?

First and foremost, you want a strong headline. The headline should leave the reader saying, "Yes, that's me." It can be as simple as "Do You Need Quality Babysitting Services?" If the reader has a five year old, she's going to be nodding her head and will read on.

Underneath the headline, you should have a catchy graphic. You can find clip art at <http://www.clipart.com/>.

You should also have either a paragraph describing your services or an attractive bullet list of the services you provide.

Finally, you need a "call to action." This is where you tell the reader what you want them to do: "Call me at (212) 555-1212 right now to secure your space in my babysitting roster before they're all gone."

Make the contact information (i.e. phone number) big and bold.

Think strategically about how you want to deliver the flyers.

For instance, advertising a lawn care service to apartment dwellers is probably a waste of paper.

But, don't worry whether all of the houses you deliver to will want your services. Not every home where you deliver a babysitting flyer will have children.

That's just a cost of doing business.

There are also places where you can post flyers. Many grocery stores and public libraries have community bulletin boards. Keep your eyes out for opportunities for a single flyer to be seen by multiple people. On flyers you post, you should cut ten little vertical lines in the bottom of the flyer with tear off contact information. Don't assume that people looking at your ad will have a pen handy to write down your phone number. Make it easy for them to tear off a strip with your contact information and take it home.

Canvassing

Going door to door and introducing yourself to your neighbors can be a great way to offer your services.

This way, you're not hiding behind a piece of paper. You're a real person that they can assess.

Of course, canvassing is one of the hardest things a business person will ever do. Many experienced salesmen will not canvass. If you learn to canvass, you'll never be hungry in your life.

What you do is go up to a door and knock. When you get an adult, you say, "My name is John Doe. I live on Main Street. I'm starting a lawn care and pool service. Do you currently have anyone who handles these things for you?"



If the woman says “yes” you have a couple of choices. You can hand her a flyer and business card and say “I hope you’ll consider me if anything changes.”

Alternatively, you can ask her what you can do to earn her business.

Play to your strengths. If you can undercut her current gardener on price, you may get the job.

If the woman says that she doesn’t have someone to do these chores, you can point out that you are offering an affordable service that would free up her busy schedule.

Offer to give her a two hour free service on a trial basis.

Sometimes, you will make a deal then and there. But most of the time, the party will have to consider the proposition.

Make sure you have informational flyers to leave behind so that she has a way to contact you.

You should also make a note of your own to follow up with that person so that you can turn her into a client.

Canvassing works for businesses too. You can either go into the business itself or you can telephone. Expect to have a larger proportion of “no’s” from businesses than from individuals.

The Parent's Role

Are you ready for your baby to be an entrepreneur? It's a big jump for many parents. As your child grows into an adult, he or she will require greater independence.

When teens begin to make decisions affecting employees, contractors and clients, they definitely become more independent.

The really successful teen entrepreneur may turn the usual parent-child roles on their head. Ashley Qualls, for instance, is her mother's employer.

What role does a parent play in a minor's business? Parents need to ask themselves if they are ready to allow their child to take on the responsibility that running a business requires.

If a teenager misses too many days at their job at McDonalds, they may lose the job, but there's always an opening at Burger King or Wendy's. If they have their own business and miss a single day's work, they could be out whatever investment they (or you) put into the business.

Further, your teen may look to you to provide contacts with potential customers and clients. If they don't do a good job, will this reflect badly on you? Will your relationships with your neighbors be the same if their business arrangement with your child doesn't work out?

You can help your teen start his or her business in a number of ways.

First, you can write a business plan with them. You can assist them with research to see if their idea is feasible.

The rest of this chapter explores the role of parent as both silent partner and vocal partner.

Silent Partner

Since minors aren't permitted to sign contracts, they may need you to "front" for them with anything legal. EBay, for instance, requires that the seller be over 18.

Are you willing to open an account that your teen can run?

Almost all teens that run any kind of significant business will need their parents to authorize transactions at times. Sometimes, this simply means approving something for legal reasons. At other times, parents put themselves on the line.

Anshul Samar is the 14 year old CEO of Alchemist Empire, Inc. which makes the card game Elemento. "Legally, I'm the CEO," Anshul says from Alchemist's Cupertino world headquarters, which also serves as his family's living room, "but, if I sign anything, mom or dad has to countersign."

Being a silent partner means putting a lot of faith in your child. You need to ask yourself what the limits to the agreement are and will you have some input to the making of the decisions?

In that case, you're not such a silent partner.

Vocal Partner

If you help to finance the business, you may have something financial at stake at its success. Then, while your son or daughter may be doing the work and making many of the day to day decisions, you will retain a voice in developing the strategic vision for the company because your money is at stake.

In this sense, you are a shareholder. Your child needs to understand what the role of a shareholder is. You're not just "telling him what to do," you're protecting your investment.

Hannah Blake wanted to get a car when she was 16 but her dad, Jim, didn't want to "just give it to her." He wanted her to work for the money. Jim thought that she would go and get a job at a clothing or record store in the mall.

Hannah surprised him. She lined up agreements to help several elderly people on her block by checking in on them every day and running errands for them.

This netted her more money than a minimum wage would have.

Jim was happy to buy the car but, since the purchase was part of a larger business plan, he wanted some say in it.

For instance, Hannah had her heart set on a Mazda Miata. But, Jim pointed out that the two-seater wouldn't hold the groceries and other supplies her clients would need.

He ended up buying her a late model SUV. "I thought the SUV was a safer car for a new driver, but the fact that she wanted to transport stuff for old ladies helped me drive the point home," Jim says.

If your child is about to start a business, you will have the knowledge that can be gained only through years of experience combined with having the best interests of your child at heart. You and your child need to work out together what the parameters of the parent-child business relationship are ahead of time to avoid conflict as the business becomes more successful.

Part II: Business Models

Start a Web Based Business

Today's teens literally haven't known a world without the Internet. Because they're the first totally "connected" generation, they're naturals for starting an Internet business.

This chapter explores what you need to do to get an Internet business up and running.

The first thing that needs to be discussed is the skills that must be mastered in any internet business. They are:

- ✓ · Technical Skills
- ✓ · Content Generation
- ✓ · Traffic
- ✓ · Monetization



Technical Skills

To build a web site, you must use software which translates your information into code the Internet can decipher. There are software programs which do this, but to do it well requires at least a minimal monetary investment and some time to learn the web page editing program that you use.

If you already know HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language), you can use a program like Notepad which comes with every computer which uses Microsoft Windows®. If you need powerful software, you might consider Adobe Dreamweaver®, which requires a significant learning curve but has almost limitless abilities, or [XSitePro](#) which is slightly more limited but infinitely easier to use.

If you are going to be making only one type of site, you can use less expensive software that is easier to use (and also easier on the wallet), such as [SBI](#) and [HyperVRE](#), which are discussed further on in this chapter.

Content Generation

People won't come to a website unless they have a pretty good reason to.

The reason they come to your site is usually the content you have on it.

Content is usually text, but can also include photos, videos and audio files.

For Nori Evoy, her content was useful information for travelers wanting to visit a small island in the Caribbean. Anguilla-Beaches.com grew to hundreds of pages covering hotels, restaurants, car rental agencies, and yes, even the beaches themselves. Because she offers such a depth of information, she has come to be seen by the search engines and human visitors to the site as the "authority" for Anguilla tourism.

Ashley Qualls' content is downloadable graphic designs for girls to use on their myspace.com websites. She makes the templates and allows users to download them free. Ashley makes her money off advertisements.

Whatever you decide to put up on your Internet web site, you need to have quality content. Most people suggest that you update your content on a regular basis to give people a reason to come back.

Traffic

Traffic is the term used by netpreneurs for the people that visit your site.

Without a steady stream of traffic, there is no web business.

There are many ways to get traffic. Perhaps the easiest way is to buy it using Google Adwords. These are ads that get placed on Google's search results.

For many terms, it costs \$.25 to \$.75 every time someone clicks on the term.

But, watch out! More competitive terms can cost \$20 a click or more (though these aren't usually terms teen entrepreneurs bid on).

[How to Succeed with Google Adwords](#) is a guide to getting started with Adwords.

Another way to get traffic is to rank high on the search engines, especially Google. This is called "Search Engine Optimization" or "SEO".

When someone types in “cheerleading fundraising” and your site about fundraising for cheerleaders comes up in the top 10 results of Google (which is their first page), you’re certain to get traffic.

You will get lots of traffic if you have chosen a keyword for your site which has a high search volume.

Ranking high on the search engines involves a combination of on-page activities, like having your keyword mentioned several times, and off-page activities, like having back links to your site.

SEO is complicated and you should read a good guide to get started. I recommend [SEO Mindset](#).

One final method that I’m going to mention (though it certainly is not the final way to get traffic) is to write articles for article directories. At the end of each article, you can place a biography or “resource box.” In this, you can link back to your site.

If you write enough articles, you’ll start generating a good amount of traffic to your site. For one of my websites, I have 35 articles written and I get 40 to 50 visitors per day generated from people that read the article.

The [Bum Marketing Course](#) explains article marketing in detail.

Monetization

Finally, there is monetization. This is where you make money.

It’s important to know that this is the last step. You have to master the first steps before you’re able to make money.

Nori Evoy’s dad, who has himself helped thousands of people start an Internet business through his [Site Build It](#) software, told her not to focus on money initially.

Once she mastered the technical skills, developed the content and started to get the traffic, the money would come.

She now makes money from a variety of sources.

- \$ She has referral fees paid by Anguilla businesses when visitors to Nori's site rent or buy from them.
- \$ She has AdSense income.
- \$ And, she sells a video she made about the island and a line of Anguilla-based key chains that she crafts.

There are an infinite number of models to make money on the Internet. We'll look at a few of them.

One of the most popular is revenue from Google's AdSense and other Pay-Per-Click advertising systems. If your site is about model car racing, Google will place ads on your site for model car parts, racing conventions, etc. They will give you a portion of the price they charge the advertiser.

Ashley Qualls makes the bulk of her money off advertiser sales.

An excellent software program for making AdSense sites is [HyperVRE](#).

HyperVRE is free software that allows you to make AdSense sites quickly.

There is an upgrade option, and I have it. But, the free model is also very useful.

Mark Nowell bought HyperVRE when his 12 year old son needed to raise money for a band trip to New York City. Nowell's son spent 2 hours a day using the software instead of playing video games.

By the age of 13, he was making \$100,000 a year by building one site a day – 2 hours work!

Next, there is affiliate marketing. If you contact the model car parts companies directly, they may have an affiliate program where they will give you a percentage of any sales that you refer to them. You can contact companies individually or you can go to affiliate networks like [Shareasale.com](#) and [Commission Junction](#) and sign up for individual company's affiliate programs through the one source.

Rosalind Gardner's excellent ebook, "[The Affiliate Marketer's Handbook](#)" is probably the top resource for people wanting to get started in affiliate marketing.

Another model is the previously mentioned one which Nori Evoy used. She became a referral partner with companies on the island she wrote about.

Nori used the [Site Build It](#) program which combines software, a detailed 10-day instruction course and website hosting in one \$295 package.

Do you have a blog? Imagine the possibilities if you could make money off it.

Many people are making a full-time living by blogging about things others want to read about. [Blogging to the Bank](#) describes in depth how to turn a blog into a money-making website for you.

Please do not think that I have covered every single way to make money on the Internet in this chapter.

I haven't discussed writing ebooks (like this one), setting up an online storefront, or selling tee shirts on Café Press, to name three of the thousands of other ways to get started.

You should look around the Internet and see what strikes your fancy before you settle on any one method.

EBay

I recently read that the average family has “junk” sitting around the house that they don’t use which could be sold on eBay for more than \$1100.

If you want to start an [eBay](#) business, one of the best ways to begin is to clear out the useless things in your own house. This will give you a chance to get familiar with the system with very little risk.

To get started on eBay, you might want to read “[The EBay Fortune Course](#)” by Tom Barnes.

But, once you’ve gotten rid of all of the household junk, you will need a steady source of items to sell on eBay.

There are basically two approaches to selling on eBay.

One is to find other people’s junk and turn it into eBay treasure. You can do this by visiting garage sales, storage unit auctions and swap meets.

The other is to arrange for drop-shipping by suppliers. This means that you make the sale and take the order. Then you send the shipping information directly to the manufacturer who ships it to the customer. This is the method employed by most EBay Powersellers.

[Salehoo](#) offers a list of more than 5000 drop shippers.

Another alternative to selling things yourself on EBay is to set up a BANS (Build A Niche Store) website promoting other people’s eBay sales and taking a piece of eBay’s commission. The [BANS software](#) is easy to use and you can set up multiple sites with just one purchase of the software.

You will need your parent’s cooperation if you’re going to start an EBay store.

EBay requires that all sellers be over 18. That means that your mom or dad will have to open the account and give you authorization to make transactions on it.

You should think about using your position as a teen to your advantage. For instance, you are far more in touch with the trends which teens are following than a 40 year old dad from Iowa is.

Take advantage of your “with-it-ness” to get ahead of the top trends for teens.

If you have a hobby, even if it isn’t one that focuses on teens, you can make a good living specializing in this.

For instance, if you build custom radio control race cars, selling the component parts for these toys can bring you a good income. Because you know the actual value of the part, you can buy low and sell high.

EBay is the fastest growing business in human history. You can be part of it.

Build Websites for Small Businesses

You don't have to be into "Internet marketing" to make a teen business building websites. There are plenty of small businesses who could use your services.

This is how Brian Hendricks got started. First, he built a website for his dad's friend. Then he went on to build other sites by referral.

The business snowballed and he eventually developed a second, larger business building computers from scratch.

In order to build a good business website, you need to understand what goes into making a successful website.

First, you need to develop a visually pleasing template and related graphics.

Then, you need to write the copy (text) that appears on the website. After you've done this and put the website live on the Internet, you must submit it to directories and generate back links so that it will appear in the search engine listings.

[Site Build It](#) is a complete package that walks you through all of these steps. It includes your unique domain name, web hosting for a year and the software to put the site together. You can pass the \$295 fee on to the customer.

Some clients will simply want a 5-10 page brochure site. You'll develop most of the copy from information they give you. A 5 page website should go for around \$750-\$1000, including the SBI package and a 10 page website will go for \$1000-\$1250.

Some businesses will want a more complex site with video, tutorials, detailed information and other interactive features.

In this case, you might figure \$500 for site concept, \$295 for software, and \$100 per website page.

How do you go about getting clients? Well, you should ask the small business people that you know if they need a site. If you can get 2-3 sites under your belt, you can go out and ask strangers for their business.

Go to the [Yahoo Local Directory](#) and look up your city. Pick a category like auto repair, attorneys or restaurants. Then, go through the directory and take note of each business's contact details. If they have a website, it's listed right under the phone number for the business.

If they don't have a website, you have an opportunity to create one for them. You can either telephone the manager or write a short note. Say that you see that they have a listing in the Yahoo Local Directory but do not have a website.

Tell them about the websites you have already created and that you can create a similar one for them for a low cost.

Of course, not everyone will take you up on the offer. But, it's a numbers game. The more phone calls you make or letters you send out, the more business you'll get.

You can also follow up by scheduling an office visit to make your pitch. Business people will be impressed that a young person is committed to starting their own business and they will also appreciate that you can provide the service for an affordable price.

Building and Repairing Computers

If you're able to build a computer for yourself, you can build them for others. Other teens would like to have a custom-built computer with maximum game playing potential, while businesses appreciate custom solutions that fit their needs.

Peter Foti, from Syracuse, NY, started a computer repair and custom building business in his hometown.

One thing that made him successful is that he didn't take the initial profits out and spend them. He reinvested most of the money he made initially which made him much more money in the long run.

In an Entrepreneur Magazine article about starting and running a computer repair business, Erika Welz Prafder suggests the following:

- \$ Know the hourly and street value of your services. There was a time when computer repair businessmen made their money off of parts. Now, they trade time for money – good money.
- \$ If you're looking to stay a one-man or one-woman business, residential customers are a better bet than small businesses.
- \$ Market your business every day.
- \$ Keep your skills current.
- \$ When you need assistance, get it, don't wing it.

[Turn Your Computer Skills into Cash](#) is the definitive guide for getting started in this market.

But you don't have to just rely on businesses. Have you ever thought of starting a business repairing Xboxes, PSPs or iPods?

Your friends will love you if you can offer them a low cost solution to their tech troubles.

If you don't know how to repair these machines already, here are three guides:

1. [iPod Repair Guide](#)
2. [PSP Repair Guide](#)
3. [Xbox 360 Repair Guide](#)

Elder Errand Service

Many elderly people live alone. They do not need a fulltime carer, but there are things they can no longer do for themselves.



Some of these things may need to be done on a daily basis like walking a dog. Other things may be weekly, monthly or even annually in nature.

For instance, an elderly person may be able to do most of her own cleaning, but need someone to clear out cobwebs in the high corners of the house.

Adult children of the elderly may be willing to pay for your services. They'd like to know that someone is checking in on their parents on a regular basis.

If you are going to start an Elder Errand Service, be aware that much of your usefulness will come in the form of being someone to talk to. If you're just looking to mow lawns or pick up groceries, you probably won't be happy doing this sort of business. You may be the only person your client sees on any given day, and she may just want to talk.

While you can approach elderly people directly about providing services, you will probably be more effective contacting their relatives. You may have to be creative about how you do this. For instance, local relatives are less likely to need you as they can drop in themselves. You might want to approach relatives that visit during holidays and vacations or other times when they're in town.

Explain how you can help and see if they're interested in retaining your services.

Another time to approach relatives is when an elderly person has been hospitalized. The relatives may feel helpless to assist their parent if they live out of town. Your timely offer of service may be just what they need to put their minds at ease.

You can charge either an hourly or a flat fee. The advantage of an hourly fee is that you get paid for everything you do. The advantage of a flat rate is that you can charge more and get it.

For instance, if you are going to do one hour of work every day after school, you probably can't charge more than \$10 an hour. But, if you list the services you will perform and ask for a weekly rate, you may be able to get \$75 or \$100 for those same 5 hours.

If you are running a business like this with no employees or contractors, you won't want to take on more than three clients.

Retirement Center Activities Leader

While large retirement centers often have activity leaders on staff, the smaller facilities do not have the budget for a full-time employee to do this function.

You could step in and tell them you will lead activities one afternoon a week for a fee. Line up four different centers and you've got a part time business.

The good thing about lining up multiple centers is that you can do one activity plan for all four centers. That way, you can use the supplies, games, music, etc. multiple times during the week.

When you make your proposal, make sure you budget the money for supplies and your planning time. You don't want to charge \$15 for a two hour session as this will not cover your costs and you will soon become frustrated with the service.

Factor in the time it takes you to prepare each activity as well as the time you spend maintaining the business relationships. If you spend 2 hours at each facility, 3 hours in preparation and 1 hour maintaining relationships and you want to make \$10 per hour, you need to make \$120 per week.

Now, if you are going to average a cost of \$30 per week in supplies, prizes, snacks, etc., you have a total monthly budget of \$600. Divide \$600 by 4 centers and each center should be paying you \$150 a month. That's quite a reasonable sum for an afternoon of activities.

Some activities you can do in your weekly 2 hour block include:

- ✓ · Bingo
- ✓ · Bridge Tournament
- ✓ · Book or short story discussions
- ✓ · Sing a long
- ✓ · Holiday craft party
- ✓ · Monthly birthday party for all birthdays that month
- ✓ · Bring in a friendly dog and have it interact with the seniors

- ✓ · Have an "auction" with play money and mystery prizes
- ✓ · Name that tune with songs from their youth
- ✓ · Pop culture trivia geared toward the appropriate time period
- ✓ · Flower arranging class

Child Care

How do you turn an evening of babysitting into a business? You add value. Part of this is aggressively marketing your services to the community. You make yourself stand out. Parents are always scrambling for a babysitter. You want to be the top of their chart.

But, you can do more than that. Remember the old book series, "The Babysitter's Club"? You can put together a top-notch recruiting program and charge a premium for your services.

If you charge \$9 an hour and give your contractors \$7, you get \$2 for the brokering service.

One way to demonstrate that you're serious about running this as a business rather than as an occasional gig is to come up with a creative name for your babysitting business. Then, use the name on all of your marketing materials. Another way to demonstrate that you're serious is to take CPR and childcare classes.

Let parents know that you are reliable in an emergency situation.

Another approach to take to child care is providing a step-up service. Find two families with similar age children and propose a summer "mini day camp." You baby-sit the kids all day with structured activities and even lunch and snacks.

Make sure this is legal in your jurisdiction before you start a business like this one.

You should be able to get \$100 per child per week for this. If you get 4 children, this could be a good summer income.

The final approach to child care that I'm going to talk about here is becoming a child's party entertainer.

Children's parties are now big business. Every parent wants to give their child a better birthday party than the last one they went to. As a result,

parents are bringing in animals, renting bounce houses and hiring children's entertainers.

To get started in the party entertaining business, you need to create one or more characters. This includes having a convincing costume (including wigs and make up if necessary) and developing a shtick (comedy routine).

Understand that parents want something different. You might think about being a clown.

But, clowns are passé. You want to jump on a current trend.

Princess parties are popular and all of the Disney princesses would be welcome at any little girl's sixth birthday party. In order to pull off a princess, you've got to know her story yourself. You've got to develop a "routine" that is appropriate for little audiences and be able to interact with the children as well.

Kendra LaBouf wanted to do something special for her daughter Hannah's third birthday. She hired a friend to dress up as Cinderella for Hannah's party.

People raved about this party for months, and other moms hired the friend to perform at their child's party as well. This word-of-mouth marketing is great for business!

Superheroes are also popular any time. Pick a superhero that is currently playing in the movies.

But, you can create characters that don't originate on the big screen. This way, your character does not go out of style when the next crop of movies comes out.

You'll want to have a set routine as well as the ability to interact with the children more casually. Your routine could include:

- ✓ a puppet show
- ✓ reading a book
- ✓ singing songs

- ✓ leading dances
- ✓ a craft that you do (balloon animals)
- ✓ a craft that that the children do (finger painting).

You can play games with the children.

You can interact with the children for a short period of time and leave or stay and run the whole party.

Your involvement in the party should be spelled out in a contract ahead of time so everyone knows what to expect.

Parents want what is best for their children and they are willing to pay for it.

Whether you are babysitting the children for an evening, running a day camp for a summer or providing costumed entertainment for a party, you are delivering value to today's busy parents.

Tutoring

As a sharp high school student, you can effectively tutor students in grades K-8. Many times, the parents of these children are simply too busy to help their kids with their homework and will pay you for your guidance. Other times, the children are having trouble with specific areas and you will be expected to develop lessons for them.



High School tutors can make up to \$20 an hour for tutoring.

Or, if you're good at marketing, you can set up a tutoring business. Charge that same \$20 and pass on \$12 to your teenage contractors.

They'll think they're getting a good job, and you will build a business.

Remember, though that you're responsible for the good things – and the bad things – that your contractors do. So, pick people wisely.

But, tutoring doesn't just have to be about homework and test help. If you play an instrument, can coach an athletic skill or teach computer literacy, you have services to sell.

That's what Nicole Knothe did when she started her swimming class. She took a skill she had (she was a ranked high school swimmer) and turned it into a teaching business.

If you're good enough to be recognized as a "class" participant in any activity and you have the patience to work with kids, you've got a built-in business.

And, not all clients have to be children. You may have skills adults want to learn as well. Teaching an elderly person how to surf the Internet and send her grandchildren email is a worthwhile service to the community and is well worth the money she pays you.

Many tutoring activities can be done at the student's home or at yours. But, sometimes you'll have to pay for a facility. If you're giving tennis lessons and don't have a court of your own, you'll need to find a dedicated space to give lessons.

It won't do to schedule a time with a client at the park only to show up and find all of the courts taken.

As a general rule, schools rent out their facilities when they are not booked for school related activities.

Parks are another option, as many will rent specific facilities for a small fee.

Churches are another option, particularly if you have a home church.

You will also want to consider what equipment you will need. If you're giving golf lessons and you're an avid golfer, you may have all the equipment already.

But, if you're giving piano lessons in children's homes, the children must have a piano for it to work. If they don't (some parents start their kids on a keyboard to see if the hobby "takes"), you'll have to do it somewhere that has a piano.

If you're interested in tutoring, make a list of all of the things you're good at.

Think outside the box. You may be able to teach your passion to someone else.

[Confessions of a High Paid Tutor](#) is a detailed guide to starting and running a tutoring business.

Event Planning

Many teens find school-sponsored events too restrictive to be fun anymore.

You can step into the gap and plan events that are truly fun for people your age. You don't have to have any restrictions based on whether someone's had a run-in with the vice principal or if someone's boyfriend goes to another school.

You will need to find a venue for these events. Your friends might balk at the idea of paying to hang out at your house. But, if you rent a hotel room and hold a dance, battle of the bands or other fun event, you can charge money for it.

You do need to know that you can get a crowd though. It will take a little bit of investment to secure the room, provide the refreshments, pay the band and publicize the event, etc.

You don't want to be in a position where you've spent \$1000 and three people show up. When you talk to people about an event, always assume that more people will tell you that they're coming than actually come.

You also need to know what a competitive price for your event is.

Remember that with a typical Friday night high school dance, the facility is already paid for, the teachers serve as chaperones and the refreshments are sold by a club. That's why they can charge \$5 for the dance.

You're going to have to charge more than that just to cover these expenses. So, you've got to make the event something truly special.

Some activities you might want to consider are:

- ✓ · After Prom Party
- ✓ · Prom Alternative
- ✓ · Comedy show (featuring local teens or a guest that you pay)
- ✓ · Battle of the Bands
- ✓ · Haunted House (Halloween)

- ✓ · '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s night/dance
- ✓ · Scavenger hunt (day or night)
- ✓ · Lock in

A related service you can offer is planning Sweet 16 parties, Bar Mitzvahs and other themed teen parties. Just like people hire Wedding planners for wedding ceremonies, they might hire you to be their teen event planner.

Consider your audience. What's lacking in the teen entertainment options that are being offered?

- ? Are they too "tame"?
- ? Are they too juvenile?
- ? What can you do to make them more relevant to your peers?

One consideration is whether you will have chaperones and/or security. You are liable for anything that happens at an event that you sponsor and charge money for.

You always need to check and conform to insurance requirements for possible damage to property, theft, injury and other risks with your events as well as any type of other business activity.

Make sure that you don't risk your parent's life savings on an event or anything to do with your business.

By starting a teen-oriented event planning business, you're sure to always be "the life of the party."

For more information on how to put together your own event planning business, check out [Paid to Party](#).

House and Office Cleaning

When the adults in a house are all working and the children are busy with school and extracurricular activities, no one is available to clean the house. People are increasingly turning to house cleaning services to take care of the “deep cleaning” that needs to be done once a week.

They want someone who they trust to come into their homes and do the dirty work.

Typically, doing this kind of cleaning will involve thoroughly cleaning the kitchen and bathroom, moping, dusting, vacuuming and making up the beds. Laundry and dish washing are sometimes included. Generally, washing windows is done less frequently and requires an additional fee.

Most of your jobs will recur once a week or every two weeks. A few people will only need you to work once a month.

And then there are move-outs. When someone is leaving a home, it needs to be cleaned in a much more exhaustive manner than is done on a normal basis. If the walls aren't being painted, for instance, they will need to be washed down.

Homeowners can go through a cleaning service which advertises in the Yellow Pages or through direct mail. If they go through referral services though, they pay a premium.

This is, in part, because of the advertising cost, but also because the services are bonded. But, if the homeowner knows and trusts you, they won't need to pay a bond fee and thus, your services can come cheaper than the franchises.

If you are interested in cleaning houses, you should approach people in your neighborhood first. If you don't fill up your slate immediately, ask your clients to provide referrals for you.

You can even volunteer to do one cleaning free for every referral they give you where the person they refer becomes your customer.

When you consider pricing, you should know whether or not your clients are going to provide the cleaning supplies. If not, you need to factor in the cost of Windex, Comet, Pledge, etc.

Also, will you have to bring a vacuum cleaner?

If so, will your parents let you use theirs or is this a capital investment that you'll need to make?

While on the subject of cleaning, I should also mention the opportunity to clean offices. Many small office buildings need to be cleaned once a week.

This is something you can do in the evenings after people have left for the day or on weekends – perfect for a busy student.

Sometimes, the owner of the building provides a cleaning service as a perk for renting an office there. In this case, you will want to approach the owner and find out if your services would be welcome.

Be aware that, if they are already offering this as a benefit for their tenants, they probably already have a cleaning service.

At other times, the tenants of any unit of the office building are responsible for their own cleaning. Many don't have a cleaning service and aren't even thinking about one.

But, if you give them the opportunity to contract for your services, you have a good shot at getting the business.

Cleaning an office involves vacuuming, dusting, emptying trash and clearing off any obvious junk like coke cans.

But, you have to be conscious not to throw away anything that might be important. Losing a client's secret recipe is the surest way to get fired.

[Start a Cleaning Business](#) shows you how to start and run a cleaning business and has chapters covering home cleaning, office cleaning, and window cleaning.

Lawn Care

Along with babysitting, lawn care has been a staple service for many young teens. Dain McKeon started his lawn care business when he was just 12 and it was thriving five years later. He provided mowing and gardening services year round and snow removal in the winter.

If you live in an area like Southern California or Florida where many homes also feature pools, you can offer pool cleaning services as well.

It's a definite plus if you can provide your own equipment, but be sure you factor that into the price.

You can market your business through flyers, door to door canvassing and referrals.

A boy who calls himself "Snapper Man" at lawncafe.com says "I'm only 14, going to be 15 in June and I have a ton of equipment. I've been doing this for 2 years and I plan on doing this for a living the rest of my life. I love this kind of work.

The last two years sucked compared to this year. It was bad because I had my friends helping me and they never worked fast. But now, this year, I am a legitimate business, it is my mom's and my business. We try to have our crew work five days a week but we usually only have 3 days of work.

We do 21 lawn maintenance accounts; 3 restaurants, 1 office building and 17 residential. I have got 95% of my work from referrals. We do excellent work and me and my workers take pride in it.

One suggestion for starting a yard-care business is to go out there and do it.

For instance, the next time it snows, pick a few houses and go shovel them.

Leave a note that you're starting a snow shoveling business and you wanted to demonstrate your services. Leave a number for the homeowner to call if he wants to set this kind of thing up on a regular basis. I guarantee that the homeowner is going to be amazed and appreciative that they didn't have to shovel the snow themselves.

You might want to concentrate on people who might not want to do the snow shoveling themselves – homeowners like single moms and seniors. The word will get out that you're offering this service and people will start to call.

[How to Start a Lawn Care Business](#) is a step-by-step guide for starting a lawn care business.

Sell Cosmetics and Jewelry to Your Peers

Avon has long been a great way for housewives to make a supplemental income. They now have a line called Mark which teenaged girls, who are 16 and older, can market.

There are three ways to sell [Mark](#) products.

1. The first way is to share the Mark catalog with other girls. They place their orders and you deliver them. This is what we traditionally think of when we think of the Avon lady. Now, we have Mark girls.
2. Mark also encourages girls to host make-up parties. When they buy a party selling kit, teenage representatives can have fun sharing make-up tips with their friends. The kit comes with a DVD demonstration of effective make-up strategies.
3. Finally, Mark representatives can sell make-up off a company designed website that has their unique identifying information. In this situation, the representative does not have to even ship the product – everything is automated. All the girl has to do is generate traffic to her site.

Mark representatives make at least 25 percent of the sales of the products.

Top producers can earn up to 40 percent in some categories. Plus, Mark representatives get a significant discount on their own make up and jewelry.

Mark also sponsors sales contests. Winners have received trips to New York City, a lease of a Ford Focus and a walk on part on a NBC soap opera.

[Click here to sign up with Mark.](#)

Concluding Thoughts

The Millennials (today's young people) are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as both a way to earn money and a lifestyle.

In addition to making money, entrepreneurs in their teens and 20's are insisting that they make their mark on society as well. This movement is becoming known as "Social Entrepreneurship."

Ilana Rothbien of New Jersey was a finalist in the Junior Achievement entrepreneurship competition with her groundbreaking program that allowed students to contribute money from their work experiences to fulfill community service requirements for school and religious organizations.

These students weren't "buying" their way out of the requirement. The money had to come from wages or entrepreneurial earnings, not their parents' pocketbooks.

We can already see the results of this kind of drive in today's 20-somethings.

A recent survey by Yahoo Hot Jobs and Robert Half International shows that this group is probably more ambitious and savvy than their parents were at that age.

Teens with a drive to be successful are now laying the groundwork for becoming very successful later in life.

Appendix: Web Resources for Teen Entrepreneurs

[DECA](#) – The national honor society for high school and college entrepreneurs.

[Entrepreneur Magazine](#) – Teen pages.

[Extreme Entrepreneur](#) – Download the free Success Manifesto for teen entrepreneurs.

[Future Business Leaders of America](#) – Association to develop entrepreneurial leadership in teens.

[Global Student Entrepreneur Awards](#) – Scholarships to college for high school entrepreneurs. Up to \$80,000 over 4 years!

[Independent Means](#) – Financial Education for girls including Camp \$startup and \$ummer\$tock.

[Junior Achievement](#) – Organization dedicated to helping teens become entrepreneurs. Includes Scholarships and Competitions.

[Small Business Administration](#) – Teen page of the US government's SBA site.

[Students In Free Enterprise](#) – SIFE helps teens become leaders in their communities and develop their business skills.

[Streaming Futures](#) – Online interviews with successful people including many entrepreneurs. Geared at teens.

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)