

WAHM-IT!, The Masters Course

Real Business Success for Work-at-Home Mothers

Case Studies

Inside this powerful little supplementary e-book, you'll find the stories of eight more women who discovered a way to find fulfillment, make money and share their passions with the world. All while staying home, raising their children.

These moms come from a wide range of backgrounds, education levels, work experience, nationalities, and more. Whatever your situation, we know you'll find a mom or two here who you'll relate to. We hope these stories will inspire you to build your own successful Internet business.

Please feel free to read the following case studies in whatever order you prefer. Click on your choice and enjoy!

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Case Study #1

Kids Inspire Mom's Website Ideas

Patricia Jensen lives in the USA and is mom to three children. Her family has been her inspiration since she first started out on the Internet. Recently, while coping with a serious illness, Patti has found peace and comfort in the creation of her website.

Tell us about your website, Patti.

(I've owned) www.kids-party-paradise.com since February 14, 2004 - almost 2 years.

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

I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from Providence College.

My computer-related experience has been learned on the job, by doing. I've taken a computer course here or there, but I am mostly self-taught.

My early work experience included several years as a professional in the travel industry, both in marketing tours to the public and as a tour escort to various destinations in the United States and Canada.

More recently, I have been an Administrative Assistant to various high-level business executives and have also worked in a hospital setting as an Admin Assistant to an internationally renowned oncologist (cancer doctor).

In between my regular 9 to 5 jobs, I found time to indulge my love of writing as a freelancer for various newspapers and magazines.

When my second child, Tyler, was born (9 years ago), my husband and I decided that it was important for our children to have a full-time mother. I have been a stay-at-home mom ever since.

Tyler was born with clubfoot, a severe defect affecting both his feet. He would require casting from birth and then corrective surgeries at 5 months of age, then more casts. It is a grueling process for both parent and child. We had no family history of clubfoot, and no one who understood what we were going through. To cope better, I learned as much as I could about clubfoot.

When Tyler was two years old, I found an Internet forum for parents of children with clubfoot. It was a wonderful healing experience to speak with other Moms who had been through a similar medical challenge with their children.

To give back to others, I decided to create a website to provide free information, resources, and support to parents of children born with clubfoot. On February 2, 2000,

Tyler's clubfoot site was born. It is called "CLIPS" for "Clubfoot Information and Parental Support". The CLIPS site was an important first step toward increasing my comfort zone operating in the online world.

My next Internet venture involved net auctions. I began by selling a few items on eBay to clear out my cluttered basement. It was a "kick" and I made some spending money to boot! I was hooked!

My modest eBay sales really ignited the desire to build a successful Internet-based business. I felt I could indulge my love of writing by building the ultimate ever-changing, ever-growing online publication: my own website!

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

We had lived on one income and sacrificed for years so I could be home and available to our children. I thought it would be so great to be able to make a contribution to the family finances.

I also wanted to have something I could call my own, something I had created through my own hard work and ingenuity – a creative outlet for my writing. I had also toyed with the idea of having an online business I could manage from home and not have to return to the workforce when my children were of school age.

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

The theme for my *Kids Party Paradise* site came from my desire to write about a topic that would be fun, and by researching its popularity and viability on the web through keyword searches.

Having three children, I knew I would have an almost limitless amount of information on this topic. I also realized that in good times and in bad, and through every season, people throw birthday parties for their kids! There is always a need for new and different party-related ideas.

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

This varies according to my other responsibilities as wife and mother. Of course, this is the beauty of having an online business! You can work when it's convenient for you. I estimate I work an average of 15-20 hrs. per week.

How do you make money from your site?

I use Google AdSense which is my best income generator and easiest model to

implement. I also have relationships with affiliate merchants through Commission Junction, Linkshare and Clickbank.

What is your average monthly income?

In October (2005), I earned approximately \$800, with traffic and income increasing steadily each month.

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

Success to me would be in satisfying my creativity, feeling that I’m offering something of value to others, and realizing financial gains.

My creative side was satisfied at the very start of the SBI! process. I was so thrilled when I hit the “Build” button for my site’s homepage! Also when I added image code and it actually appeared on the page! Wow! I enjoyed designing each page with the ease the SBI! blockbuilder. Little successes built into bigger ones and soon the site was off and running...

In truth, I was such a wreck after I had first purchased SBI!. I really didn’t know if I had what it took to be a web entrepreneur. I spent many hours researching keywords and writing pages with a nagging doubt that I wouldn’t be able to cut it. That feeling drove me onward until things I had found so new and difficult in the beginning became routine and easy. Somewhere along the way, that little devil on my shoulder changed into a cheerleader with great confidence in me and my potential to create something truly valuable for others.

The financial success came between 6 months to one year after beginning my site, when my site traffic had built sufficiently to realize some Google AdSense and affiliate income.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

I saw so many others who had great looking and interesting sites that they apparently loved creating at www.results.sitesell.com. I also emailed some actual SB!ers and asked how satisfied they were with the product. Every single one was positive and enthusiastic about it.

In addition, the SBI! site-building plan just made perfect sense to me. I came to a point when I could no longer rationalize or support in my own mind NOT giving my dream of having my own online business a chance.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

My husband supported my decision because he could see how passionate I was about having my own online business site.

Yet he did not believe this could ever be “more than a hobby” for me. When my party site began to generate significant income, his opinion changed. Now he is talking about starting up his own SBI! site!

My husband supports me mostly by listening to my plans for expanding my site and making it better. He sometimes offers advice and I sometimes take it. Since he has been in sales for many years, he keeps me focused on monetizing my site in new ways.

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

My advice to other WAHMs in a similar position would be to formulate a sensible site plan and JUST DO IT! You may not have the full support of your “significant other” until they can see the proof in the pudding. Why wonder if you could have been a success at an exciting Internet venture, when it is truly within your grasp with SBI!?

Are your children involved with your website?

My kids love the idea that I own a party website. They are my “partners” in the business as they often provide me with ideas I use on the site. For example, they might bring me an idea for a new party game because they have played it in school. Of course, I also get inspiration just by doing crafts and activities or making costumes or cakes for my kids too. I often use pictures of my kids during these fun times to illustrate new ideas on the site.

My daughter Elizabeth is 12 years old and I can imagine her managing her own website within 2-3 years. It would be so easy to get her started with the experience I have now. What a great way to get a head start on college expenses!

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

I don't have any regrets about how I've built my website. I had a vision for my site at the beginning, and for the most part it has evolved according to my plan.

It's all been a really positive learning experience. There are things I like better than others about site-building, like writing articles over building links, but at the end of the day I'm usually pleased with the results.

Patti, how do you “do it all”?

It's sometimes difficult for me to keep all the balls in the air. Life with a young family is a

balancing act with daily challenges.

I've always been a pretty organized person so I tend to write lists of things I need to do and prioritize them. I also keep a dry erase calendar on the fridge with family activities, so we all know what we have to do and when. Pretty basic stuff, but it works for me.

While driving in the car or waiting in the doctor's office, instead of listening to music or reading, I brainstorm about what I'd like to do next on the site.

This is the first year that all three of my children are in school for a full day, so I use that time to work on my website. That way, I can concentrate on helping them with their homework or other issues when they come home.

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

Six months ago I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Throughout my treatment, I have continued to build my website with even more intensity. At times, I was ill from chemotherapy and spent hours writing pages to distract me from the nausea.

It was a lifesaver in a way because it kept me focused on a constructive goal, instead of on my illness. In the process, *Kids Party Paradise* became a work of the heart of which I am truly proud. I am still undergoing radiation therapy and looking forward to a long life with my family.

As you can imagine, this experience has made me so thankful that I didn't wait to grab onto my dream! If you have an idea which excites you, chances are there are many others out there who are excited by it too. Don't let naysayers discourage **your dream!**

Be passionate about your topic, and be willing to put in significant hours (at least in the first year) to make it happen. You must believe that no one and nothing will get in your way of becoming a successful Internet entrepreneur!

When you get stuck, make use of the SBI! forums. Tap into this great community of web enthusiasts, just waiting to assist you. I have been the beneficiary of their goodwill and considerable knowledge on many occasions! Give back when you are able and perpetuate the powerful dynamic of "paying it forward" which makes the SBI! forums such a great resource.

I wish all who read this may have as much fun and satisfaction as I have had in building my website.

Case Study #2 Crockpots Turn Out to be a Recipe for Success

CJ is an American mom with two young children, ages six and four. Her website's focus

stems directly from her experiences as a WAHM, preparing meals for her family.

In the short time she has been building her site with SBI!, she has started bringing in a second income most of us envy.

Tell us about your website, CJ.

www.yummycrockpotrecipes.com

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

I have a degree in Interpreting (and worked as an) interpreter for the Deaf (and) building web sites.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

I liked that I completely controlled my work environment, and I would succeed or fail under my own steam.

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

It stems from being a WAHM. Work is work wherever you do it. Even without a business being at home with kids is work, work, work. I have never been big on cooking... but I like my family to have good home cooked meals. I'm very passionate about the crockpot. In my mind there are very few pieces of machinery that can cook a home cooked meal with such a hands off approach. Since I am an average WAHM I just knew I would not be the only one who felt that way.

I also knew that besides WAHMs 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. Hence my motto "Home cooked food the easy way!"

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

A couple nights a week for 2 hours and one day on weekends 4 to 8 hours. Then during children's naps, I squeeze in some time if I can.

How do you make money from your site?

Clickbank, Linkshare, Google AdSense, and Café Press.

What is your average monthly income?

\$600+.

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

About 6 months! Well my success is measured in my own mind by my goals. Each goal has a set amount of money I plan to make. I hit my short term goal at 6 months and my medium goal at 7 months. SBI! Is so much better than when I built web sites before (pre-SBI!) my goals will have to become much higher now!

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

Not having to know html, not having to worry about how to optimize for search engines, not having to make sure my site is submitted to the search engines, and knowing I was going to get to do more of the creative writing/work and less tech stuff.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

He is very encouraging. He watches the children and lets me work on the site. (That is a big help!) He knows that it won't pay off right away but thinks it's a good business for me!

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

I would have to say telling them about the great joy you will have doing something you love and making money (slowly for a while then building) would surely help them to see that this is a great alternative to other businesses.

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

I just can't think of anything. SBI! really set me up to win at this business!

CJ, how do you “do it all”?

Very carefully. I plan as much as I can and think ahead as much as possible.

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

As a mom at home, I know what a great joy it can be or how some days you feel like you're running a zoo! I also know we ladies can just lose ourselves in our families. It's our nature to give and give! One of the benefits of SBI! is getting to talk about something you love on your site. It's such a nice side benefit to have a little more that helps make me a well-rounded person!

Case Study # 3

Life Experience = Formula that Pays

Mom to four, Cheryl Johnson took her real-world experience and turned it into a website. This Maryland, US, mom now shares her knowledge with the world.

Cheryl, tell us about your website.

I started www.simpledebtfreeliving.com in October 2004.

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

Associates in Early Childhood Development. (I was an) administrative assistant to Assistant Director at child care center for 12 years prior to 2003.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

Lower overhead and operating expenses as compared to other possibilities was inviting due to financial limitations. It was clear to me that the Internet was a media that would prove to be essential for business success in the future.

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

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.

In following with the *Action Guide* advice, I simply related to something I felt passionate and confident about. 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.

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

I work an average of 30 to 40 hours a week.

How do you make money from your site?

Monetizing is an area that I am still researching and re-learning. I got carried away for a while and actually was promoting too many products. Lost my focus so to speak. I am currently re-evaluating this area and starting to focus on more relevant product marketing and aggressively marketing those products that I have reviewed and truly am passionate about.

What is your average monthly income?

I don't have a great deal of income to boast about but I can say that my site has paid for itself in the past year. Over the past four or five months, I've seen steady increases in traffic, which has led to small, but encouraging, increases in sales. I do not sell my own product as of yet. I rely mainly on affiliate marketing and contextual ads. I recently was accepted into the Yahoo publisher's beta program. Just a little over a month into it and I have earned just under \$200 to date. I average about \$100 per month in other affiliate income.

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

Success can be elusive. It can be right before your eyes and you fail to recognize it. Many rate success monetarily. If I assessed my successes and failures in life on money alone, I would have been discouraged and given up long before now.

A few months into building my site, I finally took the advice to start writing and submitting articles as a means of developing an Internet presence. I felt success the day my writing was recognized by others as valuable and usable. When I realized that other webmasters would use my articles on their websites, I had a feeling of accomplishment and pride. That, to me, was success in my business. But, I also measure success by what I see in my children. I truly believe that they benefit from having a parent accessible to them at all times.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

I had researched many Internet opportunities. Most provided some good advice on how to become successful on the Internet but few provided the actual tools. I was a newbie at Internet technology. SBI! provided the tools I needed to build a website with no knowledge or experience in doing so. I soon learned that building the site was possibly the least of my worries as I discovered the many services and tech issues that SBI! took care of for webmasters.

The final decision to buy was based on the risk free guarantee. Having limited resources, I could not afford to waste money on lost causes and products that just required me to keep on buying more and more services. If SBI! was truly the “all-in-one” program it promised to be, then it seemed to be perfect for my needs. Being able to actually try it without risk said a great deal for the integrity and confidence the company had in itself. And, in fact, SBI! did prove to be an “all-in-one” service that over delivers.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

By celebrating the smallest of successes with just as much enthusiasm I do. Encouraging me to keep on going when I am discouraged and supporting my decisions.

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

Many people are skeptical of Internet business because the great “scam” artists have given it a bad name. Explaining that SBI! addresses the reality of Internet business can help. I am careful to explain each success I encounter, even though they may be small steps, in relation to what that means to my overall success.

For example, I got a very valuable incoming link not too long ago and had some articles placed on sites of established success in my field. My husband didn’t have a clue why this was important until I explained the significance. You can’t just assume that they will understand your enthusiasm and excitement over accomplishments that may seem insignificant to them. Communication is the best tool for understanding the big picture.

Also, many people have the misconception that Internet business should mean instant success. I guess it goes along with our tech revolution and instant gratification attitudes in today’s society. You need to stress that a website is like any other business. You have a business plan. No instant success claims. It will take time, patience, and hard work to be successful. This can help make the opportunity with SBI! more realistic and acceptable.

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

Many times I lost my focus and got sidetracked in the wrong direction. I missed some important steps in the *Action Guide* due to these detours and feel that I lost a lot of time because of that. Each time I got side-tracked, something I would read on the forums or elsewhere in SBI! would bring me back to reality. If I had to do it all again, I would stick to the program and stay more focused on the really important issues. I can testify that trying to rush things is not a good strategy. The way of the “tortoise” is best! I would also have the insight to plan my days better, since hindsight is 20/20, I now understand how important that is to make the most of your time.

Cheryl, how do you “do it all”?

I “do it all” much in the same ways that I did when I worked outside the home with the exception that now I have more flexibility. Working at home means being your own boss, setting your own schedule, and prioritizing your work, family, and personal needs based on daily demands. These demands can literally change daily during stressful times. For example, I found that scheduling appointments (ie. doctors) has become much less stressful given the flexibility to rearrange my work tasks to suit other needs that arise.

Over the past few decades, moms have adapted to become not only homemakers but wage earners. It has been an economic need for most families for years. Working at home offers a greater ease of managing the many tasks required of working moms. Moms are figuring out how to manage their new “double duty” lifestyles more efficiently by evolving into WAHMs. It was bound to happen sooner or later. We have been forced to basically take on two full time jobs and eventually, well you know, necessity is the mother of invention!

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

Evaluate to validate your decision to work at home. Leaving the security of a weekly paycheck is scary to say the least. My advice is to analyze what you would really be risking in taking the WAHM path. Put it in a realistic perspective.

Many moms find that they actually are not contributing a great deal of income to the family once all of the extra expense of working outside the home are subtracted. In working at home you eliminate these expenses. Some examples are child-care, auto maintenance and gas, work clothes, and the use of time saving convenience foods. Cutting back on unnecessary expenses and re-evaluating the family budget can help during the transition. You may find you are really gaining more than you're losing!

Learn to measure your accomplishments and successes in many ways. WAHMs must be careful never to measure their successes by monetary value alone. WAHMs are so much more! There is no measure for the benefits of spending more time with our children except, the result of helping them become responsible, moral, individuals who bring something of value to society.

In doing so, you yourself bring something of great value to the world. There is no greater service that anyone on the earth provides! This is a measure of success for WAHMs as much as the success of their business is. Don't lose sight of that and you will never be discouraged.

Stay focused. The Internet is vast and informative. It can be “information overload.” It's easy to get side tracked. I found myself doing this many times. I would start out to accomplish a certain task and get redirected to the point where I actually never achieved the initial goal. It is important to stay focused on the day's tasks as much as possible.

Make a to-do list for each day. Group similar or like tasks together in days or blocks of time. For example, do all your phone calls together, same with any filing/record keeping, link building, content research, writing, and so forth. Grouping similar tasks together is just more efficient than skipping back and forth between different types of tasks. Your time management will be much more efficient.

Be sure to acknowledge your own achievements. It's a good idea to write down what you have accomplished on any given day. When working outside the home, we have outside influences that acknowledge our accomplishments and successes. A raise in pay or a pat on the back from a co-worker or supervisor acknowledge our achievements.

When you work at home, I think it's important to acknowledge your own successes and accomplishments, no matter how small. If you completed the intended tasks for the day, that is truly worth patting yourself on the back. Staying focused is sometimes difficult when multi-tasking. Some of us are better at it than others. But, moms are the definition of ingenuity. We usually do find a way to "do it all."

Case Study # 4

Christian Mom Shares Inspiration with World

Linda Wakefield Kelley lives in Ohio, USA, with her husband and three children. After home-schooling for years, Linda decided to share her knowledge with the world, by writing books and starting her own website.

Tell us about your website, Linda.

(I've owned) www.christian-parenting-source.com since August 2004.

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

I have an undergraduate degree in Business Administration - majoring in Hotel Restaurant Management from the beautiful University of Hawaii. Years later, after I married and wanted a job where I wouldn't have to travel as much, I went back to school and earned my Master's Degree in Education.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

I'm a freelance writer and I have several book proposals I'm currently circulating to book publishers. However, I haven't been very successful with this pursuit because publishers want authors who have a platform (a way to reach an established audience). I thought it would help my writing career tremendously to have a website. Since there are LOTS of writing websites, I decided to create a site around the themes I write most about - homeschooling and parenting.

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

This was an easy fit for me. As a freelance writer, I've written on home-schooling and parenting themes primarily. To me, "ideas" are never a problem. It's finding the time to develop them that can sometimes be tricky.

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

Right now I am only able to devote about 10-14 hours per week on my site. Between home-schooling, running the children to their various sports practices, and writing that's about all the time I can manage. SB!ers subscribe to the "tortoise success factor"... persistence. The way of the tortoise may be slow, but if you persist success eventually occurs. Don't you just love that? It makes my measly 10 hours a week seem a whole lot better than nothing. And, they are! I'm inching closer to the finish line at breakneck speed—for a tortoise.

How do you make money from your site?

I use Google AdSense. I also am an affiliate of Amazon, and Barnes & Noble. I participate in several affiliate programs through Linkshare and Commission Junction as well. My goal for this year is to write several e-books and offer them through my site.

What is your average monthly income?

I average about \$150 per month in income. Most of this is derived from Google AdSense income. My second best sources of income are the Spanish affiliate programs I belong to (especially Visual Link and Power Glide).

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

It took me longer to achieve success than most. I felt I had achieved success when I had 20 pages on my site, and my traffic and income figures were steadily increasing each month. Six or seven months after I first purchased SB!®, that began to happen. The main reason it took so long was my lack of confidence. I started out with lots of enthusiasm, but then I struggled for several months.

Ken Evoy, creator of SiteSell and SB!®, is careful to point out it takes a lot of work to achieve success in any business and certainly SB!® is no different. SB!® eliminates many of the usual headaches you get when building a website. However, it still takes a lot of old-fashioned elbow grease. Because I'm not very technical I doubted my abilities. I hired a couple different webmasters to help me and they did. That cost me additional money and I was no further ahead because, although I now had pages built, I still felt unsure about making changes or adding content.

It wasn't until I decided to take complete control of my site myself that I began to move ahead. I made the decision to learn what I needed to learn even if it meant moving at a snail's pace in the process. I re-read the *Action Guide* and began visiting the SBI! forums and participating in the discussions. That was THE turning point.

My suggestion for any SBI! newbies out there would be to get involved in the SBI! forums very early on. Soak up the information that is available there and in the various publications available through SBI!. And, most of all, believe in yourself! A successful SBI! site is achievable for anyone.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

Two things were equal selling points when I first visited the SBI! site. I liked the fact that I could be a complete Web technology neophyte and still have a successful site. SBI!'s use of the block-by-block page building sounded manageable. The forums and SBI! support offered help 24/7 as well.

The second selling point was the fact that with a little effort I could generate great traffic to my site. I didn't want to spend a long time building a site only to have no one ever see it. Believe me, SBI! works. My site is in the top 1% of all sites on the Web.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

I'm lucky to have a wonderful mate who is so supportive of my sometimes wacky ideas. When I first told my husband about my idea to build a website, he was a little leery. He knows I have to get help from him or the kids to program the VCR, and operate the digital camera, etc. I explained to my sweet husband the beauty of SBI! is I don't have to be a webmaster. SBI! practically builds itself! He still was not totally convinced, but he was at least willing to let me give SBI! a shot for a year or so. The especially attractive part was that I might actually be able to contribute to the family income-- for a change! After a year and a half, he's completely convinced SBI! is wonderful. Now, he tries to find ways to give me MORE time to work.

My hubby supports me in so many ways. He loves to cook and is in fact better at it than I am. He makes the family meals far more often than I do. He also cleans, does the dishes and the laundry, and drives the kiddos to their various practices. Since I am a home-schooling mom as well as a WAHM, I couldn't begin to accomplish all that I do in either arena without his help.

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

I'd tackle your business very professionally. Why not present a written proposal to your husband? Research SBI!, detail your goals. Explain when you'll work on your business—how you'll fit it in around your other activities. Project expenses and

earnings. That way your hubby can see that you're serious about the business and that you've carefully thought this through. If you do this, you'll be much more likely to have your husband's full support.

Luckily I didn't have to do this as my husband gave me the go-ahead sign without having to go to these lengths. Maybe he was so easy to convince because he subscribes to the "If Momma ain't happy—nobody's happy" philosophy of marriage. However, if I had a husband that was harder to convince, I'd try the Business Plan approach.

Are your children involved with your website?

My kids are involved in the business. Since I home-school them, I have actually incorporated teaching business principles into our home-school curriculum. My three even came up with their own page for my web site. You can find it at <http://www.christian-parenting-source.com/bizyuhomeschool.html> They also provide content for several of my pages. They have their own Christian music review pages, for example.

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

I would probably change the name of my site. I know I can still do this, but I hate to change it now that I've built up a following. My site encompasses Christian parenting and home-schooling. However, it would be better if the keyword "home-schooling" was in my domain name probably. Oh well, if I did everything perfectly the first time around, there would be nothing to accomplish tomorrow.

Linda, how do you "do it all"?

I think the "do it all" approach is an absolute myth. Something always has to give, doesn't it? In my life, what goes first is the housework. I'm afraid if you dropped by the house unexpectedly, you'd find a few cobwebs and dust mites lurking in the shadows (if I answered the door at all). With the tremendous help of my husband, we manage to keep on top of most of duties. But, keeping the house neat is the one area I can't seem to conquer.

My advice: Train your children from a very young age to pick up after themselves and to help you with the household chores. Even the youngest child can help you quite a lot. Be patient if the effort is not perfect. Half-dusted is better than dust, is it not? Also, learn from the other WAHMs out there. The SBI! WAHMs are particularly bright I've found. And, they've got TONS of great advice for attempting to "do it all." They've even got their own forum all to themselves at the SBI! forums.

Case Study #5

If At First You Don't Succeed... Try Again!

Living in Tennessee, USA, with her husband and three children, Joan Linwood has journeyed through several business ventures on her road to her real passion, a site about the best California beaches.

Tell us about your website, Joan.

I've owned www.best-california-beach.com since June 2004.

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

I have a BS in plant science (ornamental horticulture) from UC Davis.

I worked for 7 years as a draftsman/designer for a landscape architect in southern California. I quit when my first child was born.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

About 5 years ago I realized that living on one income wasn't going to cut it, not in the long term. So I started to look around for a business I could run from home.

I started network marketing, which was a really not a good thing for an introvert like myself to do. I failed spectacularly and ran up some debt. By that time, I was interested in working on the Internet, and had dabbled in it with my network marketing business.

An online business is perfect for someone like myself, especially since I'd rather write than talk. So when I discovered SBI!, I decided to take that route. I hadn't even thought of creating my own website before then, because the prospect seemed too daunting.

Again, however, I chose poorly and focused my web site on a very competitive niche for which I had little knowledge – home-based business. I continued with that for much longer than I should have, before abandoning it and choosing a better niche.

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

After I realized that home business was not a good theme for me, I started brainstorming other topics. One evening, as I was ogling my coffee-table book on California beach houses and dreaming of getting back to the coast, it came to me. Why not build a site about the California coast? I'd set a goal to get back there a long time ago, so why not make that my theme?

I already knew that other travel sites have been successful, and when I ran the numbers, it panned out. However, I thought maybe it'd be better to choose a locale closer to home, so I checked out the numbers for the Smoky Mountains. They were good, though not as strong as California beaches, and my heart was really set on the beaches.

However, I also love the desert, so I checked out the numbers there, and the beaches still won.

After working on my California Beach site for over a year, I found myself frustrated because I hadn't been able to get back to California yet. It's not easy building a site about a place thousands of miles away. You can't just dash out to do some research and take photos. So I decided it was time to start that Tennessee site I'd considered before. My son's interest in photography was one of the deciding factors, along with the fact that I won't be able to get back to California until this summer. The new site is in the works, but I'm not sure when we'll actually launch it.

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

It varies considerably. Some weeks I do absolutely nothing because I have other priorities to attend to. Other weeks I may spend as much as 8 hours a day.

How do you make money from your site?

Most of my income is coming from Google AdSense. I also use affiliate programs, but it takes more work to promote those, and right now I'm still more focused on building content and building traffic.

What is your average monthly income?

I'm averaging about \$175/month. I thought I was going to hit the \$300/month milestone, but then fall came and my income dropped. Gee, I should have seen that coming, given my niche.

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

Success is making steady progress toward your goals. I set incremental goals for myself, such as getting to 30 pages, getting 500 visitors a month, getting 1,000 visitors, getting a first check, making \$300/month consistently, and so on. It's important to celebrate the small achievements, because that's what leads to big success.

It took me nearly a year before I got that first check, which is to me the first big success milestone.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

In promoting my network marketing business, I was frustrated because I could not build my own website. I was interested, but the learning curve seemed way too steep. SBI! promised to eliminate that learning curve by taking care of all the tech stuff. A little light went on, and I said, "Hey, I can do this!"

Are your children involved with your website?

They're not involved at the moment, but my younger son has developed an interest in photography, which I plan to encourage by having him help with my new site. I've already purchased another subscription (the recent two-site deal) and am planning a site on east Tennessee. He'll help with the pictures, while I'll write the content. (I might also have him write some content as a home-school project.)

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

That's the beauty of a website, you can always go back and change things around. I'm beginning to reorganize the information now, breaking up large pages into smaller ones. I think one mistake I made was worrying too much about using good keywords, and I was unwilling to build pages based on low demand keywords. This focus led to some awkward phrasing and clumsy organization. I now realize that it's far more important to break up the information so it's easy for visitors to find and so that pages are clean and easy to navigate.

The one thing you can't easily change, however, is the domain name, so it pays to take extra time choosing it. I'm not entirely pleased with mine, but it'll do.

Joan, how do you "do it all"?

My children are older, so childcare isn't a major issue. I recently put my youngest child (11) in public school. She has Down syndrome, and it was just getting too overwhelming to home-school her. My other two are teenagers, so they're able to help out with the housework, which, frankly, we don't take all that seriously. They're also able to do their schoolwork with only minimal oversight.

For meals, I use a lot of convenience foods. When I cook from scratch, I'll often make a large batch so that I can freeze a second meal. Laundry is easy. I never buy anything that needs ironing or dry cleaning. I use a timer to remind me to get laundry out of the dryer before the machine stops and clothes get wrinkled. That way, I can keep working without thinking about it.

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

I think a lot of people are like me, and start out building long pages, which take forever to complete. This leads to a lot of frustration, because your site grows very slowly. My advice is to start out building short pages. If a topic is worthy of at least 125 words, make a separate web page for it, even if the keywords are low demand. Your site will grow more quickly, your visitors can find information more easily, and you'll be happier and less frustrated. There's a real psychological boost when you can quickly create a lot of pages.

Case Study #6

Business Keeps Building Despite Moves Abroad

British mum to three, Nicole Tod discovered that creating her own website was the right solution for her family's nomadic lifestyle. Currently living in Vietnam, the Tods have also enjoyed stints in Thailand, Mali and Ghana.

Nicole, tell us about your website.

I started www.kids-partycabin.com two years ago.

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

I finished full time school education at 18 years of age. This was followed by 3 years basic nurse training, 1 year pediatric nurse training, 18 months health visitor training then just for something different I did 2 correspondence courses in interior design and setting up a home based business and then a 2 year diploma in French.

I am British and started my career as a nurse which was something I had wanted to do since I was about 5 years old. I can still vividly remember regularly setting up my toy ironing board with all my plastic tools and giving my parents 'foot care'! Consequently I went on to train as a nurse which led to school nursing then pediatric nursing and finally I became a Health Visitor.

After 10 years of nursing I was ready for a different challenge and so off I went to work in a refugee camp in Sudan. That was one of the most challenging and rewarding things that I have ever done and the kindness and gratitude of all the people that I worked with will stay with me forever. Another great thing to come out of my stay in Sudan was that I met my husband Bill. He too was working with the same organization ("Save the Children"). One thing led to another and hey presto, here we are happily married and with three great kids.

Moving on several years...

Bill is still working with "Save the Children" and we have been working and living overseas now for thirteen years - Togo, Ghana, Mali, Vietnam and latest stop is

Bangkok. We love it all and although I have not been working regularly per se (not always easy to get work when you are on the move every three years) I have felt immensely privileged to be able to stay at home and bring up my kids.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

As we move location every 3 years or so, it was important that any business that I did was mobile. I love working my way round the Internet and have dabbled with several web design programs – very unsuccessfully until I discovered SBI!. I also love children and being creative with them so I felt that my website was the perfect answer to put all my skills and interests together.

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

It took me a while as initially I couldn't see what I was good at or what interested me the most. However, once I started following the action guide, I was able to see that a website doesn't have to be about something hi-tech or be just a sales site and that the idea of kids parties was literally starting me in the face.

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?

It took me a while to monetize and initially I was jumping the gun and doing things too early which only set me back in the long run. Now I feel more settled and confident and am concentrating on a few monetization strategies. Basically I use Google AdSense (Just love it); am listed in a few directories; affiliate marketing; link exchange (been difficult to find decent links which aren't direct competition); started an e-zine about 4 months ago (I find that a bit of a struggle); I have written 2 articles for e-zine directories (got me lots of traffic) and my latest is setting up a party entertainers directory. At present I provide free listings but I may charge a small fee in the future as it is very, very time consuming.

What is your average monthly income?

For the past 6 months my average earnings have been around \$335 USD per month.

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

That's a tricky one to answer. I suppose for me there were/are several levels of success and each one is related to the goals that I set myself. The first element of success for me was just the fact of setting up a web site. After all my failed attempts in the past, the achievement that I felt when I got my first page up is indescribable. The second element of success for me was when I started to earn some money. I can vividly remember my first earnings – all of 4 cents! But oh boy was I happy. Last month I had earned enough to buy a laptop computer – that felt like success!

Now that I have achieved the above 2, my success goals have changed. Firstly I plan to develop my party themes and my party entertainer's directory, then I want to write an eBook and finally I am setting myself monetary goals for the year ahead. I think with a web business, your goals and what you consider successful can change all the time and as you achieve one thing, you set yourself another target. So in a nutshell for me, success is achieving the goals that I set for myself no matter how big or small.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

Initially it got my interest as the SBI! site was different from the others in that I felt I was being talked to rather than talked at. It wasn't so high-tech and frightening as many of the other sites and somehow seemed to be answering most of my question that I had in my head. I downloaded the free e-book and read it thoroughly but was still confused a little and I suppose nervous about spending on something that I really had no idea about – I had never heard of affiliate marketing until then.

I suppose what really cemented my decision to go with SBI! was when I emailed Judd a load of question and worries and he came straight back with some great advice and answers. I realized then that SBI! was not some mechanical site and system and that there were real people behind it who were ready to help me get started and to support me as I went along.

How does your significant other support you in your ventures?

My husband is great on Excel and writing emails but that is about it. So technically he doesn't support me at all but where he is good at is just listening to me prattle on about my day and what I have achieved (or not!). I think my advice to others would be not to bore the pants off your family like I have done in the past. My website topic doesn't particularly 'excite' my husband so I tend to get friends or other family members to critique pages. Be prepared though for both positive and negative comments. Sometimes I have spent hours putting up a great page only for someone to suggest I could have done it differently.

Are your children involved with your business?

My kids are involved directly and indirectly. Indirectly as a lot of the advice I give my visitors is drawn from experience of the parties that I have thrown for my kids. Whereas

directly they are involved in testing out some of the craft projects that I suggest (photos of their projects usually make it on to my web pages) and in suggestion ideas for different party themes that they would like.

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

I would narrow down my main topic. I feel my topic on kid's parties is too wide to do successfully and thoroughly. I would maybe have just stuck to party themes or party games.

Nicole, how do you "do it all"?

I am embarrassed to say that I have someone who does most of the housework for me. It is not as luxurious as it sounds as we live in Asia and it is the norm to have some home help who will do the ironing, cleaning and washing. If I didn't have that help, I honestly don't know how I would manage. Setting up and maintaining a successful website is not something that you just dabble in when you have a few minutes to spare. It does take time and commitment. Actually that is the only thing that I feel SBI! should stress more. I was under the impression when I started that a couple of hours a week would do – oops more like add a zero to that.

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

My advice would be to research thoroughly before you spend a dime. Check out other web hosting and building programs before you get SBI!. That way you will realize what an excellent deal SBI! really is. Also you may find something more suited to your needs.

Don't get into affiliate marketing for the money. Few people make much money in the first couple of years. After two years I make what I call "Holiday money". In other words it will pay for our family holidays. I am very happy with that I might add.

Be realistic. It takes up more of your time than you think, especially in the first year.

Create your own private workspace which is especially for you. Tidy it up each day as it is amazing now quickly it becomes a mess and then your mind is all over the place.

If you are short on time, prioritize. Write a list of what is important and stick to it. It is so easy to get carried away with browsing the forums or playing around with images when you might be better off getting a decent paragraph up on one of your pages.

Make use of the forums. I can not tell you how much they have helped me.

It is very easy to become totally unsociable and boring when you are spending a long time on the computer. Try to set times when you will not work such as weekends or when the kids arrive home from school.

Case Study # 7

Teaching What You Know = Success

Tracy Achen from New Mexico, USA, found such success with one website, she decided to build more.

Tracy, tell us about your websites.

I've been with SBI! since 2001. I have three websites: www.womansdivorce.com, www.creditsourceonline.com and www.makeyourownwebsiteguide.com.

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

As I look back over my work history, I've spent about 15 years of my life cleaning something. I've cleaned out animal stalls, new-construction homes, occupied houses, and washed cars (about 1500 per week). During my separation and divorce, I decided that it was about time to do something that wasn't dependent on the weather and paid a regular paycheck, so I started working as a magazine merchandiser. I like the flexibility of my work, but the pay left a lot to be desired. I was making about \$700 a month and trying to support my family.

Struggling to pay the bills is what got me to thinking about earning some extra income, which eventually lead me to where I am now. I started my website while I was still working. This way, if it flopped, I still had my job. I continue to build it along the way, eventually adding two more websites. I had a work injury in 2003 and had to eventually quit my job in 2004. Even though it was scary letting go of the security of a paycheck, it was the best decision that I ever made. I've been able to devote my time and attention to my websites, and the effort is paying off.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

After my divorce, I was financially strapped and looking for some extra income. I had gotten interested in a MLM venture, but was disappointed that I would have to pay outrageous fees for a website that I had not control over. This began my journey for information about starting my own website which I could have total control over it.

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

After reading the action guide (which tells you to focus on something that you are passionate about) I chose to focus on the subject of divorce from a woman's perspective. After being emotionally and financially devastated by my divorce, this was something that I was definitely passionate about. I wanted to help other women prepare for and understand the divorce process so that they could avoid some of the mistakes

that I had made.

I started my credit site later that year after seeing the income potential from commission off of credit cards. After doing extensive research on the keywords, I decided to have the site encompass the major areas surrounding credit. This is because each area affects the other. Basically, I offer general credit advice, information about credit reports, and a system to find different credit cards. This is a constantly evolving website.

My last website I built due to the conviction that the SBI! system is the best way to create a website. It offers the basics of how to build your own website and what you should consider along the way. This site is really fun to work on because it makes me go back and review what I have done on the other two websites, helping me to make changes to improve them. They say that the best way to really learn a subject is to teach it, and this has certainly been true in my case.

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

I spend approximately 40 hours a week on my website (I know, same as a regular job), but I am able to be home for the kids. I can help them with their homework and listen as they talk about their day.

How do you make money from your site?

78% of the money I make is through affiliate commissions. Basically, I post links to merchant sites, and they pay me a commission when someone purchases from them. Also included in this figure is income from Google AdSense, but it's not a great amount due to the fact that it's only on a few of my pages. 14% of my income is from the sale of my book about divorce, and I also make 8% from directory listing fees from the lawyers who list their services on my site.

What is your average monthly income?

\$1857/mo. For January 2005, my income was \$1409. In September 2005, my income was \$2943. Generally, there has been a steady climb in income each month.

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

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. I admit that it takes a lot of time answering their emails, but this was something that I chose to do from the beginning. In fact, had I known how much time this aspect would take, I probably wouldn't have ever started in the first place. Luckily, I

didn't know. The fact that I can truly help other women far outweighs the efforts involved. The letters from the women make it all worth it.

I need to point out that not all websites require so much email support. The divorce site does because there is such a wide variation in divorce law from state to state. The questions to my credit site are really basic in nature. In fact, I will probably be adding a FAQs section that answers all these questions. And I really don't get that many questions from other site because I try to provide the information that they are seeking directly on the website.

I measure success with my credit site by the commissions that I make, but I also know that I am providing relevant information due to the steady increase in traffic that I get. My success on *www.makeyourownwebsiteguide.com* comes through the sharing of information. I'm steadily building traffic and subscribers, which in turn will lead to revenue as I begin to monetize it at some point in time.

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

I got my first "real" computer (the first was a DOS) in 1999, so I really didn't have a lot of experience using a computer. What sold me on SBI! was the fact that I didn't need to be a computer geek to build my website. All I had to do was pick my template to get the basic look for my website, and be able to copy and paste my information into the building blocks.

What I like so much about SBI! is that it includes everything that I need, without having to use a lot of outside programs. For example, I don't have to go to every search engine to submit my pages and check my rankings. When I add a new page to my website, SBI! analyzes it to make sure that I have it optimized for the search engines (this way I don't have to keep tweaking my page to get higher rankings). I am able to get the relevant data that I need for traffic analysis and reciprocal linking.

Another added bonus is the email system that filters out all the spam, saving me countless hours of hitting the delete button. There are so many things that SBI! does for me that I would never consider switching.

At times I thought it would be nice to have SSI (server side includes) capabilities so that I could make universal changes across the website without having to edit every page. But the way it is now also has its benefits. When I want to make such a change on all my pages, I am able to re-analyze and update my pages on an individual basis so that they perform better. If I were to be able to push one button to change everything, those pages might just gather dust and become outdated.

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

If I could go back, I really wouldn't change a thing. Granted, what I started with was not exactly flashy, but I was able to communicate my messages in a way that real people

could relate to. It's funny, I started my credit site because I saw how much money could be made on credit cards, but as the site evolved, I found myself again in the position of helping people, only this time it was helping people understand the basics of credit. When you focus your website on helping others, you truly are a winner. The money is just secondary.

Tracy, how do you “do it all”?

When I first started out, I had to save working on my website until after the kids went to bed or on weekends. The thing is, it never really seemed like work to me. It was fun and challenging at the same time, with me often finding it hard to tear myself away from the computer. As the kids got older, I was able to spend more time on it during the early evening. Once I quit my job, I was able to work on it during the school hours. I take small breaks from the computer to do laundry, clean, walk the dogs, etc.

I could probably cut down on the number of hours that I spend developing my websites, but I don't want to. It excites me and gives me a broader purpose. I am more than just a wife and mother. My oldest son has even bragged that his mom owns and develops websites (this is really big considering that he is a teenager). I'm lucky that my kids and new husband support me, and that I have found something that is so fulfilling.

Case Study #8 Salon Owner Becomes Internet Success Story

Michelle Schill comes from Alberta, Canada, and turned her skills as a hairdresser into a profitable website.

Michelle, tell us about your websites.

I've been with SBI! since August 2004 and have two websites: www.style-hair-magazine.com and www.enchanted-galiano-island.com.

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

Most recently, I've operated a salon in my home, working in the evenings when my husband was home to look after the kids. Before that, 5 years working in salons, beginning with an hourly wage, then commission, then chair rental, which required me to “start a business.”

Before hair school, I worked in insurance claims, reception, clerical and administrative positions.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

My initial motivation wasn't to start an online business, actually. It just turned out to be the best vehicle for me to bring my vision to fruition. Had I known about the possibilities, I'd have considered a website long before 2004. My main motivation is twofold, first of all, I want to be self-sufficient, have my own money and contribute to the household so my husband isn't solely responsible for the finances. Secondly, I want to live a full life, discover and develop my individual talents, and become the best me possible through challenge and hard work.

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

The idea for a hair book had been brewing for a year and a half before I was introduced to SBI!. I'd been working on a proposal for a publisher, trying to sort through the ins and outs of corporate publishing, editors, agents, etc...

My travel site was born a year after the first site and is still very young. I've got grand plans for it and the fact that I'm building a site about one of my favorite places to visit (and daydream about) is a thrill for me.

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

20-30 hours per week probably.

How do you make money from your site?

Mostly Google AdSense, which I have great success with. I've also recently implemented a new pay per click advertising program. And I earn regular income with affiliate marketing as well.

With my travel site, I'll be implementing paid advertising and referral agreements once the site has grown to a certain extent. I have Google AdSense on that site as well, and will be adding select affiliate programs in the future.

What is your average monthly income?

At this point in time, I'm around \$1000.00 per month from my hair site. The other one is very new and not earning yet.

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

I achieved some measure of success after about 6 or 8 months with my first site. Started receiving monthly cheques from my monetization strategies and regularly

increasing traffic. It was also at this point that my site was discovered by the Editor in Chief of a publishing house in New York that produces hairstyle magazines. She'd been surfing the net, had discovered my site, and was "very impressed" with my work. She offered me the opportunity to write freelance articles for their magazines.

So, in the space of 8 months from the day I embarked on my SBI! journey, rather than researching potential publishing avenues and learning about jumping through hoops, I was in the enviable position of being approached by them. The Internet has been dubbed "The Great Equalizer" for good reason, but success hinges on getting your site seen, and many millions of them never are. I feel as though I've been blessed with a secret treasure having found SiteBuildIt!

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

It was the down to earth quality that "sold" me on SBI!, no question. The authentic feel to the content, no hype or pitchy stuff, just solid information about what I could do with the product. Plus all the behind the scenes technical stuff that I wouldn't have to do, or even spend valuable time learning about. I'd just get to drive the beautiful machine, I didn't have to learn how to assemble it myself. This meant I could focus on the aspect of my project that interested me the most, building and creating something to be proud of.

I also did a lot of research, browsing successful SiteBuildIt! websites and reading their stories. It really fuelled my drive to get going and find a way to purchase SBI!

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

It's all been necessary. As cliché as that may sound, it's true. Sure I'd like to have done everything perfect to start out with, but that's just not reality. I'm so proud of all I've learned, of how far I've come, and it's been through my mistakes that I've gotten here. No regrets at all, looking forward to more learning, more milestones, more growth.

Michelle, how do you "do it all"?

Ummmm... housework? Well in truth, I was never really much concerned with a pristine environment. Seriously though, it all balances out. That's the beauty of working on your own time. A meal and a quick story, then some time for Mommy to work, then a snack and clean-up, nap-time for the youngest, a movie for the oldest, throw in some laundry, and set to work for a few solid hours.

I do what needs to be done the most at any given time and the nature of website building is such that I can stop or take a break at any point and carry on when time allows. I can work in my pyjamas and fuzzy slippers and switch from work mode to mommy/caretaker to silly dance partner whenever the mood strikes. And I'm here to answer all my kids' questions, kiss their boo-boo's and hear their newest words or discoveries. It's a beautiful thing.