

WAHM-IT!, The Masters Course

A Work-at-Home Mother's Guide to Successfully
Building a Real Business on the Net

Preamble

We are Elizabeth, Cate, Jen and Erin, four work-at-home mothers or WAHMs.

We joined forces to write this Guide because we wanted to share with you our discovery, that building a theme-based Website is a fantastic solution for WAHMs who are looking for a fun, rewarding way to earn steady income from home.

Why?

First, building an information-packed site gives you the total flexibility and freedom you need, so that you can devote time to your family. And second, it's a thoroughly enjoyable business that has the potential to provide you with a long-term source of income.

Who are we?

Believe us, we're **not** Internet gurus, up to every trick in the book to extract dollars from the Web! No, we're four ordinary moms, three in the USA and one in the UK, who met up through our shared desire to give time to our families **and** have fulfilling, lucrative work of our own.

Throughout the WAHM-IT! Guide, you'll find quotes from real SBI!-owning WAHMs! These nuggets of wisdom and inspiration come from the SBI! Forums (a friendly gathering place for the SBI! community). We'd like to thank all of those women for sharing their experiences in such an inspiring way.

Like us, you've probably come across lots of get-rich-quick schemes on the Web, promising you fantastic earnings for little effort. We want to reassure you, that is **not** what we are about.

In this Guide, we share with you the underlying principles that ensure sites like ours have the potential to succeed. Follow those principles, and you won't go wrong. However, **you** will have to supply the thinking power and the motivation.

It takes work, and time, but the journey is extremely worthwhile. And the beauty of it is, it can fit perfectly into your life as a WAHM.

*By the way, please don't feel neglected if you're a **work-at-home dad**. We've written to moms – well, because we're moms, and that's what came naturally. But we're sure that many dads who are also doing the main child-caring would also love to start their own Web businesses, so please join us. This is for you, too.*

Your WAHM Masters Course covers...

- all the how-to information you need to get your business started.
- an overview of social media (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube)

- inspiring stories of real-life SBI! WAHMs and their websites.
- tips on managing your household and family successfully while you work.

Chapter 1 welcomes you to the world of work at home moms (part-time or full-time).

In Chapter 2, in Steps 1 and 2, we discuss the pros and cons of some of the **approaches to “work outside the home”** that you’ve probably looked at as a mom. We then consider some of the more common ways of **earning income at home**, both online and offline, which you may have considered, and see how they compare with what we’re doing.

In Step 3, we give an **overview of building a content-rich Website** and show you **why it’s such a good option** for you as a WAHM. We demonstrate, in detail, how it can give you the flexibility and income you want, while at the same time providing you with a creative and satisfying ongoing enterprise that lets you reach beyond being “just Mom”.

Step 4 is the **nitty-gritty section**. This is where we explain how the SBI! system of website-building functions. It’s broken down into four easy stages, and we talk you through each one to give you a thorough understanding of the process.

Step 5 shows you how “social media marketing” via Twitter, Facebook and YouTube fits into the e-business building process. Most moms love to socialize. Now you can do it to grow your own business!

In Chapter 3, you’ll find our **Case Studies**, stories of real moms like you, who are building profitable websites today and making a great success of it. They tell you, in their own words, how their sites are working for them, how much time they put in, how much money they make and their plans for the future.

Chapter 4 is **The Background Story**, where you can find out more about us and how this Guide came into existence.

In Chapter 5, we’ve pulled together some **Helpful Resources**, everything you need to learn more about SBI! (<http://www.sitesell.com>) and how to begin your own e-business.

In Chapter 6, we provide tips for getting organized.

Don’t worry. It won’t take you forever to read. We’ve kept this Guide concise and easy to pick up and browse whenever you have a few minutes to spare while the kids are sleeping or playing.

Are you all set and ready to read? Grab the binder and a highlighter pen, and settle into a comfortable place. Mark interesting passages and make notes as you go along. There’s a lot in this book that you’ll want to think about, review and act upon.

And now, join us on an exciting journey, on the pathway to Internet success...

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the world of work-at-home moms - WAHMs! And what a diverse and interesting world it is...

You might be a mom who's already working at home, or one who's wishing she could. Work-at-home moms live in all corners of the globe, and are at all different ages and stages.

Do you fit any of these descriptions?

- Pregnant, and wanting to sort work out before your baby arrives.
- A mom with babies and toddlers at home.
- A mom with kids at school.
- A slightly older mom, one of the "sandwich" generation who, alongside raising a family, has some responsibilities for her own elderly parents.
- A nearly empty-nester, whose teenagers will soon be gone.

Added to your family commitments, maybe you're:

- A single parent.
- A military wife.
- Living overseas.
- Working outside the home, in a demanding full-time career.
- Unable to get back into the job market.
- Finding part-time work inconvenient, unfulfilling or badly paid.
- Working at home, either offline or online.
- A stay-at-home mom, who'd like to contribute to the family income, but doesn't know how to do it.

All so different... and yet, in many ways, so alike.

There is a common thread that connects us. Partly it's in the experience of parenting, the way we all put our children's needs so high on the agenda. Partly, it's in our own desire to find ourselves in other ways alongside being a mom, and at the same time, to contribute financially to the family.

And to do that, we *all* need the same things. For us, and for you, no matter where we are, what the shape of our lives, as work-at-home moms we just *have* to have work that fits, that takes into account all that we hold most dear.

In this Guide, we hope you'll find the key to a better, more fulfilling future as a WAHM.

2. The Pathway to Internet Success

2.1 Step 1: Review the Offline Work Options for Moms

Once you have kids, work never feels the same again.

Take us. Before we were moms, we had full-time jobs. We worked long hours, socialised after work, brought papers home, commuted, focused on our careers.

Now? Since having children, we've tried just about everything. Working full-time and part-time outside the home, setting up a home-based business, working freelance, taking low-paid jobs to tide us over, saying 'Yes' to work that demanded too much – and suffering the consequences – even stopping work altogether.

Yep. Between us, we've done the lot.

And we've realised that our feelings about work are *completely* different from what they were pre-kids. Other moms feel the same:

Once my baby was born I found it difficult to focus on my work... with two kids. I feel torn between two worlds. There is no way that I can get to the career next step without putting in long hours, which I feel are not compatible with motherhood. Dian

One thing is crystal clear. As a mom, your working needs change drastically. You still want and/or need to work, but you need different options to fit with the changes in your life.

And that's where you might have drawn a blank. Finding work that fits isn't easy.

2.1.1 Working Outside the Home

After you became a mom, your first thought might have been to return to a job *outside* the home, where you'd always worked. That's what we thought, too. But once you have kids, it isn't always the best solution.

You could **go back to your old job**, part-time, or even full-time. But it's hard to cope with the pressures, it's exhausting, it means arranging childcare and, just maybe, it doesn't give you the same buzz as it did 'before kids'.

Another option? You could **get a job for \$10 an hour**, working in an office or serving food. You'd have a low-pressure job that brings in some useful cash.

But take that path, and where are you, this time next year... in two years... in five?
Answer:

- still earning \$10 per hour, doing work you likely don't love.
- still earning only when you work.

Work now/pay now provides an instant money-fix. But there's little or no progression. And that \$10 an hour is quickly spent.

Like us, you've probably discovered that once you're a mom, working outside the home has major drawbacks. So perhaps you've explored the options for working *at home*, instead.

2.1.2 Working At Home - Offline

What kind of work could fit alongside all the domestic and childcare tasks you do? Where's the work you can be **paid** for?

Based on our SBI! forum research, here are some of the offline possibilities that WAHMs have tried:

- **Service businesses**

Sell your knowledge, skills and experience.

- **You offer your expertise or skills for an hourly rate or a flat fee.** Examples: consulting, bookkeeping, medical transcription.

Downside: You need to fund training and equipment, find clients, and work when, and possibly where, it suits *them*, rather than you.

I trained to be a medical transcriptionist at night, and after six months, began transcribing weeknights. I would sign on each night, praying there was enough work to meet my desired income level. I had to work one weekend a month, and if the kids were sick, or I couldn't work, I had to find a substitute. Working 1-5 hours a night, I earned around \$500 a month. Cate

- **Open your own business at home.** Examples: in-home hair or beauty salon, children's daycare facility.

Downside: Your home might need alterations. You work when clients want your services, rather than at the best hours for you. You fund your own training, equipment and insurance, and take the wear and tear on your home or rent premises.

- **Sales businesses**

You create or purchase products and re-sell them for a profit.

- **Make your own product**

Crafts, quilts, baked goods, marketed at craft fairs, kiosks in local stores - the list is endless.

Downside: You can sell only as much as you can make, unless you outsource. Selling could take up as much, or more, of your time, as making the goods.

- **Catalog sales**

There are many catalog companies, with Avon one of the most well-known. You drop off catalogs to customers, pick up orders and deliver products.

Downside: You spend hours traveling between customers and may be required to work evenings/weekends.

- **Party plans**

You purchase a starter kit, from which you sell make-up, jewelry, kids' toys, kitchen utensils, etc. for companies like Tupperware and Usborne Books. You take orders at parties held in customers' homes, and also deliver products.

Downside: You may work difficult hours, as most parties are in the evenings or weekends.

- **Multi-level/Network Marketing (MLM)**

Melaleuca, Herbalife and Amway are well-known companies. You sign up as an independent representative and buy a supply of goods. Your "upline" is the person who brought you into the business, and you become their "downline".

I ran a party plan business for two-and-a-half years. I recruited a team of 3 or 4 and usually earned around \$400-\$800 a month. I didn't like having to keep track of inventory, constantly delivering product, hounding people to set up parties, and then having to go out at night and lug all my stuff in and out of customers' homes, especially in the dead of winter. Cate

You make money when you sell the products you buy from the company. Uplines earn commissions on their downlines' sales, so you must recruit other sales people to expand your own downline.

Downside: You must pressure your downlines to get results. Products are usually expensive, and you need to store stock. These jobs involve inconvenient hours and travel, plus you have deadlines, hours that suit others and fluctuating income.

Please don't misunderstand us...

We are not disparaging the hard-working moms out there who *are* making money at all of these work-from-home options. We admire their energy and determination, and some certainly do thrive. (And if you love the work you're currently doing, stay with us,

because we're going to show you how you can get more leads, more sales, build a larger client base and downline... without leaving home.)

But we wonder how many moms fall by the wayside sooner or later, discouraged by all that these jobs demand of them in return for payment that is seldom generous, and limited long-term prospects.

We speak from hard-earned experience, and we came to the conclusion that somehow, somewhere, there **had** to be a better way to earn money.

And that's why we – like you – went looking for other, more family-friendly ways to earn.

2.2 Going Online

We turned to the Internet in search of flexible work to do at home. After all, the Net's an amazing place, where women often feel very comfortable.

But start looking for online work and you are bombarded! The Internet is jam-packed with get-rich-quick scams, "failsafe" offers, "foolproof" money-makers, seductive "experts". The clamour on the Web is deafening. Some of that noise is highly, dangerously persuasive.

It's easy, very easy, to end up confused and anxious. It's even easier to lose two very precious things – money and time.

I kept on researching and researching... until I got so tired with all the hype and gurus who only wanted me to buy more stuff. I even bought into one of those \$999 - \$3,000 e-marketing courses. I took a hard look at these and gave up - demanded refund - (as they are all about selling me more stuff). Ann

2.2.1 Potential Online Income-Generators

Within the resounding racket on the Web, you'll come across some common possibilities, that you might have tried, or thought about trying. We found out the hard way, that while some do have potential, others are total time-wasters and all have drawbacks.

- **Telecommuting**

With a good telecommuting job, you can earn a reasonable salary doing work like data entry, typing, or customer service calls. Doesn't it sound perfect to be able to work from home, while your kids crawl around next to you?

But...(there's always a "but," isn't there?)...

- Hordes of people are chasing a handful of legitimate telecommuting jobs.

- Wages are typically less than you'd earn at an outside job.
- Work hours are often inflexible.
- If you're sick, on vacation, or can't work for any reason, you don't get paid.
- You still have a boss!

- **Taking surveys, reading emails or surfing the Web**

Perhaps you've stumbled across sites offering to pay you to complete surveys for market research, read ads via email or surf the Web.

Beware! Some of these programs do pay money. But the amount is minuscule and the task so time-consuming, all you'll end up with is pocket change. If you need a reliable source of income that takes on more of your family's financial burden, look elsewhere.

As for autosurfing programs, where you get paid to surf to sites in order to enhance their visitor numbers - be doubly careful! These companies ask you for money, then pay you "interest" in return for visiting websites. These are pyramid schemes. Invest only money you can afford to lose - and who can afford that?

- **Auctions**

Maybe you've tried eBay - we have. Its explosive success has allowed moms across the globe to stay home and make money.

But... (Aha! You knew that was coming, didn't you?)...

- Sales are seasonal. You buy product off-season, so you may have girls' swimsuits cluttering up your garage for months before you unload them.
- Competition. Unless you find that secret stash, you're fighting everyone else for sales.
- Fees. Both eBay and Paypal take a chunk out of your hard-earned money.
- Finding reliable dropshippers who sell unique items at low prices is tough.

And again, if you're not working, you don't get paid.

Those are just a few of the job possibilities you'll come across on the Internet. Some are scarcely worth considering, and there are disadvantages to them all.

But there is one common-sense approach that you may have never considered. We'll tell you about it in a moment. But first...

2.2.2 Time to Reflect...

Take a moment to think over your own experiences. If you like, write down here or in a notebook the jobs you've had since you've been a mom. Think about those jobs...

How well did they work, for you and your family? What was difficult about them?

What is it that you're looking for? What is it that would make work more manageable for you?

Start making a list.

Ours begins like this....

- instant time off whenever we need it, when the kids are sick, or in a school play, or on vacation...
- extra money for the family budget...
- work that's creative, fun and fulfilling...

What's on your list?

Write down all of your thoughts.

You have just started your WAHM wish-list. It's a powerful blueprint. Read on to find out about a common-sense approach that could help make those wishes come true.

2.3. Step 3: Build a Web Business Via a Theme-Based Content Site

2.3.1 Building an Information-Rich Website

Yes, *that* is the common-sense approach that each of us found in our own way. It solves so many of our work-at-home dilemmas.

And the best part? It doesn't matter if you're starting from scratch, or are currently building a business. It can work for you, too.

Building a site based on information allows you to create *your own* income-earning opportunity. There's no boss, no clock to punch and potentially you can make money 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's yours, and it has that vital flexibility you need.

Each of us started out by building just one Website. Now, we're moving on to build more – and more! But these aren't just any websites.

The best way to explain a theme-based content site is by asking you to think about how you surf the Web. You loathe badly organized websites, flashing banners “shouting” at you, messy sites stuffed with ads, or information that's way off the theme. Whether you are searching for recipes, parenting tips, travel deals, or gardening advice, you want **information**, right? Easy to find, clear, and lots of it!

You want solutions to your problems, jokes to make you giggle, art ideas for keeping kids busy on a rainy day. Info, info and more info. If you don't find the answer in a click

or two, you're gone and on to the next site. When you do find a site that delivers, you bookmark it, send it on to friends and family members, post it on Facebook, or tweet about. Then you go back to the site time and again, because it's such a great resource.

Those are the kinds of websites we build.

With billions of pages on the Internet, we've learned the importance of standing out from the crowd (and what a huge crowd it is!). We know now that the best way to keep people coming back for more is to build a site filled with engaging and original information, with solutions to our visitors' problems or wishes, and all the facts they're looking for.

We call that information "**Content**", and it's content that wins the day hands down in the drive to create successful websites.

This common-sense method of building a website can work for you to leverage your results if you already have a service business, or sell a product (your own, or one sourced from a manufacturer). We'll explain more about this in Step 4.

But you don't need to have a physical product or service to sell. A content-rich site can also allow you to earn money as an "infopreneur". That means, you provide free information, and earn money through advertising and/or commissions. Or, you can package your information digitally and sell it as an e-book or e-course, using completely automated systems.

Whatever route is best for you, there are dozens of ways you can earn money from your site, so that while your visitors get the content they love, you earn the income you need. It's win/win.

We'll tell you **how** we build our sites in Step 4. But first, you may be wondering, "What *exactly* is it that would make building an information-rich Website such a great choice for me?"

2.3.2 Enjoying Total Flexibility, And Making Good Use of Precious Time

For us, it's a great choice because a website fits in so beautifully with our priorities. After all, how many times have you considered a work prospect, and then passed it by because it didn't fit with your life as a mom? The start was too early, holidays were inflexible, office was too far away, you had to work evenings, the pay wouldn't cover the cost of childcare – we could go on...and on...

The bottom line? You're a mom. Flexibility is crucial. You want work that you can readily drop when the baby's been up teething all night or your child's suddenly ill and can't go to school.

When you have truly flexible work you needn't panic, whatever your day throws at you.

At the same time, when you *are* working, you want every moment you spend to count. Like us, you're already juggling a thousand things a day. Don't you just hate wasting a moment of your valuable time? So you need a job that rewards you, even on days when you can only give it 15 minutes.

Building our information-based websites gives us that flexibility, and that satisfying use of time.

Think about it. You can skip the commute and head straight for your computer when kids are asleep or at school. Whenever you can squeeze some time into your schedule - early morning, late at night, on weekends - you can access the Internet and make progress on your website.

I begged, borrowed and stole every spare moment to build my site (still do). If you are determined and it's what you really want and it turns you on, you will do it. Patricia

You can start slowly - all of us did. If your family is very young, you might have just a couple of hours a week to spare. That's enough to get you started. And as your children grow you'll have a few more hours to spend, developing your site, slowly and steadily.

When I began with SBI!, I had two children aged 1 and 3, and life seemed fairly manageable. I spent about eight hours per week building my site. Then I turned around and discovered that I had a 2-year-old and a 4-year-old - and I was pregnant.

Life seemed a lot busier, and I found only an hour or two per week for my site. Now I have a life is chock full. I spend less than half an hour per week on my site (usually typing with one hand while nursing the baby!)

But in every season of my momming, SBI! keeps chugging along, doing its magic. Traffic keeps building and my subscriber list keeps growing. When I'm ready to jump back in again, my site will be healthier than when I set it down months ago. Ellen

A content-filled Website grows as your babies grow. A well-planned site continues to attract visitors, earning income. If you need time out – a day, a week, or a bigger block of time, when a new baby arrives, for instance – your site carries on, growing in the background, until you can return to it.

After a while your work becomes a part of your family's dynamics. It's something you do alongside raising your children, an on-going project not just for yourself, but also for your family and for their future. As your children get older, you might even choose to involve them, too.

A useful add-on to that flexibility is a Website's total *move-ability*. You can work on it, wherever you end up in the world.

The great thing for me is that it doesn't matter where I am. We've lived in four different houses over the last year and so long as I have a connection to the Internet I can carry on building my sites. Nor does it matter which country I'm in – my sites, at least, remain where they are, and have become my homes in cyberspace! Claire

Building our own websites has given us a measure of independence that no other work opportunity we've ever come across can offer. It could do the same for you.

2.3.3 Earning the Income You Need

As a mom, you work hard for your family.

Yes, you may have a partner who shares the load, and that helps. But we know how many hours you're putting in, because that's what we do, too.

We know that when you're not soothing babies, playing with toddlers, driving kids around, helping with school work, you're doing laundry, shopping, cooking – all the myriad tasks that go into keeping a home and family running smoothly.

The reward? It's in the deep satisfaction of seeing your children happy and growing. You're there to share day-to-day life with them, find your toddler's lost cuddly, help with your 10-year-old's project, sympathise with your teenager's broken heart.

But there's one thing you don't get in return for all those hours of loving labour.

Money.

Money - who earns it, who spends it, what it means – raises a whole bunch of questions for moms. We *like* earning. It empowers us in many different ways. But we *love* raising our kids, too. Like you, we want to do both.

Many mums that I chat to feel torn between the desire to be there for their children and the desire for more control and independence. Annabel

Maybe you're not interested in earning a whole lot of money right now. If you've chosen to take time out of the job market, chances are you can manage on your family income – but a bit more would probably be welcome.

Or maybe you need funds *now*. Perhaps you're a single parent, struggling to make ends meet, or your partner has taken a pay cut and it's up to you to bring home the difference.

Whatever your financial situation today, take a moment to stop and think.

How would you like to find an earning source that took up only the time you could comfortably offer? One that could give you a small income fairly soon – and had the potential to g-r-o-w spectacularly and consistently in the future?

Imagine if that work began to bring in money. Not much to start with, but a steady trickle, that gradually turned to a stream.

Money that came in, not just during your working hours, but during the many more hours that you spend tending to your family. Money that came in while you slept... or while you went on vacation. Money that still came in, if you needed time off.

I am happy for the people who are supporting their families with their online income, but that's not me. I won't have time for several years, probably, to devote enough time to my site for that to happen.

But right now, I am making several hundred dollars per month! Am I planning to one day make significant money with my site? Definitely. In the meantime, am I delighted with \$300+ per month passive income? Absolutely! Ellen

Suppose that as long as you carried on chipping away, bit by bit, you were rewarded with a stream of income that kept on growing and continued to come in far, far into the future.

What would that mean to you?

In time, you could dump the \$10-an-hour job. Or ease yourself out of a full- or part-time job that pays, but makes colossal demands on your time and energy, and leaves you worn to a frazzle. You could pull back on the party plan or the medical transcription. Or focus your net-based efforts into a more satisfying and rewarding direction.

That's what developing a content-filled website could give you.

Make no mistake. This is **not** a get-rich-quick scheme. There is no promise about money this week, or money without work... steady, focused work.

As to how much you can earn, there's no easy ballpark answer there, either. The amount varies, and depends on many factors. Everyone's experience is different.

Within six months of starting my site, it was providing a growing full-time income for us. It brings in about 25% more than the income I earned at the highest paying "real" job I've ever held. Rena

Approached in the right way, building a website, as we and many other WAHMs are doing, can answer your wish to earn income, and offer you a slow-burning, long-term money-making proposition.

We particularly like the idea of nurturing our sites as we do our kids, putting our best efforts into making them as strong as they can be. And, like our children, our income will continue to grow into the future, slowly... but surely.

2.3.4 Getting Beyond "Mom"

Now let's talk about you. Not "you" as in "Mom", "Wife", "Cook", "Teacher's Aid", "Choir Member", or "Team Mom". Just you.

What's on your wish-list that's just for you? What are your wants and dreams? Do you get to share your hobbies and passions with other interested people on a regular basis? Or has that part of you gone on hold, as the important job of raising a family takes precedence?

*Sure, money's nice, but a large part of this for me is doing something where I shine.
Jennifer*

*After all, don't we all just want to spend our time doing the thing we are passionate about?
This is what "hooked me" as a WAHM, and as someone with some serious passions that
are yet to be fulfilled. Nicole*

You recognise the pride your kids feel when they come home with a star for behaving well in class? You've seen the grin on your husband's face when he's just received a raise or pulled in a new client. Perhaps you remember moments, pre-kids, when you felt that warm glow of achievement, too.

Where's your applause now?

Of course, you feel great when you look at your kids. We're not suggesting that bringing up a family is anything but a fantastic achievement. But we are suggesting that there can be even more than that in your life.

Building a content-based website lets you tap into your passions, show off your skills, share your ideas, receive recognition for your expertise... that's your gold star. Not only will you learn new skills, challenging yourself on a regular basis, you'll find "you" again.

Or discover a whole new person.

*I saw this time (motherhood) as a perfect opportunity for a change in direction. I knew I
would have some spare time at night or nap time that I could use to study or learn
something new. Kellie*

The Internet doesn't care if you hold a college degree or graduated from high school. It doesn't know if you live in Outer Mongolia or the Big Apple, or give a hoot if you're the queen of gourmet dinners or the crockpot mom. On the Internet, everyone has the same chances and opportunities to get to the head of the class.

It's a place where you can shine.

Find the you that goes beyond "the mom". Use the satisfaction you gain now, to build choices into your future.

And it's all very do-able. We know, because that's how we work. Not only do we enjoy the benefits of staying home with our children, but our "beyond mom" needs are fulfilled, too. What could be better than earning money... on our time, doing work we love?

So now, for the details on how we do it, let's move on to Step 4.

2.4 Step 4: The “How To” Answer... The C ➡ T ➡ P ➡ M Process

Building our websites, and making money from them, is exciting, creative and, above all, **very do-able**.

You don't need loads of technical knowledge. You don't need to be an Internet whizz, understand html, be great at design, or have a higher degree. If you do already have some knowledge, you can put it to good use. But it's by no means essential.

All you *do* need is the willingness to work at it, and the ability to follow a clearly set-out process, at your own speed. Do that, and your site can join many others, in the top .5% of sites on the Internet, as measured by **Alexa.com**, the leading traffic-measurement company on the Internet. (Alexa is owned by Amazon.com and powered by Google – it measures traffic-popularity.)

Will it be easy? We say, not exactly *easy* – there's no such thing as get-rich-quick – but *very possible*. Start your “New Day”! (This video says it all in about 1 minute – click on this SiteSell YouTube video, <http://sbi.me/WnrAbV>)

SBI! saved my life. It gave me something to get excited about beyond wiping noses and doing the hundredth load of laundry. It gave me confidence to see a business project through to successful completion. It opened a whole new world of people like me who aren't afraid to work hard to create something wonderful, useful, and yes, economically successful. Patricia

2.4.1 Introducing the C ➡ T ➡ P ➡ M System

How do we do it? We follow this step-by-step process that *you* can easily learn, too:

CONTENT ➡ TRAFFIC ➡ PRESELL ➡ MONETIZE

Hmmm, you may be thinking. What does that mean?

Let us talk you through it.

STEP 1) Build **CONTENT** by loading your site with fascinating, valuable information and solutions that people are searching for on the Internet.

STEP 2) Your carefully focused content means your site is well-ranked by search engines, which direct streams of visitors – **TRAFFIC** – to your site.

STEP 3) Overdeliver top-value information to your visitors *without* pitching to them – that is, **PRESELL**. You do this through the way you write the content on your site. (We'll tell

you more later on.) Content written to PREsell puts your visitors into a positive mindset, so that they like your site and feel as though you are a trusted friend.

STEP 4) At that point, because you've established your credibility, you can get your visitors to generate income. In other words, you **MONETIZE**. We explain the numerous ways you can do this later in the chapter. In time, you'll use a mix of methods, to build a thriving, diversified business.

CONTENT ➡ **TRAFFIC** ➡ **PRESELL** ➡ **MONETIZE**

That's all there is to it.

Now that you've seen the underlying concept, let us tell you a little more about each stage. Because we know you're pressed for time, our aim here is to give you the big picture. Or sit back and watch this short 4-minute primer video... <http://sbi.me/14djmkm>

2.4.2 Content: The Crucial Element

Why is **content** so important?

Do you know anyone who's thrown up a website, sat back and waited for the money to roll in, then been disappointed and disillusioned when it hasn't? Maybe you've done that yourself. It's an easy mistake to make – we know. But a website won't succeed unless it has visitors. And it's content that attracts motivated visitors.

After all, a website doesn't have a shop window, or a prime site in the local shopping mall. In the mall, it's easy for stores to pull in customers. You take your kids in there and before you know it, you're dragged into a toy store, a candy shop, a computer games store...

On the Web, you can't press your nose to the shop window, or handle the goods. There's no such thing as passer-by traffic.

- **Understand what people want on the Web**

Successful websites use high-value **information and advice** to pull in their customers.

Think about it. When you surf the Internet, you search for **information**, for **solutions** to whatever was on your mind at that moment. You want cloth diapers, a new stroller, an online kids' game? You're looking to book a vacation, bake a cake, sort out your house once and for all? For each need or wish, you search the Internet for the answer, for the **information** you want.

And **information** is what our sites provide. We build them around tightly focused themes, and then we pack them with in-demand **CONTENT**.

You can learn to do this, too, and do it in a way that search engines such as Google or Firefox or Bing, so they give you a higher search ranking, and make your theme-based site easier to find. That way, when any one of the millions of surfers out there taps a few words in to a search box... presto! Up comes your site.

We can't tell you how delighted we are when our pages start to score well, and we can see that they are getting lots of visitors. It makes all our hours of patient work, fitted in around everything else we do, totally worthwhile.

- **Choose a topic for your site**

So far, so good. But of course, before you can start building content, you have to **choose a topic** for your site.

How do you do that? Ask yourself: **What do I know about?**

And please, don't say "*Nothing*". It simply isn't true! We truly sympathise, because we used to feel that way too. If you're in the midst of child-rearing, or have been out of the employment market for a while, it can feel like you don't know about anything, except how to lull a baby to sleep, or handle toddler meltdown. But stick with us. You know more than you think you do.

Naturally, as a mom you know an enormous amount about kids. So you *could* build a site around any one of hundreds of parenting or child-orientated topics, and find a big audience on the Internet.

But don't worry – you don't have to be "Mom" on your website – unless you want to. There are many, many other possibilities.

I'm very passionate about the crockpot. In my mind there are very few pieces of machinery that can produce a home-cooked meal with such a hands-off approach. I also knew that there were moms who worked outside the home who could use some help, and people who just plain don't like to cook. That's where my site came from, out of a need I had and solved... then taking what I have learned to show others. CJ

- **List the options**

Grab a pen and paper. It's list-time!

What do you like to talk about? What do you like to read about or do, in any precious spare time you have? What was it you loved to do, before you had kids, and would be thrilled to rediscover? What are your hobbies? What do you do when you want to relax, or have fun, or stretch yourself, or have fun with the family? Write those things down.

What do you do each day that other people might like to know about? We've talked about childcare, but maybe there are other things. Do you have a great recipe collection? An enviable garden? A family of lovable wolf-hounds?

Do you have a skill – hairdressing, book-keeping, jewelry-making? Maybe you already have a small business you'd like to take on-line? What's your passion – vintage dresses, tropical fish, chocolate cakes?

Are there any areas, anywhere in your life, where you have gathered knowledge, maybe without even noticing, that other people would like to share? When we brainstormed, we realised we had lots of hard-won knowledge, that others would value. And, you know what? So do you.

*Several months prior to purchasing my SBI! site, I came to the realization that I had lost control of my family's finances. It was through my own experiences and a lot of reading and research that I learned how to get back on track. This is how I got involved in finding money-saving tips, learning to budget properly, and managing debt. I already knew that there were lots of families and individuals making the same mistakes I had. I felt I had valuable information to offer that could maybe help others with the same problems.
Cheryl*

Is your list getting longer? Write down everything for now. Don't discard any idea.

- **Look for a niche that works**

You'll use this list as the basis for choosing your site topic. Now, it may be that you know at once that there's only one subject you'd want to build your site around. If that's you, then your next step will be to identify a **niche** within that topic, where your site can succeed.

Or it may be that you'll research several of the subjects on your list – and then choose something totally different! It's a gradual and exciting process. The main thing is, to end up with a topic you really love. That way, working on your site will never be a chore.

Once you have a list of topics, it'll be time to do some research to identify a niche within one of your topics, where you could build a successful Website.

It's all about demand and supply. Your site must focus on information that enough people are looking for. If no one's interested in your topic, you won't get enough traffic. And "no traffic" means "no income." So, your topic must have good **demand**.

The other consideration is the amount of competition around your topic on the Web, or the **supply**. You need to know how many other sites are showing up in search engine results for your topic.

A topic that will work needs to have a high demand, and a low supply.

How do you find out?

There are a variety of tools available on the Internet to help you do this research, but they all make it rather laborious. You're a WAHM, and WAHMs don't have **time** for all that! We use the tools that come as part of the SBI! package, and provide us with everything we need to work out which is the best concept to use for our sites.

Don't worry. It's not as hard as it sounds. You can do it at your own pace, and if you get stuck, there's plenty of help. You won't be on your own.

Excited? You should be! It is exciting – we are still thrilled by every little bit of progress we make on our sites.

So now, let's move on to the all-important topic of **TRAFFIC**.

2.4.3 Traffic: The Lifeblood of Your Site

We've established that **content**, written on a tightly-focused niche topic, is the key element to a successful Website.

But content alone isn't enough. What your site really needs is **traffic**... and not just any type of traffic. You need **targeted traffic**.

Targeted visitors are interested specifically in the theme that you've built your site around. So when they reach your site and find masses of great information about the exact topic that interests them, they're delighted.

What's the secret of attracting targeted traffic?

One of your first tasks will be identifying the search terms people use to find information about your topic on the Web. These terms (ex., florida vacation, safest lice shampoo, wallpaper removal) are known as **keywords** and you'll build a list of them to use on your site's pages. Rest easy, it's a straightforward process.

Search engines love giving their users the results they want. For example, let's say that you typed in this keyword at Google. You would find...

<p>Getting to Know Wallpaper-Removal Techniques - For Dummies New wallcovering can transform a room, going from boring to beautiful. But before you can determine the best approach to removing wallpaper, you need to ... www.dummies.com/.../getting-to-know-wallpaper-removal-techniques.html - Cached - Similar</p>

So, if you build your site using lots of sought-after keywords, wrapped around with plenty of original content, in return they'll send you visitors.

There are other ways to grow your traffic. You can pay for it. There are plenty of sites out there that are more than happy to accept your advertising dollars to send visitors your way.

But because we're budget-conscious moms, we prefer **free** traffic, and you can get plenty of that. As well as using search engine queries, visitors can find you through:

- reading an article you wrote about your subject for another website
- following you on either Facebook or Twitter

- discovering a helpful message you've posted on a forum
- pinning the photos that you have on Pinterest
- links from other relevant websites
- following a referral on a message board

Don't panic! We know there's a lot to take in here, but you don't have to learn and understand it all at once. Take your time. Simply build your site and your traffic one step at a time. It's like raising a child. You don't move from the newborn stage to adolescence in one step. Day by day, you see your child's growth and maturation blossoming before your eyes. Your site and business will do the same.

Don't know anything about *how* to build a site? That's okay. We all started out with next-to-no knowledge about website-building. We all have good-looking and performing sites, built with our own fair hands!

As long as you're willing to learn and to follow a step-by-step process, you'll be fine, even if you are a total newbie. You'll have all the tools you need to make the process do-able.

Attracting a steady, growing stream of traffic is great. But once again, it's just one part of the process. The next trick is to excite those visitors with the amazing goodies you have to share – and that's what we call **PRESELLING**.

2.4.4 PRESELL: Make Your Visitors Happy

We know you want to make income from your site. But we're sure you'll be glad to hear that the best way to do that is NOT through heavy selling.

When you **sell**, you go all out to get the sale. Your visitor is in no doubt what's going on, and most likely, she resists your efforts. Who likes a pushy salesperson, or trusts overblown hype?

So we do it differently, by **PREselling** our visitors.

The idea of **PREselling** is to create a positive mindset in your visitor, warm her up to an idea, product or service and leave **her** with the choice of whether to explore further and possibly make a purchase.

It's a natural extension of what you already do, without even thinking about it. As a mom, you make recommendations to your friends every day. A new bargain kids' clothes store, a home organizer who's transformed your life, a brilliant movie – things you've checked out and liked. It's natural to tell other people about them. You have nothing to gain. You just want to share a good thing.

So now, you do the same thing on your site. You write your site in an open, friendly way, so that your visitor "hears" your voice addressing her concerns, offering her the ideas, solutions and information she wants. Pretty soon, she starts to feel that you're a

new and trusted friend. And a visitor who feels like that is far more likely to buy than one who gets the hard-sell.

PREselling simply means creating that positive, willing-to-buy mindset in your visitors. And this is how you do it...

- **Write a site that PREsells**

Every single time we write for our sites, we put our target readers in the spotlight. For Elizabeth, they're moms who are short on time, and want to feed their families fresh, healthy food. For Jen, they're parents who want to explore new places with their children. For Cate, they're folks who want to learn how to manage their money properly, and for Erin, they're busy moms who will benefit from organizing and simplifying their home.

By making it top priority to meet our readers' needs, we know that when they land on our sites they'll be bowled over by what we have to offer.

Because not only do we give our readers what they want - we **overdeliver**. We earn their respect.

Offline, overdelivering is when your package arrives two days earlier than promised, or the waitress brings crackers for your hungry kids to munch on, without being asked.

Online, you can overdeliver by offering masses of really valuable information. And you can go further. For instance, you could give your visitors:

- Links to useful online resources
- Free printable downloads
- Product reviews
- A newsletter
- A discussion forum
- A site blog
- Links to comment on your Facebook Page or Twitter account.

Whatever you decide to put on your site, do it with your own personal touch. Write as if you're talking one-on-one with your visitor. (You don't have to impress your English teacher.) Have a friendly conversation from the heart. Be yourself. Your sincerity and personality will shine through.

Let your visitor know you truly want to help her. Share your knowledge and experiences. Be honest when it comes to your reviews and recommendations.

*My first year, I was able to see a small profit with my divorce website, but my real success came in the form of positive feedback from my visitors. Women across the country and the world were letting me know that my website was making a difference in their lives.
Tracy*

Build relationships, not sales pages.

(Click on the link for a free e-book that shows you how to communicate/connect with your visitors, <http://mycps.sitesell.com/download/mycps-free.pdf>)

Think of it this way...

As a work-at-home mom, your desire to earn income always comes second to your drive to do the best possible for your children. Now apply the same principle to your site. **First** give your visitors everything they want and need. **Then** think about the money.

It feels good to have a site that centers on its visitors. And know what? It makes your income potential soar!

Let us show you how...

2.4.5 Monetization: Earn Money From Your Site

We suspect you're still wondering... "Just how can I make money doing this?" It's the question that puzzled us when we were starting out – until we grasped the amazing monetization potential of a content-rich website.

There are many, many ways to earn money from your website. Let us explain.

You might have a product or service to sell. If so, a content-led website can help you reach a far wider audience of potential customers.

But, more likely, you don't have a product or service. No problem. You can set yourself up as an "**infopreneur**", providing highly sought-after information that caters to surfers who are seeking specific solutions.

For us moms, setting up a site based on information is an excellent choice because it's low maintenance and easy. And we like the sound of that!

How do we make money from providing information?

Simple. We don't *sell* the information – the content on our sites is given freely. Instead, once we have a solid flow of presold traffic, we use two very popular methods of earning revenue: "contextual advertising" and "affiliate marketing." These are the perfect fit for content-rich websites.

We'll discuss these two monetization models in a moment. We know you have another question: "How much can you make?"

*My first year, I made all of \$200 total; it takes time; but \$300 month is attainable; and \$1,000+ a month isn't far off with the right niche, focus and content. It's all about focus.
Debs*

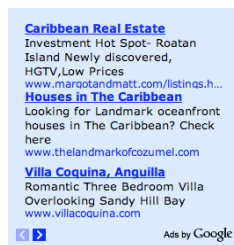
That figure varies enormously, depending on the niche you choose, the amount of time you have to spend on your site, how long your site has been “live”, and other factors. In our **Case Studies** chapter, other WAHMs tell their stories, and give you an idea of how much they’re making, following different monetization models.

But first, let’s take a more detailed look at some of the most popular ways to earn money from your content-rich website.

- **Contextual Advertising**

Programs like Google AdSense have revolutionized the Internet business world. When visitors click on an ad, we earn a referral commission.

You’ve probably seen these types of little ads on sites as you’ve been surfing. Every day, hundreds of thousands of people click on ads like these. And every time they do, the owner of the site where the ads are displayed earns a referral commission. And that owner could be you! For example...



You’ve probably seen these types of little ads on sites as you’ve been surfing. Every day, hundreds of thousands of people click on ads like these. And every time they do, the owner of the site where the ads are displayed earns a referral commission. And that owner could be you!

It had taken me 2 years of working fulltime on my previous site to get the same amount of traffic I got from my SBI! site by just working around 2 hours a day for six months! I just received another Google AdSense check and can't get over how you can get paid that much by simply cutting and pasting some html code on your pages! Rina

Contextual advertising programs are free to join, if your site’s content is good enough. (Yours will be, of course!) You simply place the ad code on your site and, through the miracle of Internet technology, your visitors will view advertisements directly related to your website... and their interests.

These programs work by analysing your keyword-rich content, so they can deliver highly relevant ads to your site. Let’s say your site is about cats. You’ll carry ads about pet supplies and cat care products. If your site’s about food, you’ll display ads about recipes or cooking equipment. That’s why it works. You build a site to attract targeted visitors, who by definition are also interested in related advertising. And so, visitors click... and you earn.

Once in place, the ads require little maintenance, another reason why, as time-poor moms, we love them. Yet, they make us money, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It really can't get much better than that!

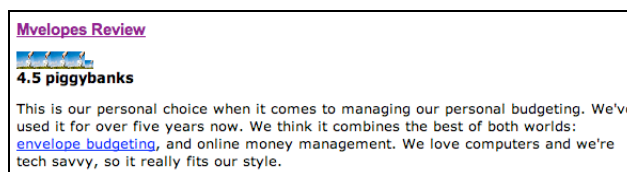
- **Affiliate Marketing**

Affiliate programs offer another excellent way to make money from your information-rich site. You don't have to think about product storage, credit card transactions, customer support or shipping. The company that you are representing looks after all of that!

Imagine an online company selling toys. If you build a site about children's games, you could become an affiliate to that company, which means that you would carry a link to them on your site. When people click through from your site and make a purchase, you earn a commission.

We've learned that a great way to make this work is to PREsell, by recommending or reviewing the affiliate products we have on our sites. Of course, we act as affiliates only for companies whose items or services we feel totally happy to endorse.

Cate is an affiliate for various authors and software manufacturers, because she likes to showcase her favorite budgeting publications and software on her site. She utilizes a very successful method of PREselling by offering **real** product reviews on her site.



Cate's visitors not only appreciate the volumes of quality helpful info they get, but because they trust the expertise she demonstrates throughout her site, they are more likely to value her endorsements. When a visitor clicks on a product-link in her review and then makes a purchase, she earns a commission.

Affiliate marketing is a great monetization choice for you to consider, because it's also low-maintenance. Yes, it does take time to find good items to represent, but once they're in place on your site, most of your work is done.

Diversification is the name of the game...

You may start out with the above two monetization models and then integrate additional ones as your presold traffic grows. Or you may begin your business with one of the following income streams and diversify later on when you are ready...

- **Creating / Selling Hard Goods**

This one is for you if you have a product to sell. It could be something you make yourself, like handmade greetings cards, or an item you've sourced from elsewhere such

as children's toys.

Either way, the secret of successful sales lies in building a theme-based site, which focuses on a niche related to your products. You'll attract targeted traffic – people who are interested in your niche and want the information you offer.

You PREsell, by offering lots of information that interests them, and *then* you offer them the chance to buy from you. Selling like this means you avoid offline marketing costs, you don't need a store *and* you reach a broader audience world-wide.

- **Creating / Selling E-goods**

Take your knowledge, and package it into an e-good, like a downloadable book or course, which you can sell from your site. Make this product an extension of the information you're already providing on your site.

Now that I have an e-book for sale, things are even cooler: I might not have a single moment to devote to my site in a day, but sales keep happening anyway! (No matter how busy I am, I always make time to check my daily sales. It's a real pick-me-up!). Ellen

So, if your site is about baking, you could create an e-book out of your chocolate cake recipe collection. If your passion is walking for fitness, offer your own e-program of exercise plans. If jewelry is your passion, follow Rena's lead (one of our case studies)...



- **Selling Your Services, Locally and Globally**

Perhaps you already have a skill that people would gladly pay for. Are you an accountant, a translator, an editor, or a gardener, etc.? There are people out there who need your services!

If your skill is one that requires on-the-spot input from you, like gardening, you can raise your profile in your local community through your website. And if your skills can be utilized over the Internet, you can build a global client base.

Erin combines both these opportunities with her website. Offline, Erin owns a residential organizing service. Now she's taken her business online, offering tons of helpful organizing advice (her "content") targeted toward busy moms. Mothers from around the world visit her site for information. While they're there, they might buy her products, or click on contextual ads or affiliate links, thus generating online income.

At the same time, local moms who find the site may decide to hire Erin. She's received more local business from her Web presence than she ever did from her Yellow Pages ad! What's more, she's discovered an interesting new sideline. As moms have discovered her site, and seen how well she's doing with it, they've hired her to help them start building sites of their own.

- **Finders / Referrers**

Do you live in a town that attracts tourists? Know of an undiscovered haven that could make a wonderful holiday destination? You can use your site to promote offline businesses who don't know how to use the Internet to their advantage, or who would be happy to receive new clients via your site.

Build a site about your touristy hometown, or a place you know well. As traffic grows, you can start to send contacts to local restaurants, hotels and real estate agents, and charge a commission on the leads and sales you send them. For example, explore these sites...

<http://case-studies.sitesell.com/#TRAVEL>

- **Build a Range of Monetization Options**

No matter what kind of website you build, it's smart to spread your monetization choices around. Start with the easiest option, and gradually add others. By diversifying your revenue opportunities, you're insuring that if one income stream isn't performing well, you have plenty of others to pick up the slack.

With all these options, remember that your first step is to build traffic, by creating carefully targeted PREselling content. Only then do you introduce monetization to your website.

If you're first and foremost an infopreneur, start with contextual advertising. Gradually add a few well-chosen affiliate programs. You might then create an e-product, or sell hard goods related to your niche.

If you already use eBay auction selling in a way that's related to your niche, you could consider adding this to your monetization plan as well, and cross-promote your auction activities with other monetizing opportunities on your site.

Likewise, if you are primarily selling services or goods, you can add contextual ads and affiliate programs to the mix. It all takes time to build, but will pay great dividends in the long term. And where's the hurry?

Here's one mom's take on it, that we think makes good sense:

When I build my site, I'm not an employee working 9-5 and receiving a very small salary. I am a business owner, building an asset that would generate income, or cash flow, if you will, for years to come.

If you have a site generating an income of \$300 a month, you have built, with your own two hands and your brain, an asset worth anywhere between \$36,000 and \$72,000 [assuming a 5-10% return on investment]. If you did all that in your spare time... I think you should be very proud and satisfied. Rachel

Truly, the only limit to finding ways to generate an income from your website is your imagination.

2.4.6 Conclusion

We hope the process is starting to make sense to you:

CONTENT ➡ **TRAFFIC** ➡ **PRESELL** ➡ **MONETIZE**

Take a topic that excites you. Seize the opportunity to share your passions, hobbies and talents with a world-wide audience.

Create a website with lots of carefully focused, keyword-rich content about something you know and love. You'll be building a solid foundation for your WAHM business.

Soon, the search engines will notice you, and your traffic will begin to grow. That's when the fun begins! Write more content, remembering all the time to PREsell, by sharing your enthusiasm for your topic in the words you write. Be warm, be straight, be "you" – and you won't go wrong.

Finally, the part we all look forward to... "Show me the money!" We hope you can see from the range of monetization options we've described, that making an income from your site is perfectly feasible.

It is all very do-able. And you can work at it when you like, at the speed that suits you, and still put the all-important needs of your family first.

But don't just take our word for it. Later on in the Guide we will introduce you to some more work-at-home moms who are building sites successfully.

First, though, let's get socialize...

2.5 Step 5: Use Social Media Marketing to Your Advantage

If there's one stereotype that holds true with moms is that we love to socialize... at the gym, over coffee chats, during play dates, at school or community events, during book club meetings, at the swimming pool or even the rare visit to the spa for one of those "me first" days. Now, it's easy to "get social" on the Web with the help of social media.

We asked another WAHM, Natasha Vincent (mydreadlocks.com) to guide us through Step 5. Take it away Natasha...

2.5.1 Introducing Social Media Marketing

Thanks for the invitation! Let's jump right in...

Sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube are so popular that the mainstream media often uses them as resources for news stories. You can do the same thing. Use them to help you create a relationship with like-minded people (i.e., people who are just as passionate about your niche as you are), to find out what's trending in your niche or area of interest, to identify the needs and dreams of your audience, to create new friends, etc.

That's what happens on SiteSell Facebook each day...

<http://www.facebook.com/SiteSell>

It's fun and easy to start conversations and develop new friends close to or very far away from your neighborhood... and you can do it all from the comfort of your home and whenever you have some quiet time to yourself.

Social media fits into every part of the **CONTENT** ➡ **TRAFFIC** ➡ **PRESELL** ➡ **MONETIZE** process:

CONTENT: Create interesting content on other social media sites by sharing news or photos or tips or opinions that are related to your theme or niche. This is a great way to demonstrate your expertise and passion about what you know or do. People who read your post will think, "Wow, she knows her stuff! I'll check out her website."

You can make your own website more interactive by allowing your visitors to add content, such as text, pictures or even videos to your Web pages. SBI! has an interactive tool included at no extra cost and it's easy to use - [Content 2.0 \(http://2.sitesell.com\)](http://2.sitesell.com).

TRAFFIC : Every link you provide to your website gives your social media visitors a chance to know more about your business **after** getting to know you through your posts or photos or free reports, etc.

PRESELL: The more you let your personality shine through and the more your posts resonate with your friends, subscribers and followers on social media, the more they'll be inclined to click on links to your website (wherever you can insert these links). Search Engines consider these "social signals" as approval votes and they take that in consideration when they are ranking your site.

MONETIZE: People who like and trust your business convert into customers much faster than "strangers". Relationships that you develop in the social world are already "warmed up" when they follow a link from Facebook, for example, and arrive on your website to "look around". These visitors are more open to your sales messages and recommendations.

All in all, being social on the Net for business purposes definitely has its advantages. Of course, social media marketing isn't first on your to-do list. Consider it as an *adjunct* to your business-building site, where you provide the high-value information that your visitors are searching for. Your website is the foundation of your online business.

I'm simply encouraging you to dip your toes into social media when you are ready - the water's fine. I recommend that when the time is right, you start by figuring out which social media sites and tools might give you the biggest return on investment ("ROI").

It's not like us moms have a lot of time to spare. We've all heard the horror stories of people wasting time - sometimes up to several hours - online only to wonder what they've accomplished! (Fortunately, SBI! owners have access to time-saving tips, step-by-step instructions and easy-to-use tools which means you can become a lean, mean, social media machine!)

The key lesson to remember is that social media is not your business: it **supports** your online business. Try not to get too distracted or off message. Read on to find out how!

2.5.2 Benefits

If you're just getting started with social media, you'll be intrigued by the business blossoming opportunities it provides. Even advanced social media users will get excited by the following reminders of how beneficial this type of marketing can be!

1) Build credibility.

The more often you participate, the more often you and your e-business will get positive exposure. Frequent exposure fosters a sense of familiarity and it reinforces the perception that you are a "helpful expert" or "trusted mentor".

2) Lead a community.

Now that you have that credibility: lead away! Groups, tribes and members are all open to insights from a trusted, reliable source. Why can't that person be you?

3) Increase traffic.

By monitoring traffic flow and interest, you'll quickly come to realize how responsive your social media followers are. Use this info to create more of the content they want from you on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Pinterest... and especially on your own website.

4) Get more visibility.

You do know the people your friends know? Many media opportunities can be traced to social media connections and networking (ex., "I noticed your business on Facebook and I was wondering..."). One way to do this is to consistently provide relevant tips to your industry. This alone will get you long-term visibility if you stick to it.

5) Collect feedback.

Surveys, polls, and forms do very well in social media circles. Regularly ask your followers for their opinions on key issues in your niche. This information can be later used for articles or even new product ideas.

6) Learn and network.

Your clients aren't the only ones involved in social media! Get connected to your current and potential suppliers, merchants, associations, etc. You'll be the first to know about key industry trends.

7) Launch new products and services.

Once your community is familiar with you, they'll be highly responsive to any relevant offer you make so introduce your new product or service via social media!

8) Manage current clients.

Supporting your customers by providing frequently asked questions (FAQs) or giving them upgrades for infoproducts (ex., e-books) keeps them happy and are the types of activities you want to do for positive "word of mouth" buzz.

9) Generate new leads.

With the ability to highly target your social media circles, you can also find new clients online. A visit to your website will confirm their initial perception where your knowledge and passion shine through.

10) See trends in your niche as they are emerging.

The more you participate in social media, the more you will see what's fresh and new in your niche. You can use these ideas to keep your online business current as well as relevant to your prospects and clients.

Now that you know the potential benefits of social media sites, let's look at...

2.5.3 The Big 3 Adjuncts to Your Website

Try to participate at least one of the popular networking sites on a regular basis as time allows. After you have a solid e-business foundation in place, "getting social" is time well spent. The top three online networking sites are...

- **Facebook**

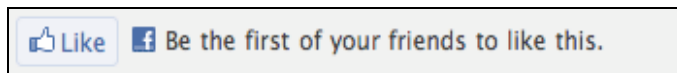
Facebook describes its social network this way... "helps you connect and share with the

people in your life.” You have the ability to find friends from your school days, previous jobs and even from your old neighborhood! Facebook’s reach is very extensive.

There are 2 main ways to use Facebook to promote your website...

1) Display a “Like” Button on your website

Adding a “Like” button (a simple plug-in) on your site allows Facebook users to show their interest in your content with a simple click of the mouse. “Like” is a way to give positive feedback or to connect with topics your visitors care about - and want to share - on Facebook.



Tracey from ot-mom-learning-activities.com uses the “Like” button as a way to be seen on Facebook without taking up much of her time. This is how she describes her winning strategy...

“I put Facebook Like buttons up on my site a couple months ago, onto a few pages and my page views increased. Now, my traffic is up quite a bit, and my page views from Facebook plugins are my second highest traffic bringer, with 19.39% of my page views - so far 933 pages viewed in just 9 days. I am reeling!”

2) Create a Facebook page for your business

Having a business page increases your online visibility. It becomes a gathering place for people who already know about your business and for new people who want to learn more about it.



On this page, you can share news about what’s happening your niche, provide updates about your business, spotlight special offerings, hold contests, do surveys, etc. Encourage your Facebook fans to ask questions, express opinions, submit photos or videos, etc. This 2-way type of engagement keeps your business on people’s radar, reinforces your knowledge and passion for your niche, and generates traffic to your website to see what else you offer “over there.”

Consumers today are not only interested in the best product and service for the best price. They also want to know that the businesses they frequent have value systems they can support. Your style of writing (“voice”) on Facebook communicates who you are and what you stand for.

As an example, SiteSell Facebook features Shelly, the steady and persistent tortoise...

<http://www.facebook.com/SiteSell>

Let's move on to the next social media option...

- **Twitter**

Twitter describes itself as an "information network" where you can connect to the latest information about what you find interesting.

What further differentiates it from other social media is the fact updates must be brief. We're talking 140 characters! Here are some examples using quotations...

"The woman who can create her own job is the woman who will win fame and fortune."
~ Amelia Earhart (99 characters)

"You have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world." ~ Harriet Tubman (126 characters)

The quotes above are less than 140 characters in length. Obviously, you need to be succinct, interesting and clear. If you haven't used Twitter before, it may be hard to see how any relevant information can be shared in such little space. Don't be fooled, though. For example...

"Simple, light, healthy spring recipes" <http://yourdomain.com/recipes>

This one demonstrates how you can provide relevant information while including a call to action (like a link to your website where they can get more details).

Give brief updates about your business, including tips, news, ideas and other information that your potential visitors (Twitter calls them Followers) will appreciate.

For example, see how SiteSell mixes information...

<http://twitter.com/SiteSell/>

The more helpful you are, the more your Followers will spontaneously retweet your content and extend your reach.

Next option?

- **YouTube**

YouTube allows you to create your own Video Channel - almost like owning your own television station - to grow a base of subscribers. Your Channel can be filled with videos that you like, but the best scenario is for you to create your own video content.

<http://youtube.com/SiteSell>

Producing your own videos and encouraging user-generated videos about your business and/or niche for YouTube will build your online “brand of one” much faster and more effectively than simply displaying videos from others.

The best part is that producing video today doesn’t require a massive budget. Viewers want to see the “real” you and get a feeling that you’re focused on sharing a relevant message more than simply pushing your brand image.

All you need is a handheld video camera and something relevant to say about your niche. Perhaps it’s a product review for your favorite tech gadget or cosmetic item. Or maybe you want to share a tip on how to finish a scrapbooking project with flair.

Whatever it is, ensure you mention your website’s URL or display it on screen because YouTube is ready to help you drive traffic to your website!

If you have lots of photos about your niche, set up a Pinterest account. It’s a fun and visual way for people to get to know your business. A picture is often worth a thousand words!

And now for a few final tips about social media marketing...

2.5.4 Quick Tips

To get the best ROI for your business socializing efforts...

- 1) Be consistent by keeping your profile name the same when using 3rd party social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- 2) Offer value by providing unique, relevant content that demonstrates your personality and professionalism.
- 3) Keep it fresh by updating often and standing up for your values – while at the same time providing high quality content to your niche.
- 4) Assume everything you say is public because it is! Like your mom used to say, “If you don’t have anything good to say, then don’t say anything at all.”

Social media marketing is not complicated. It does take time, though. That’s why SBI! includes “social” tools (Facebook “like” buttons and commenting, Follow Me on Twitter buttons, Pin It! buttons, Share bars, etc.) in its suite of tools. As you work on your website, you can be social at the same time!

2.5.5 SBI!'s Social Tools

I (Natasha) use the following SBI! tools on my site...

- **Site-Blogging**

Traditional blogging - writing posts, finding graphics, replying to comments, etc. - takes a lot of time... often for little return. (See why at <http://blogorbuild.sitesell.com/>)

SBI!'s RSS/Blog It! tool allows you to get the benefits of **site-blogging** (more traffic) without the downsides (more hassle). Complete a few simple steps and then Blog It! leverages your efforts by distributing news about the latest page that you added to your website.

- **Socialize It!**

Socialize It! gives you a fast and easy way to add a social marketing button bar to your website. This bar gives your visitors multiple ways to easily share your website and spread the word to the people they know online. All they have to do is click on one whichever option they want on the Socialize It! bar.

All **you** have to do is provide high quality content. Great content is what makes people want to share, buzz, and bookmark your site's pages.

- **Content 2.0**

Your visitors are used to seeing interactive sites like personal blogs or Facebook, etc. You can make your website interactive too... without the heavy work involved!

SBI!'s tool allow you to have your visitors create valuable content (text and photos) on your site for you. The best part is that you can control the quality and quantity of these user submissions.

With Content 2.0, you essentially become an online party hostess! Your visitors hang out and socialize with you as well as each other. They leave with good feelings about your site and tell their friends. That's exactly how you want to generate long-term traffic to your website!

For more details about these SBI! tools, see the Trust-Building section on this page...

<http://tools.sitesell.com/>

And that's it for me. Well, for now anyway... in the next chapter, please see my case study (Natasha Vincent).

It's back to the WAHM Team...

3. WAHM Case Studies

We'd like to introduce you to some WAHMs who are making a success of their websites, right now. We hope you'll find these stories inspirational. We certainly did.

Case Study# 1

Amber Dusick

<http://www.do-it-yourself-weddings.com>

What kind of education and work experience did you have before building your website?

I have a degree in art and worked various jobs that were somewhat art related after college. I was working in the music industry (for a record label) when I started my first website. I was doing mostly administrative work with a little graphic design on the side. I was fairly miserable in my job. Unfulfilled and bored mostly.

I was fairly computer and online savvy, but had zero experience with anything website related.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

I was motivated to start an online business because my husband and I wanted to start a family and I wanted the freedom to stay at home with my (future) children. My current job offered a very short maternity leave and the thought of putting an infant in daycare to go to a job I didn't even enjoy made me ill. We couldn't have afforded for me to stay home though so I felt rather stuck as we had to put starting a family on hold while we figured out finances.

My original plan was to start a website and grow it to a level where I could quit my job and we could squeak by. I needed a source of income that would work in the long run when I was raising children and needed flexible hours. I wasn't even intending to completely replace my salary (although I did and then some). I just needed to contribute enough that we could make it work.

How did you come up with your idea for a website?

I started my first website (do-it-yourself-weddings.com) in 2004, and my husband and I had gotten married earlier that year. That alone pretty much explains the story! I was wedding-obsessed and we had a "DIY" (Do-It-Yourself) style wedding ourselves. At that time the DIY wedding trend was just getting started so thanks to SBI!'s Brainstorm It! tools I soon found it was a niche that needed filling.

I started my second site (www.make-baby-stuff.com) in 2008, two years after my first son was born. The birth of a baby ignited a passion for making baby things like clothes, toys and decor so that site was a natural outlet for me.

My most recent site (www.DIYHomeDecoratingIdeas.com) I started in 2009, just after we bought our first fixer upper home. The experience of buying a home and fixing it up made me excited for all things decorating so a new site was born.

Basically, my sites are an outer extension of what I'm excited about in my life. They are outlets for my passions. As my life evolves and we've welcomed babies and a new home, my passions have grown too. These new passions are things I'm learning about and doing anyway... so why not build a business out of it?! I'm sure there will be more SBI! websites in my future.

How many hours per week do you work on your site?

The amount that I work is a hard question to answer because it varies month to month and year to year. Right now, I never work more than ten hours a week. Usually much, much, much less. More like zero hours per week. A week that I work ten hours is a very busy week for me, very productive.

Gosh, this is a little embarrassing to admit. I feel guilty because I know I could be achieving so much more if I spent more time on my sites. Time though, that is the problem! I'd love to be working on them more.

I have two small children, ages 4 and 18 months and I am at home with them every day so finding time to work on my websites is often put on the back burner. Their grandmother comes once per week for a few hours and I am able to get some work done then but it is never more than three hours. I sometimes work at night after the little ones are asleep but I'd say this is only once or twice a week for a couple hours.

Building websites this slowly takes a lot of patience and commitment.

How do you make money from your site?

I make money from Google AdSense, and direct advertising from advertisers who contact me directly.

What is your average monthly income? (approx figure)

\$6000 - \$8000/month (depending on the time of year)

How long was it before you found success? And please define what "success" means to you.

Within six months I made my first pennies from my weddings website through Google AdSense. And I mean "pennies" quite literally. I think I made something like 23 cents. While this wasn't exactly "success" it was something! I knew that it had potential so I kept plugging away and writing content. That first year I made a total of \$243. Not exactly at a level where I could quit my job but by the second year I did reach that level.

After 14 months my site started averaging \$500/month and it kept increasing each

month as my traffic grew and my site reached what SBlers call the “snowball effect”. I quit my job that second year. That was success to me.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

I stumbled on an SBI! site about jewelry selling (thinking maybe I'd try making or selling jewelry as a source of income) and read her "about me" page where she mentioned SBI! and the success she had with her site. It sounded so far fetched and too good to be true. I also didn't understand how on earth her website made money since she didn't seem to be selling anything. So I emailed her my questions and to my surprise, she actually took time to reply. It was her email that convinced me to purchase SBI!. She herself was a mom and basically living the lifestyle that I wanted. It totally inspired me.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

Back when I started in 2004 we were totally broke and newly married. He was very supportive (okay, a little sceptical, but heck, so was I) about taking that leap. He absolutely wanted to find a way where I could stay at home with our children too.

Now things are a tad different. After seeing the success of my websites he started one and then another one, etc. It is a source of camaraderie as well as light-hearted competition between us. It is fun having someone to talk about SBI!, that is for sure. We have this fantasy of living completely off our websites and using all that freedom to travel with our kids. Actually, this is more of a “goal” than a “fantasy” at this point. An attainable one!

Do you have advice to offer other WAHMs on eliciting support from their significant others?

I think the thing that helped the most when I first introduced him to the idea was to show him examples of actual SBI! sites and have him read their “about me” pages. It makes it real if you can put a face and a story with the company.

Are your children involved with your website?

My boys are my models for a lot of projects on my baby crafts website but that is the extent of it so far.

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website(s)?

I wish I would have started ten of them back when I started my first and had all that free time!

Amber, how do you “do it all”?

I don't. Simple as that. As I mentioned above, I work very little on my websites right now. There are so many things I “should” be doing with them. I know what needs to be done and what the next steps are to help them grow, but my time is limited and my little

ones are only little for a very short time. Growing my business at the rate I am is very slow. I'm okay with slow.

Case Study #2

Rena Klingenberg

<http://www.making-jewelry-now.com/>

What kind of education and work experience did you have before building your website?

My "working for other people" experience includes secretarial jobs, followed by several years of editing and desktop publishing. I've also had a jewelry business for several years, making and selling handcrafted jewelry.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

I'm a single mom with a son who has serious health issues, and it would be extremely hard to find an employer who would put up with all the work time I'd have to miss when my son is ill.

Although I had been doing well with my handcrafted jewelry business, reliable childcare was expensive and sometimes difficult to secure when I did jewelry shows.

Also, because my jewelry business involved making and selling tangible products, my income was limited by how much jewelry I was physically capable of producing and selling. The only way to earn more money in my jewelry business was to work longer hours. But I wanted to work smarter, not harder. So I thought about adding a second stream of income by writing and publishing e-books.

And then I began to wonder if instead of e-books, I could operate a profitable Website with my jewelry marketing tips and info available for free.

My first and most successful SBI! website is jewelrybusinesstips.com which I started in October 2003. I had been exploring the possibility of writing e-books when I came across SBI!. The SBI! organization seemed different – it had integrity – and the money-back guarantee helped me feel safer in giving it a try.

I now have 4 SBI! sites in total. The others are jewelry-display-ideas.com, making-jewelry-now.com and jewelry-business-blog.com.

How did you come up with your idea for a website?

I had been selling my handcrafted jewelry for several years and had experimented with nearly every possible way of selling my work, and evolving and tweaking the methods that worked for me to make them more profitable.

Jewelry making is one of the most popular creative activities in the world, and everyone dreams of selling what they make. However, marketing and other business matters

usually don't come easily to jewelry artists.

So I was sure there was an audience for all the jewelry business success secrets I had learned through my own hard-won experiences. I looked around the web and couldn't find any really comprehensive resource that detailed all the unique aspects of marketing handcrafted jewelry.

I also researched all the online jewelry making forums, and from the questions and problems addressed there I saw a huge need for information on how to market one's work successfully in the crowded jewelry art field.

On the forums, jewelry artists were asking things like how to photograph their work, how to do home jewelry parties, how to display their jewelry, how to approach shops about carrying their work, how to get their business set up legally, how to find good shows, how to sell jewelry on eBay.... These were all questions I could answer, and many of the articles I add to my site are written to address the questions that pop up frequently on jewelry making forums.

I created *Home Jewelry Business Success Tips* with the intention of providing the information resource I would have loved to find when I was a struggling jewelry artist.

How many hours per week do you work on your site?

20 or 30, and sometimes I do none at all when I'm busy with other things. But it's nice to be able to rely on a steady income from my sites, even when I totally ignore them for a week or more at a time.

How do you make money from your site?

Hosting pay-per-click ads (Google/Yahoo!) on my sites; affiliate programs; ebooks.

Although I don't include any outside advertising in my newsletters, I do get a huge income boost every time I publish a newsletter issue, due to the volume of people following the article links in my newsletter (and clicking on all the latest ads and affiliate links while they're visiting!). SBI!'s tools make getting subscribers and publishing newsletters a piece of cake.

What is your average monthly income?

Home Jewelry Business Success Tips brings in about 25% more than the income I earned at the highest paying "real" job I've ever held. Being able to rely on a steady income from my sites, even when I totally ignore them for a while, gives me the freedom to live life on my own terms, spending my time the way I choose. Every summer we go on vacation for two weeks, and I come home to find that my websites have kept on earning money each day I was gone, like clockwork - with no decrease in income.

How long was it before you found success? And please define what "success" means to you.

I made my first \$7 commission a few weeks after my first article went live. That was a big moment for me – when I really knew that information publishing could be a path to financial independence.

I worked really hard and less than two months after *Home Jewelry Business Success Tips* was online, it made SBI!'s list of sites in the top 2% of the web. And within six months of starting, the site was providing a growing fulltime income for us.

My websites have given me the time and flexibility to be the mom I need to be - while I earn a wonderful living in a most enjoyable way.

Building my websites never feels like work. It's something I really love doing, and it's a great feeling to look over the sites I've created and think, "Wow! I did that!" And to earn money from them is icing on the cake.

It's very rewarding to know that the information I publish in my website and newsletter is helping my fellow jewelry artists achieve their own dreams. Being able to help people make a positive difference in their lives makes this more rewarding than any "real" job I've ever had.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

The factor that tipped the scales for me was the triangle-shaped diagram showing the high percentage of SBI! sites that make it into the top 1 to 2 per cent of the web.

The comprehensive suite of tools that are all under one roof at SBI! was another factor. I didn't want to have to cobble together a collection of software and services from different providers and fiddle with getting them to work together. I wanted to concentrate on writing useful content and getting visitors to my site.

I know I could probably do much of the technical stuff myself if I had to, but why spend my time on it? And all those fiddly separate parts would cost about as much as I spend on an all-under-one-roof SBI! site anyway – which is less than a dollar per day.

As an online entrepreneur the most profitable use of my time is to build my sites' original content and incoming links, so I'm glad to let SBI! take on the technical stuff for me.

And I can't think of anything I would change about SBI! – it works very well for me, and they're constantly adding new features to make our web businesses better and better.

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website(s)?

I would start my second, third, and fourth SBI! websites sooner than I did. Once you've got a handle on using the SBI! tools for the basics of building good content and incoming links, it's not at all difficult to balance multiple websites. In fact, when you come up with a great new niche, it's nice to have different topics to write about.

Rena, how do you “do it all”?

I work on my sites while my son’s at school during the day, or playing with his friends, or in the evening after he goes to bed. I don’t have set hours for working, and I love having the freedom to arrange each day to suit the other things going on in my life.

I’m a big fan of voluntary simplicity. I love the scaled-down lifestyle of working for myself at home.

Case Study #3

Crystal Maleski

<http://www.makedinnereasy.com>

What kind of education and work experience did you have before building your website?

I have a B.S. in Occupational Therapy and a M.S. in Management. I’ve been a Director of Rehab Services for more years than I can count but cooking has always been what I love to do.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

Initially my motivation was to help my friends who kept asking me for ideas for what to make for dinner. I had no idea that it would actually grow into an e-business that reached people all over the world!

How did you come up with your idea for a website?

My site started quite by accident. I had a friend who knew I always cooked homemade meals for my family. She asked if I would consider cooking for her as well and she encouraged me to open a weeknight catering business. While I thought the idea was viable, I just wasn’t that available at dinner time to deliver dinners or even to have people pick them up from my house.

I have four kids who are really involved in sports and I’m usually running between games and practices during the afternoon and evening hours. As a compromise I offered to send her my weekly plan of what I was making for dinner along with the recipes. She liked what I was sending her so much that she started forwarding it to her friends.

Fairly soon, I was sending a weekly e-mail to about 30 people with menus, a grocery shopping list and recipes for the week. The defining moment actually came when a single Dad approached me at a soccer game and asked for dinner ideas to feed his kids. It became clear to me that there was a need for this service and best of all it was something I thoroughly enjoyed doing!

How many hours per week do you work on your site?

Anywhere from 5-15 hours per week. After I attended a "By SBlers For SBlers" Conference, I was really on fire and probably logged at least 20 hours a week for a while. Besides managing four kids I also work part-time outside of the house as a Rehab Director and do work for my husband's business at home too.

How do you make money from your site?

Currently the majority of my income comes from AdSense. I also receive donations and I recently just got my first paying sponsor and I think I have enough traffic to start perusing site sponsorship more.

What is your average monthly income? (approx figure)

About \$600-\$700 per month.

How long was it before you found success? And please define what "success" means to you.

I think I felt successful the first time I received an e-mail from someone who raved about my menus and recipes. I still savor those e-mails. Now I frequently get e-mails from people who tell me they are making homemade dinners for the first time and their kids are actually eating it, it's hard to put a price on that!

I remember getting quite excited the first time I earned a few pennies on adsense and the first time a page of mine was ranked 1 on Google. Now I define success by my daily traffic volume, the number of interactions on my Facebook page, the number of subscribers to my weekly e-zine and of course my revenue. I often tell people that I can cover my yearly expenses with one month of revenue. That always gets a response!

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

I have to admit I purchased a competitor before SBI!. Sure they were a lot less expensive but I was lost. I had no support and had no idea what to do. So I bit the bullet and bought into SBI!. Now I know you get what you pay for!

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

My husband still rolls his eyes at me sometimes. He thinks I have a viable business but should just pay someone to do it for me. No way! I get so much satisfaction by learning how to do it on my own.

I have a very well paying job outside of the house, but I have so much pride in my site and how much I've learned. I firmly believe that my site will soon outperform my job in terms of revenue. My site has always out performed my job in terms of personal satisfaction.

Do you have advice to offer other WAHMs on eliciting support from their significant others?

One thing I've told my husband is that if I had started a traditional business I would have tremendous overhead initially and a much greater chance of failure. Building a website takes time, the gains are slower but there is almost no risk other than your time and the monthly or yearly subscription fee, which is nothing compared to the cost of leasing a building and hiring employees.

I do think it can be challenging to still be part of family activities when you are a WAHM. In order to work on my site but still have time with my husband kids, I often invite them to read or do their homework with me in my "home office" so that we can spend time together at the same time I'm working on my site.

Are your children involved with your website?

My kids have become food critics! They taste test every recipe and even help me name my new creations. They seem to get a kick out of telling their classmates that their Mom has her own website!

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website (s)?

I wish I had understood keywords a bit better when I started. I look back at some of my early pages and groan a bit, but no one else knows that.

One of the best things about having your own site is you can make every page your own. You can go back and fix an error or take a better picture. I try to just keep moving forward and learn from my past mistakes. I often tell my kids you learn more when you make a mistake. In this case I've learned and benefited from my mistakes but in the long run my mistakes really haven't hurt my site that much.

Crystal, how do you "do it all"?

I have a very busy life but I don't "do it all." My kitchen cabinets aren't organized and I'm sure I have some overdue library books around the house (if I can find them that is). But, I'm doing what I love.

I heard a quote once, "if you want to see me, come on over; if you want to see my house then make an appointment." That quote sums my life up. My house is often a bit messy but we have a homemade dinner every night on the table and I have pictures on my website, makedinnereasy.com, to prove it!

Case Study #4

Biljana Drake

<http://www.skin-care-recipes-and-remedies.com/>

What kind of education and work experience did you have before building your website?

I did not know anything about HTML, site building or keywords. I ran, and still do, a forum for parents but that was the extent of my knowledge.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

I was a sophomore in college and working part time. I needed extra income to cover the car payment and a few other bills. I also wanted to be able to eventually work from home full time.

How did you come up with your idea for a website?

When I moved from to the United States (I am from Serbia), I brought with me a notebook with skin care recipes I collected over the years. Most of them were from my mom, she is a skin care recipes enthusiast also.

My other sites are skincarefromscratch.com and success-with-weight-loss-programs.com.

How many hours per week do you work on your site?

I work approximately 10-15 hours a week, sometimes more, sometimes less. I do majority of my work in the morning before my daughter gets up and before I have to go to work. A lot of work is done on weekends, also.

How do you make money from your site?

My primary earner is AdSense as well as Clickbank products, affiliate products, and advertising.

What is your average monthly income? (approx figure)

\$2500-\$3000.

How long was it before you found success? And please define what “success” means to you.

In the beginning success meant being able to cover the car payment every month. I soon revised the goal to paying the car, cell phone bill and my daughter’s daycare cost. I earned my first AdSense check six months after I started the website.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

My friend Zorana of www.cakechannel.com showed me her AdSense earnings in June of 2006 and I was hooked! The investment was significant at the time, spending \$300 was not an easy decision. I haven’t looked back.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

He is very supportive and often times more optimistic about the sites than I am!

Do you have advice to offer other WAHMs on eliciting support from their significant others?

The key is clarifying that it is a business and not a get rich scheme.

Are your children involved with your website?

Yes, my daughter helped me with a couple of pages. She took pictures and arranged ingredients. Money that those pages earn goes to her.

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website(s)?

I often think that I should have narrowed the focus of the site. It requires a lot of topics to be covered but it also allows for latitude and creativity. The second thing I would do differently is to pay more attention to keywords and linking; I neglected the two in the beginning so I revised the strategy a couple of years ago.

Biljana, how do you “do it all”?

I like to quote my favorite TV character, Dr. Brennan of the show “Bones.” She says, “I do one and then I do the other.” This perfectly summarizes my work. I don’t make lists, I don’t check things off. I decide what I will do that day and I do it. After that, I move on to something else.

Juggling graduate school, a full time job, motherhood, marriage and every day life is not easy. Luckily, my site now allows me to take time off if I need it.

Case Study #5

Natasha Vincent

<http://www.mydreadlocks.com/>

What kind of education and work experience did you have before building your website?

Despite being proficient in the sciences as a young person, my educational background ended up being in communications. I have a degree in journalism and had worked in several marketing-related positions over the past 15+ years. Wow, that makes me feel so old. Ok, let’s call it experience!

That, err, experience first translated into working for marketing agencies and even fundraising for non-profit organizations for a few years.

When I first thought about having a presence online, it was to promote my fundraising skills. The original intention was to be a “fundraiser for hire” and putting my shingle up online seemed the most logical next step at the time.

But I was so nervous about putting my professional reputation on the line... online. I had so many crazy disaster scenarios in my brain: What if I make a mistake on the site? It'll ruin my credibility. What if my potential clients can't find me online? I won't be able to help anyone with fundraising.

So that's when I decided I'd start a "laboratory website" where I'd be able to make all my mistakes and learn from experiments. At the time, I had had dreadlocks for a couple of years. So that's where the idea for mydreadlocks.com came from... fear of starting a site about my profession!

Now that I know how simple the process of building a site can be, it was such a silly fear to have! That said, I'm kind of glad: falling into the health and beauty niche because of this experience has been a very good thing for me. It's gone beyond a lab experiment and become a sustainable source of long-term income.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

As I mentioned, the original idea was to have a space to display my fundraising experience and expertise on the web. The thing is, I wanted to ensure that this "online business thing" really worked before potentially risking my career path by making mistakes on a website. I decided to start a hobby site first so that I could work out the kinks before doing a fundraising related site.

The motivation went from being one of promoting non-profit organizations with my marketing skills to learning how to promote services in a specific niche (health and beauty) with my marketing skills.

That learning process has literally changed my life and its direction: I've since learned skills I never thought about previously but couldn't live without now! My new motivation is to continue to merge my love of health and beauty with my online marketing skills.

How did you come up with your idea for a website?

I had worn a particular hairstyle called dreadlocks for a few years and during that time period there was little credible hair care information online. After doing the research as prescribed in the SBI! Action Guide, I knew that this weird little niche would be perfect for me... and all the other people looking for dreadlocks hair care information.

So much of the information online at the time was either inadequate, myopic or dangerously wrong (who would put glue along entire sections of hair anyway?!). The most altruistic parts of me just wanted to provide an accurate information source that relied on professional stylists, the most practical parts of me simply wanted to create a resource for myself that I could use while growing my own dreadlocks.

In essence, I was my most important customer in the beginning and I shaped the site to my questions and needs. As the site gained traction and an audience grew, I relied on their needs and feedback to shape the site's content and direction.

How many hours per week do you work on your site?

Hmm, more like per month! I'm what you'd call a Lazy Webmaster. I'd say I put in around 15-20 hours a month across all my sites now that they're more mature. In the beginning, however, I think I logged around 25 hours a week on myreadlocks.com alone. I don't regret it though because I was able to start profiting from that site with Google AdSense in less than 3 months after starting it! That was back in December 2007 and the site has gotten monthly checks ever since.

How do you make money from your site?

While AdSense has been the most consistent income over the years, affiliate programs and lead generation have also been very profitable for me. I'm really comfortable with this mix of monetization, but if I was to try another way to earn money from the site, it would be via a membership site and/or offering infoproducts (like how-to reports and videos).

How long was it before you found success? And please define what "success" means to you.

I started my first site in the Fall of 2003 and was making consistent income by Christmas of that same year with AdSense. As mentioned above... to this day, there hasn't been a month where an AdSense check doesn't get deposited into my bank account.

In general, my personal insights on success relate to being able to put my family first, building on my professional strengths, and having a strong business network that I can rely on... all while generating a fulfilling income and having fun! That's success to me.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

It took me a whopping 18 months to decide on my first subscription. Isn't that horrid? I feel like such an imbecile now because an extra 18 months could have seen the site be even bigger than it is now. But one can't dwell in the past: "always forward, never back."

The tipping point for finally making that purchase after 18 months was seeing yet another website giving false hair care information. It was like SBI! was going to be my sidekick as we combated potentially health-damaging information online!

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website(s)?

I'd start 18 months sooner and build more of sites so that my health and beauty network would be bigger today. The other thing I'd do is manage my domain names better. I lost a really good one that could have been the pearl of my hair care network if only I remembered to renew it on time. Perhaps it wasn't meant to be so I focus harder on the remaining domains.

Natasha, how do you “do it all”?

That's easy: I don't! As a mom, I realize the importance of delegation. Since I'm only one person, I need to call on others to help with important tasks. Over the years, I've found lots of people to help with things like graphic design, creating custom software and HTML coding. By far though, SBI! is my best and most consistent helper when it comes to the longevity of my online business.

Case Study #6

Kari Anderson

<http://www.karipearls.com/>

What kind of education and work experience did you have before building your website?

I've done tons of volunteering. (I'm a pastor's wife...it comes with the territory.) I also attempted some substitute teaching. I've traveled to several different countries for missions work. For over 20 years I've home schooled our 7 children up until college.

I have a BS degree in child development from the University of Arkansas, an elementary teaching degree from University of Iowa.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

I sort of stumbled onto it. I'd started a pearl business (I also stumbled on that) and was advised by the businessmen from SCORE to make a Website.

How did you come up with your idea for a website?

I had already started a small pearl jewelry business from my home, so that actually came first. It was a toss up about domain name, but just decided to choose a brand (my own name) instead of a generic domain name. I haven't regretted that decision.

How many hours per week do you work on your site?

I'd say 20 hours minimum to 40 hours maximum.

How do you make money from your site?

My two main methods are Google AdSense and selling my own pearls.

What is your average monthly income?

I've chosen a broad topic: pearls, and I'm slow, so, my average income is about \$1000US per month,

How long before you found success? And define what “success” means to you.

I'm very, very slow (tortoise, you know), and I really had no idea what I was doing. The whole "content concept" took me a while to grasp and I got really hung up on keywords... so, it was about 10 months before I saw any real traffic or income.

Success can mean different things for various situations, but my goal for this site was to make an income. Once the checks from Google started coming, they continued.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

The comparison with other programs.

Also lots of WAHMs I talk to have this concept that they need to be selling something. They totally miss the beauty of the possibility of making an income at home simply by supplying information about their favorite topic. It just seems so foreign and maybe too simple. They look at me and say, "But you're selling something." Yes, I am selling something, but most of my income up comes from the information I provide, not by selling.

Being a "business-person" is scary for some WAHMs, but sharing their hearts, researching, and becoming an expert on a topic, etc., comes naturally. Because my children can all "tie their own shoes", I'm ready to become a "business-person."

Raising children and running a home is the best training for success anyone can have. People just don't realize how complex and all-encompassing this time in life is. Nurturing children and managing a home makes one develop in incredible ways as a person and makes us mothers totally capable for just about anything.

That may seem like an exaggeration, but, as you know, it takes tremendous stamina, wisdom, and self-denial to raise children. Those character traits can see anyone onto success.

We mothers not only raise our children, but they "raise" us... to new levels of refinement and strength.

WAHMs need to see their value and that's what most women struggle with... having value. We love our families and home, but feel sort of "stuck there", and need outlets. Expressing ourselves and our knowledge via the Internet is a great outlet, although it will never take the place of human relationships and contact. In all reality, women who are smart enough to want to stay home are pretty smart.

How did you convince your significant other that an online business was a smart move?

After being married for so many years, a couple knows one another pretty well, and I'd already tripled my initial investment in pearls more than once, so my husband knew, for a fact, that there was potential in my business. When I found SBI!, I was looking for a website program for my business. SBI!, of course, has opened up a whole unknown

world for me on the Internet and I'm very grateful to them for that. My husband, was totally behind me in this venture. I also paid for SBI! from my own pearl business earnings... that was very important for me. I wanted it to be a real long-term commitment on my part, not just a fling.

Also, when my husband saw my first Google AdSense check which was for over \$400, guess what? He started his own SBI! website: *www.grassfedrecipes.com* which is a winter project for him. He's also a busy pastor and sheep farmer.

How does he support you in your ventures?

For one thing, my husband makes breakfast every morning. That gives me more "quality morning time" to work on my site. I'm fortunate to have a supportive husband. I think he's seen that God has used my efforts in the past and will continue to do so.

The best way to get your husband's support is to get your priorities in order, simplify life, and give him enough of your time to make him feel special. After all, if he feels he's going to be squeezed even more out of his wife's life, he won't be interested in her starting a website.

Are your children involved with your business?

We have a site that involves all nine of us (*www.globe-hoppers.com*). We thought an SBI! site would be a great way to share about our family's global ministry. The kids write about their travels and experiences and these stories go up on the site. It's been a great motivator for them, knowing their writing will be "published".

If you could go back, what would you do differently with your website(s)?

I won't get so hung up on keywords and would rely more on my common sense and an outline. Also, I wouldn't be so afraid. The whole thing was very scary to me. I'd discipline myself to writing at least a page everyday first thing and not spend so much time checking things like stats and email. I'd NEVER offer a free item without charging at least a minimal shipping and handling fee.... big lesson learned.

I have two words printed out and taped to the top of my computer: "Consistent" and "Persistent". I would have been more of both of those from the beginning. Most of all, I'd work harder at keeping my priorities right.

Kari, how do you "do it all"?

I have lots of tips. Here are a few that have especially helped me.

1. De-clutter.
2. Simplify clothing.
3. Simplify meals.
4. Simplify lifestyle.
5. Stay out or get out of debt.

6. Tithe.
7. Establish priorities.
8. Wash something, clean something, and bake something every day.
9. Delegate.
10. Encourage yourself.

Do you have more pearls of wisdom to share with other mothers?

Even though my kids are older I still try and work when they're not around or sleeping. It was a big point of frustration for them when I started my website and I was "always" (it seemed to them) on the computer. I think they were right about that. I learn a lot from my children's insights. One of them summed it up one day this way. "Mom, don't get sucked in. Remember, we need a mother!"

What was happening was exactly what I didn't want. Yes, I was home with my kids, but at the same time often ignoring them. That's something to keep a handle on. The computer can do that.... "suck you in."

That's when I started getting up early and I'm not a morning person. But it's restored peace to my home and my relationship with my family. Some afternoons I also squeeze some more time in, but only if there is time.

And speaking of time...

It's time for the story about how the WAHM team created this Guide...

4. The Background Story

You might be wondering how we four work-at-home moms got together to write this Guide. Let us introduce ourselves, and tell you our story.

The WAHM It! Team – Who We Are

Elizabeth Martyn

<http://www.healthy-eating-made-easy.com/>

I live in the UK and have two children. My background is in women's magazines and publishing, and I've worked at home as a freelance writer and editor since my kids were tiny.

Why did I get into building websites? Because freelance work is precarious. I wanted to grow a new source of income long-term, so that by the time my children were through university I wouldn't still be chained to my desk, working until 2am to meet deadlines. I didn't have a clue how I'd do it, but I needed something with great financial potential, that offered total flexibility, and where I called the shots.

I turned to the Internet – where else - did loads of research, and in a mood of excited trepidation bought SBI! at the end of 2004.

It took three months to settle on a topic. I discarded all my original ideas, and finally focused in on the question of how to produce healthy-but-yummy family meals using fresh, seasonal and unprocessed food. I launched healthy-eating-made-easy.com in 2005.

At first the learning curve was vertical, since my skills were minimal, but I did some reading here, some page-building there, and gradually it began to make sense. Over the ensuing years, I worked at the site as and when I could, and watched it grow slowly, but steadily. As traffic grew, so did my earnings. A couple of years ago it began to make better economic sense to devote all my working time to my SBI! sites (I now own three), so I became a full-time webmaster, running my own online business – no longer dependent on the whim of employers but free to organise my time as it suits me. One of my children is now at university and is giving me a helping hand with my work. It's great to feel I have some useful skills to pass on.

Life has thrown all sorts of challenges at me since I started with SBI! and there have been times when circumstances have forced me to stop working for quite a while and put my family to the forefront. The flexibility of SBI!, and the fact that once a site is well-established you can take a break and still see money coming in, has been worth more than I can say and is the thing I appreciate most. That said, I don't take my income for granted, and stay ready to make any changes that are needed to stay ahead of the game as situations fluctuate on the ever-volatile internet. Fortunately, SBI! does a lot of

the groundwork for me in this respect, so I know I'm always getting the most up-to-date information and advice available.

Running my business does mean that I put in many hours tapping away on my own at the laptop. But I've also had lots of opportunities to meet fellow SBers both online and at SBI conferences. Firm friendships with people all around the world have grown out of these meetings, as well as chances to work together on joint ventures or just to share our experiences, inspire and inform each other. I feel privileged to be part of this highly motivated and successful community – and that's a bonus I could never have dreamed of when I first bought SBI!

Cate Brizzell

<http://www.home-budget-help.com/>

I live in upstate New York, USA with my husband, son and two daughters. Between church, school, baseball, football, dance, soccer and golf, we're always on the go!

I left a 10-year corporate finance career in 1999 to stay home with my then two-year-old and infant daughter. I became a WAHM right away, juggling medical transcription and motherhood.

However, as great as it was to be home with my kids, I still had a boss to report to, reports that had to be typed every weeknight (even if the kids were sick or I was up with a colicky baby) and at least one weekend a month when I was on rotation. If I didn't work, I didn't get paid.

In 2002, my husband lost his job and my transcription agency lost their major contract, so I was out of work, too.

We decided to start a home business and truly work for ourselves. "Job security" just didn't exist for us any more. I began researching opportunities on the Internet and found SBI! almost immediately. The idea of building content websites had never occurred to me before, but I quickly realized its potential.

I started my site in March 2003. Immediately my site began to see traffic, but then I built another Internet venture, and didn't work on my site for about three years! When I came back to it, I realized that traffic to my website had remained constant, and even grown, and I decided to build a portfolio of websites, with different monetization models.

In 2007, I wrote a book on how my husband and I lost weight in Word, then converted it into a PDF. I built a small website (realpeopledontdiet.com) to sell the e-book, utilized a third-party order processor called Clickbank, and set up an e-mail list manager in order to send out regular newsletters. Since that time I've earned a neat little part-time income from that site, and I rarely have to do more than answer a couple e-mails a week and write up a quick newsletter to my thousands of readers, which is really fun, to be honest.

I love being an online WAHM. I don't have to commute and I can work a different

schedule every day, depending on what's best for my family. My brain is "engaged" more than it's ever been! And instead of feeling isolated at home, I've met wonderful people from around the world (like Elizabeth, Jen and Erin) and developed lasting friendships, some of which have turned into profitable joint ventures.

I've never enjoyed "going to work" as much as I do now.

Erin Nield

<http://www.home-organize-it.com/>

I live in the Midwest, USA. I have 3 children. My work background began with Golf Club Management. But after having children, long work hours drove me to look for different, preferably work at home, options. Finally, in 1999, I started my "It's About Time Organizing Service" that I continue to run.

When word-of-mouth referrals slowed, I knew I needed to market my organizing service differently. After much research, I decided a website would be the best solution to promote my business.

Being a do-it-yourselfer, I looked at how I could build my own site, hoping to find an all-in-one solution. Not being exactly "tech-inclined", I needed a step-by-step approach. You know... point here, click there. When I found SBI!, there was just something different about it. Not only was the CTPM concept a real "aha!" moment for me, but it spoke to my heart. They seemed to be saying if you're ready to work hard, you CAN do this... quite contrary to everything else I had seen! So I guess you could say I thought it was believable. And it is.

Choosing SBI! and building my own site, *www.home-organize-it.com*, put me on a most unexpected and rewarding journey. I originally planned to build a site to just promote my local organizing service. However, not only did I get so much business from my site, I also learned how to generate other income streams by recommending and referring quality organizing products and related services to people around the world.

Organizing in the homes of busy moms also has led to a side business... helping moms achieve their own dreams of working from home by building their own content-rich websites, based on their passions and interests.

This venture gives me a respectable income. But what's best of all? Flexible hours, so I can be there for my children.

Jennifer McVey

<http://www.kidsguidetosandiego.com/>

I live in sunny San Diego, California, with my Canadian husband and our four kids. Before entering the world of Internet marketing, I worked in a variety of administrative assistant positions, from talent agencies (you haven't lived until you've sat next to

Johnny Depp... trust me on this one) to law offices. Though I've always valued my skills and worked hard at my jobs, my heart was never in it. What did I want to be when I grew up?

Fast forward to Spring 2004. Pregnant with my last baby, I was put on bedrest due to complications. I quit my part-time legal assistant gig working with the best boss in the world (hi, Dad!) and suddenly, had a lot of time on my hands.

It was during this four-month period that I turned to the Internet for solutions to my boredom and unemployment. When I discovered people actually make money by promoting affiliate programs on their own Websites, I knew it was the answer. I learned everything as I went, teaching myself Frontpage, choosing a site concept (online dating... let's just say, bad idea), picking a domain name, selecting hosting, marketing my affiliates.... whew! I suffered information overload, becoming easily confused by the contradictory advice espoused by Internet "experts", and when I didn't make a million dollars, let alone a profit, by the end of that year, I sold my Website to the highest bidder on eBay.

After working another home business, I realized I spent all of my energy trying to sell product and build my downline solely online, by creating a great Website with keyword-rich content and uploading terrific graphics to appeal to my visitors. I didn't throw one party!

Clearly, I really wanted to get back to the building of Websites. But, I needed better, consistent information to guide my Internet success dreams.

So why SBI!? Because the CTPM process just made sense to me. There's no magic pill, no false promises, no hype. Sitesell's founder, Ken Evoy, understands that hard work, patience, and being true to yourself = success. Novel concept, isn't it?

My original SBI! site, www.favorite-puppy-names.com, started me on the path to finally earning an income online. By the time I sold the site in late 2008, it had over 400 pages of content (and growing!), attracted nearly 3000 visitors per day and earned money every month... whether I worked on it or not. For the last year under my ownership, it was truly passive income.

However, I decided I wasn't really interested in a pet niche web site and decided to sell, unloading it just in time for Christmas. I was able to treat my family to a very nice holiday season!

After selling that site, I started building my current site: www.3BoysInSanDiego.com. With it, I get to share my passion for exploring our local area as a family with others. I eventually hope to branch out with a network of sites related to traveling with children. Though I don't have as much content on this site and don't receive nearly the amount of visitors per day, I still make money with this site. When you're ready to build, keep that in mind: some niches pay off much better than others ;)

I still love the creative element of building, coupled with the practical aspects of

business. And as long as those Google and affiliate checks keep coming, I'll keep building with an eye to the future.

Am I ready to retire to a far-off land yet? Nope! With a large family and part time work, I can't always make my site a priority. Despite that, it continues to grow in traffic and income. I earn the cost of my site back many times over throughout the year, whether I've been an attentive site owner or not.

And there you have it...

Four very different individual WAHMs...

... with different backgrounds and experiences...

... all at different stages in their lives.

So, how did we come together to write this Guide?

We met through the SBI! Forums.

These private Forums are populated with exceptional people, people who have similar visions to ours, who want their sites to succeed and are prepared to put a lot of effort into making that happen. Click on the link below to see some sample posts from the SBI! Forums...

<http://forums.sitesell.com/cgi-bin/showAllPublicPosts.pl>

But that was just the tip of it. We found that folks on the Forums were often willing to spend a great deal of time, and go to a lot of trouble to help us. It's like belonging to a great community of colleagues, who are happy to share their knowledge, and who will go out of their way to cheer each other on.

When we started working on this resource for WAHMs, between all of us, we had 12 children (ranging from a 1-year old to teenagers), owned 12 SBI! websites (in various stages of development), and lived in four different time zones. Some of us worked part-time outside the home as well as working on our websites. And of course, alongside work, we handled loads of domestic stuff. Just keeping in touch presented quite a challenge.

During our weekly progress chats (via instant messaging), we've sometimes had more than 10 kids around - losing teeth, having melt-downs, clambering over the laptop, demanding hot chocolate. We've kept going through it all, because that's what WAHMs do. We're used to it. We like it, even!

Writing this Guide has been a huge experience. A great experience! We've shared a lot of laughter, a few tears and a **stack** of hard work.

There's one thing about this Guide, we hope, that makes it stand out from so much of

the other stuff out there on the Internet. It comes from the heart, and if it rings true – and we hope it does – it’s because we are four real people who’ve connected to pool not just our experiences, but the collected wisdom of the numerous other WHAMs we’ve been privileged to get to know from their voices on the Forums.

And brings us to a special group of voices that we wish to extend a big...

THANK YOU!

Our warmest thanks go to all the women who took part in the original dialogue that set this whole ball rolling, or who have contributed their ideas about being a WAHM elsewhere in the SBI! Forums.

Some of you are quoted in this Guide – see below – but there are many, many more. We simply didn’t have space to include all your wisdom.

Thank you, to all those people, for sharing your thoughts. You inspired us.

And a special toast to the moms who allowed us to quote their fascinating insights...

Ann	healthinsurance-help.com
Annabel	puzzle-club.com
CJ	yummycrockpotrecipes.com
Claire	littlekidsgamesonline.com
Debs	debtsteps.com
Dian	best-child-toys.com
Ellen	healthy-quick-meals.com
Kellie	spa-living-for-health.com
Nicole	kids-fun-and-games.com
Patricia	kids-party-paradise.com
Rena	making-jewelry-now.com
Rina	diving-helmet.com

Now what?

All that’s left is one final question that only you can answer (with a little help, of course)...

5. “Is SBI! For Me?” ... Helpful Resources

You’ve read our stories. Maybe you’re excited, tantalised, a little scared. Maybe you’re still wondering... “Is this for me?”

We say:

- If you want a quick buck – No
- If you don’t have staying power – No
- If you don’t want to work hard and learn a lot – No

But...

- If you want pride and satisfaction from your work – Yes
- If you want to grow a source of long-term income – Yes
- If you want to be a part of a growing global community of site-owners – Yes

And above all, if you want satisfying, do-able work that fits totally with your life as a WAHM – Yes!

A good place for you to start your own research (just like we did) is...

SBI! Work At Home Moms

<http://wahm.sitesell.com/>

The SBI! Quick Tour

<http://quicktour.sitesell.com/>

BlockBuilder

<http://bb2.sitesell.com/>

SBI! Sites Are At The Top Of The World

<http://results.sitesell.com/>

Videos By SB!ers

<http://ilovesbi.sitesell.com/>

Questions? Talk to a successful SBI! owner!

<http://question.sitesell.com/>

The decision is yours. We wish you success, and joy with your families, whatever you decide to do.

And when you do take charge and become a WAHM, please keep a copy of the following tips for home organization right beside your computer. They are WAHM suggested and approved!...

6. Getting Organized

Are you working at home already? Or are you wondering if it's the right way to go in the near future?

Based on our experiences of working at home for years, juggling childcare, domestic stuff, kids' schedules, our partners' needs and our own, we all agree that in order to do it successfully, without cracking up, you need just one thing... **organization.**

Get organized, and you can conquer the world, or at least stay happily on top of your own little corner of it.

Are you still not sure how it would work for you? We brainstormed some ideas with other WAHMs and pulled together these additional tips to inspire you...

Tip # 1 Set up your work space at home.

Tip # 2 Make work time.

Tip # 3 Secure support from those close to you.

Tip # 4 Manage childcare while working.

Tip # 5 Take domestic shortcuts to free up valuable time.

Ready to get organized?

Start here...

Tip #1 Set Up Your Work Space At Home

First, you need **space**. Thankfully, working from home means you can be creative and flexible. If your home doesn't have a dedicated office or study, then think about where else could you find space? Are there a few square feet to spare in any of these?

- Attic
- Basement
- Breakfast nook
- Walk-in closet
- Corner of living room or bedroom (use privacy screen if necessary)
- Foyer or lobby
- Hall or landing
- Garage
- Garden shed
- Laundry room, utility room
- Or....?

Once you've decided where your home office will be, you need the right equipment to get the job done. Essentials include:

- Desk (or any flat surface where you can work)
- Computer – desktop or laptop/notebook with Internet access
- Printer
- Phone (using a cell phone gives flexibility and frees up your home phone)
- Answering machine
- Filing system (cabinet, crate, box, concertina folder)
- Comfortable chair
- Good lighting
- Basic office supplies (pens, highlighters, folders, stapler etc.)

But (and this is a very important “but”)... don't blow your budget. Start with what you have, add what you absolutely need, and shop to your heart's content only when your business begins turning a profit and you can afford the extras.

As you create your workspace and purchase essentials, keep in mind the need to be **flexible and efficient**.

Your **computer** is crucial. Make sure your operating system is current, your software up-to-date, and you've installed adequate anti-virus and firewall protection. **Create regular backups** of your data. Your data is your business's lifeline... protect it above all costs.

Using a notebook computer and wireless Internet means you can **work anywhere in your home**, even outside on the patio! If you have small children, who can't be left unsupervised, a wireless laptop is ideal. You can work wherever your kids are. A notebook with wireless also lets you **work outside your home** wherever there's wireless Internet... in local restaurants, coffee shops, a public library, even in shopping malls. Having the option to “go out and work” can make a tremendous difference to your productivity.

Another great way to maximize your budget, space and time is to **combine functionality**. If you need a printer, look for a model that includes a printer, copier, scanner and fax machine... all-in-one.

No matter how small your work space, enjoy creating one that is just for you. We love our work spaces. They're places where we find another side to ourselves, beyond “just mom”.

Tip # 2 Make Work Time

Are you envisioning your work space? Great! Next question is... how will you squeeze work time into your already busy day?

Start by figuring how much time you can afford to give to your business, and create a work schedule.

First, set some ground rules with yourself, family and friends. If you work at home, whatever you do, then you're a **working mother**, even if your office is "home". Use your answering machine consistently to screen calls and prevent interruptions. Learn how to say: "Sorry, I have to work!"... because you do.

Next, **set office hours**. You could decide on regular days and times or, if your life is more unpredictable, identify the times when you will be able to do some work, even if these are different every day.

This bit is vital...

When work time comes around, **turn your back on other demands**. Don't start mopping the kitchen floor or changing the bedding. Go to your work space and work. You may find it helpful to set a timer, so that you carry on working for an allotted time span. When the bell goes drrrrring, then – and only then – do you go back to being "mom"!

Factor in the following as you create your work schedule:

- times of day you're naturally most productive
- times when there are least amount of distractions
- other priorities, like time with partner and kids,
- and remember...allow yourself time for adequate rest and relaxation.

Finally, **be realistic**. If you only have three hours a week to work on your business, then that's what you schedule. Just make the most of that time.

Can't find any free time? Answer this question honestly to yourself: Which is more important to me - earning an income from home, or all the "other stuff"?

If you want work time, you'll have to **spend less time** doing some things, or completely **eliminate** activities from your schedule. We've faced the same dilemma, and reduced:

- TV-time – aren't there shows you could live without?
- E-mail and Internet surfing – are they are related to your business?
- Kids' activities – ditch those that eat your time, and which kids no longer enjoy.
- Shopping – do it one swoop, or order online and have it delivered.
- Cleaning – delegate chores, hire help, create a system.

Here are some other terrific ways to free up more time – and even 15 minutes a day can make a big difference:

- Practice saying "no" more often.
- Plan menus, prepare food ahead of time and max out your freezer!
- Create a regular "Daddy Night", when the kids get quality time with Dad, while Mom gets to work uninterrupted.
- Use a daily/weekly/monthly planner that works for you and your personality (paper, electronic, scraps of paper...just make sure it helps you stay organized).

- Schedule regular “work retreats”...go to a relative’s home, or hotel, and work for one or more days without interruption.

For us, finding time to work – and sticking to it – is about the most challenging aspect of working from home. It’s an ongoing task, but take heart. It does get easier as the family – and you – get used to your new regime.

And remember, in the end, **you** are the only one who can create your success. Roll up your sleeves and **just do it!**

Tip # 3 Secure Support From Those Close To You

You might be thinking, “Organizing time and space is all very well, but the first thing I need is the backing of my partner and family.”

We understand. Let’s face it... working from home isn’t “traditional” (although it’s definitely a fast-growing trend). But just like anything else, it’s easier to succeed if you have the support of key individuals.

We’ve found that the best way to *get support* is to *be supportive*.

Make sure you involve those you love as you prioritize, set goals and start your new online business. If spouse or partner, children, parents, siblings and friends know they’re important enough to be consulted when it comes to planning your new business, it’s much more likely they will feel a sense of “ownership” when it comes to helping you succeed.

It may help if your loved ones know and understand what it is you’re doing. In the section, “Is SBI! For Me?” Helpful Resources, there is a list of links to places which will help you show them what theme-based Websites are, how they’re built, how they earn income, and what it all costs.

As you start to build your business, take some specific steps to enlist the support of your spouse, partner, older children or friends and relatives:

- Set your priorities. Will you be less available to spend extra time with your partner for the next six months? Discuss with your loved ones.
- Build a simple plan to achieve your aims. Show your family and friends how they fit into the plan. Be specific: “I can do this if you’re willing to cook dinner and handle bedtime routine two nights a week.”
- Be sensitive and flexible, but firm when it comes to non-negotiable goals and boundaries.
- Celebrate your results, and share the rewards. If someone you love has gone out of their way to help you succeed, make sure they know it!

Also keep in mind that it's difficult for *anyone else* to take your business seriously, unless *you* do. Set office hours and let family and friends know that you're unavailable to take phone calls or socialize. Hand out business cards. Create firm, non-negotiable boundaries when it comes to distractions.

It's hard to not use the time to mop the floor and wash the dog, but I've made my website my "job" and ask my family to respect that. So far, so good! Jennifer

We all know we can't please everyone, all the time. Try hard to enlist the support of those you love. Make sure you regularly check with them not just how your site is progressing, but how well the way you are working suits them. Listen to what they say, and try to find compromises when there are problems.

Be flexible, but stay true to your priorities, your goals and your action plan. Share the journey, with all its highs and lows. And if you don't immediately have the total backing of those close to you, keep going anyway. Because, when you succeed, you may find that your loudest critics become your strongest supporters.

I'm nearing the "other side" where there is money coming in and he's begun to believe. I've seen the glimmer in his eye when a check arrives in the mail... he'll clutch it in his hands, grinning at me. Michelle

Tip #4 Manage Childcare While Working

Are your kids at school during the day, and old enough to take care of themselves when they're at home?

You're in with a head start, because you have built-in work time.

If you have younger children, it's a different story. At those times when you want to work while your kids are home (and awake), try these ideas:

- Set up a no-mess craft area.
- Rotate toys, so you always have some "new" ones to offer.
- Provide challenging puzzles.
- Designate a quiet time (with reward...time with you!).
- Let kids watch educational (or just plain fun) videos and DVDs.
- Allow video game time.

If you want to spend more time working, you may decide to arrange some childcare. We've tried all of these at different stages:

- Have older siblings watch younger ones.
- Hire a mother's helper (a teenager who comes in to cook, clean and babysit).
- Swap sitting with a friend/neighbor.
- Occasionally, ask a relative to sit.
- Various paid childcare options.

These solutions can work well day-to-day, but what about holiday or seasonal breaks?

Fortunately, building Websites is highly flexible work, so you can anticipate those long breaks and down-shift your schedule for a while. It's easy to give yourself time off to enjoy holiday times with your kids.

Over vacation times, you could also try these:

- Sign up for summer camps or other organized activities for kids.
- Create a babysitting co-op with other WAHMs, with a schedule that allows each of you a full workday each week.

Give ample time and thought to your childcare decision. Done right, you'll be more productive – and your kids will be just fine.

Tip #5 Take Domestic Shortcuts To Free Up Valuable Time

You know that managing a household is time-consuming job, but there are loads of ways to cut corners, and we're wise to 'em all! Try these:

- Use phone time for “no-think” chores like sorting laundry, dusting, wiping counters, ironing. Purchase an inexpensive headset or a cordless phone, and presto... you're hands-free to do chores while you talk.
- Create a routine, and do certain chores on the same day every week.
- Agree with your partner specific chores that he will do, now that you are working.
- Enlist help from kids – set a timer for 15 minutes, and then everybody cleans until the timer goes off.
- Teach older kids how to do chores. You may need to offer small rewards.
- Be ruthless with clutter. Sling out stuff you haven't used in six months, shred out-dated paperwork, take old clothes to charity shops, etc. Clear space, in your home and in your mind.

We hope we've inspired you to see that building a content-rich Website at home can be a very viable option for moms. And all it takes to get started is... **a little organization!**

And that's a wrap for the WAHM Guide. Our best wishes for your success!

Take SBI! for a risk-free test drive. With its 90-Day Guarantee, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

<http://order.sitesell.com/>

I'm lucky that I have the support of my friends and family as I continue to grow my business. Even though they don't always understand what I do or how I make money, they are always there to offer me encouragement (and critiques when I ask). In fact, both of my boys have showed an interest in helping me with the websites. Maybe I'll have two second-generation SBLers living in the house in the near future. Tracy

WAHM-It! Masters Course

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