

NOW

We're in Business

Adopt an entrepreneurial mindset for a bigger bank account and a more fulfilling work life.

(BY LIZ DAVIS)

The financial crisis the United States has been mired in for the past several years has gotten the general public way too familiar with layoffs. You probably remember a time around two years ago when you kept hearing the same sad news from one friend after another: that a promising career with such-and-such company had bitten the dust, yet another casualty of the recession and its attendant downsizing.

What makes layoffs so frightening is the fact that most people rely on a full-time job as their sole source of income. For some people, losing a job can mean losing their home, car and overall way of life. Many have taken the hard-won lessons of this recession to heart, and more and more people are seeing the value of establishing more than one stream of income. Part-time, home-based, direct selling, e-business: These are some of the buzzwords poised to pull us out of our financial rut.

The good news is that signs of an economic upswing abound. Over the last year, online job postings have increased significantly. You've probably seen your laid-off friends pick up new jobs. Perhaps you've taken a position with a new employer yourself. But because people have been so desperate for jobs, they're not commanding the same salaries they were five years ago. Second, salaried employees are working longer hours, taking less vacation and experiencing more stress.

*Don't worry only
about job if
had multiple income
streams*

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work ethic is a noble, admirable legacy. But according to a report from the International Labor Organization (ILO), an agency of the United Nations, Americans work longer hours and are allotted less vacation time than most other First World nations.

A 2009 survey by Expedia determined that 34 percent of U.S. adults don't use their vacation days. Of the 11 countries studied, the United States came in dead last in number of vacation days earned and number of vacation days actually taken. Here's the kicker: American workers handed more than \$63 billion back to their companies in unused vacation days.

Some would argue that spending more time at work is the surest route to greater productivity and success. In a certain sense, that may be true, but only if you're just looking at career success. But at what cost? Technological and economic progress for a nation of stressed out, unhappy people who don't get enough time with their families? Despite

writer's block. But no matter who you are or what kind of work you've done, you have expertise that will serve you well as you prepare to go into business for yourself.

What Kind of Business?

One of the simplest, most affordable ways to start earning additional income is to sign up as a representative with a reputable direct selling company. In terms of the time and money required to begin, direct selling opportunities are the best options around. You can decide how much time you'd like to spend on it at first, whether that's 10 hours a week or 40 hours a week.

Established direct selling companies are growing, and ambitious new ones are springing up left and right. Customers can get an incredible variety of products and essential services through direct selling

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the upside of all this working, the average American adult has three big complaints that no amount of working and succeeding can alleviate:

- Not enough money
- Not enough time
- Too much stress

What if more of your time—or *all* of your time—was your own? Wouldn't you like to determine your own value in the market? On the path of traditional employment (whether you're salaried, hourly or an independent contractor), there's always a limit on how much you can earn. If times get tough, you might not even be kept aboard. Is there a better way? Can you figure a little more security into this equation? Are you ready to get out of the passenger seat and behind the wheel?

Determining Our Own Worth

There *is* a better way, and *of course* you're ready to take control. The answer is a simple one, but it's a calculated risk. Having more say in your own destiny always involves taking risks, but if you plan well and put diligent effort into it, chances are you'll be successful.

Start a home-based business. Don't be overwhelmed! You don't have to start big. In fact, it's better if you hang on to whatever source(s) of income you have at the moment, and then carve out a little bit of spare time to make a plan for a small home-based business. Choose something that's relatively simple to get started. Also, choose something you will enjoy; the last thing you need is to add another chore to your to-do list. Be realistic about what kind of startup costs you can afford. In other words, be willing to invest in your future success, but don't break yourself.

When trying to come up with ideas for home-based businesses, most people come down with the entrepreneurial equivalent of





companies. These companies pair high-quality, often trendy products with personal attention from a representative, and that combination is often the deciding factor for the discriminating modern consumer.

Direct selling businesses are also affordable to begin. For a very low startup fee, especially compared to the cost of starting other kinds of businesses, the company provides you with materials, a business plan, training, discounts and a built-in support network. They want you to succeed, because your success creates their success.

Why Direct Selling Is So Smart

The direct selling (also called network marketing) industry is primed for growth in the years to come, because it relies on the power of relationships. With the social networking boom currently shaping and dominating nearly every aspect of modern life and the economy, now is definitely the time to be in a business that leverages your connections. Think about how many more people you're in touch with than you were 10, or even five, years ago. If you have a Facebook profile—and who doesn't?—you can put your business in front of your friends, and their friends, and their friends, and so on.

In the direct selling business model, companies market and distribute their products and services via a network of independent consultants like you. As you sell that company's products and/or services, and recruit other people to do the same, you move up in the company's hierarchy. You become a leader based on performance and passion. In the workaday world, it isn't always so straightforward. Just ask anyone who has ever been passed over for promotion. With direct selling, you are rewarded based on your performance period.

As you continue to build your team with the company, you earn more and more over time in commissions on your team's sales, plus profits on your own sales. Most companies also offer bonuses for key accomplishments, and even have incentive programs in which you

can earn cars, trips, jewelry, additional products to sell at 100 percent profit and more.

Where We're Headed

at least in addition if not replacement

No matter which approach to a home-based business you choose, and even if you always have a full-time job, now is the time to carve out a niche for yourself as an entrepreneur. Over the next decade, we'll become a nation with many more home-based businesses. Instead of standing by passively and letting others tell you how much you can earn, why not take an active role in generating wealth and demonstrating a new mindset informed by possibility and positivity?

TEAM EFFORT

What makes layoffs so frightening is the fact that most people rely on a full-time job as their sole source of income.

What you stand to gain from this transformation is a thriving marketplace invigorated by healthy competition, personalized service and the small-business owner's invaluable ground-level understanding of what buyers need and want now. You'll have the opportunity to create better relationships with your family and friends, more time to live the life you desire, more pride in your work and more resources going where they need to go. You could have more freedom to respond to the changing market, and to the changes that happen over the course of your lifetime. You'll have more money and security, better health and lower healthcare expenditures. You'll know the pride and satisfaction that only an entrepreneur can know. And you'll give your children and future generations the skills and the initiative to continue that legacy, and to respond effectively to the world's changing needs. **SM**

In Summary