

Provided FREE By Kay Green of MyPreciousKid.com and Preciouskids.org

50 Tips: Starting a Work At Home Business

1. Choose your product or sell another's!

Do you want to sell a product from a direct sales company? There are many to choose from. Match one to your hobbies and interests. The benefit is it is sometimes easier to sell a product that everyone already knows. There is more competition.

Or do you want to sell a product that you make yourself? Do you have a hobby or craft that you excel in that you could profit from? What about a gift basket company of other wahm made products? What about offering your services? There are many choices based on your skills. This is the first step to being a work at home mom.

2. Look for a company/product that you can trust.

Make sure you agree with their values and policies and their products. You cannot sell products that you do not like yourself. Do some research to find out about the companies you are considering. If you are going to have your own company and products, then this research will still help you out in deciding how to set up your company.

3. Make a product made from your need or passion.

My homeschool book came from sharing my resources with many homeschool families. It started as a notebook. My ID cards came from my homeschool kids needing school ID's. What do you already do that could be made into a product for others? What do your friends and families ask you for help with. What are you known for? Turn those hobbies or passions into profit.

4. Choose a name with meaning for you.

Register your web site domain name, only \$8.95 <http://www.godaddy.com>
There are plenty of other inexpensive places to register too. Choose a name

that you will not have to spell for people. I think shorter is better. What will others be able to remember easily. To do online business successfully I strongly suggest your own domain name, rather than a free site with a long string name.

5. Get a web site with e-store capabilities.

I like <http://www.wahmshoppes.com> for \$6 a month and he registers your domain name for you. His tech support is great and he offers a free e-store with shopping cart. <http://www.Behosting.com> is also great at \$10 a month and has many amenities. <http://www.uneedwebhosting.com> also has some great programs. She offers web templates too.

6. Get set up to take credit cards. This is a MUST!

<http://epay.propay.com/cgi/appProcess1.exe/signup?EHNDNEPT> is free but only allows \$1000 a month in transactions. It is a great way to start out. Your local bank may be able to help you. US Bank does them for \$25 a month. Join <https://www.paypal.com/affil/pal=74N9QPNX7BQUQ> too. Paypal works for many online transactions as well.

7. Get a DBA business license through your state.

It is your "Doing Business As" business name registration. I got my form at the bank. It was \$18 a year. Register your business name and your domain name if different. Make sure to give a copy of these to your bank where our business account is. See what other licensing your state requires. You may need a reseller's license.

8. Open a separate checking account just for your business.

Make sure every order/income and every expense go through it. Get a separate business credit card for online/phone orders of supplies. I write next to every deposit what it was for and which client. <http://www.qksrv.net/click-707232-6307423> These simple things will help you with taxes. Quicken is an easy accounting software to track your income

and expenses. Microsoft Money is also good. See if your county Small Business Association has any free small business accounting classes. The big thing is to keep track of everything coming in and going out, and keeping them separate from your home bank accounts. Many local community colleges offer inexpensive small business classes you may find helpful.

9. Get free business cards with your new name

<http://www.qksrv.net/click-707232-5355905> has FREE business cards! Give them out everywhere. Put them in when you pay bills. Put them down at doctor's offices, stores, and bulletin boards. Pass the word to everyone about what you do, Be sure your web address is on them too. Make a goal of giving out 10 cards every day!

10. Get a PO Box for all your business mail.

This is especially true if you are online. It protects your family. I never post my home address online. It also keeps my business mail separate from my home mail. You can write off this minimal expense. Get \$25 in free shipping.

<http://service.bfast.com/bfast/click?bfmid=9441148&siteid=30015925&bfpag=stamps1>

This is a great service that allows you to print postage at home. I got a free postage scale from them too.

11. Get a toll free 800 number for business calls.

This makes you look more professional. If your area offers distinctive ring you can get a separate number for that too, so you answer those rings like a business call.

12. Tell your friends and family about your new business.

Offer them a discount to help you get started. Network, network, network! Make a list of everyone you know, do business with, have in common thru your kids, met a church or moms club. Use this list to slowly work thru and tell tem about your new business. Offer them something. People buy from those the have relationship with. Be sure to follow up with every flyer you send out. Do not expect the phone just to ring. You must follow up!

13. Join several WAHM support groups.

Go to <http://www.yahogroups.com> to get support from other WAHM's too. Put in any subject related to your business to find lots of options. I really like 1ChristianWAHM-subscribe@yahogroups.com and wahmhits-subscribe@yahogroups.com and commonconnections-subscribe@yahogroups.com There are MANY!

14. Check with an accountant and a lawyer.

They can help you to see if you need to do anything special in your state. Every state has different rules. Go to the professionals. Check with the SBA (Small Business Association) too. They offer lots of free help.

15. Come up with a flier, brochure, and postcard to have printed and send out to others.

Mail Box Etc offers 1000 black copies for \$35. You can take your own paper if you want color or card stock. My local printer (another WAHM) offered to meet that price for me and I get excellent service. If you have a high quality laser or ink jet printer on your computer you may be able to print them yourself. My brochure has changed many times as my business progresses. Check out the FREE Xerox Color Printer at <http://www.123homebusinessguide.com> for an awesome deal. You will need to do 2500+ color copies a month plus have at least 2 employees (you and hubby?) Create a different brochure for each target customer you are aiming for. Have a different brochure for recruiting then selling. Be sure your selling brochure has an order form attached to it. Make it easy for people to order your products.

16. Swap fliers/coupons with others in like businesses.

Join <http://www.mompack.com> or <http://www.mommymailers.com> to find others to swap with. Offer to put out others flyers with your orders in exchange with them doing the same for you. I make up coupon packs of all

these flyers and give them away free all over my community. Moms love coupons. I send them out with my orders too. I also find having these coupon packs to hand out at fairs and activities give me a way to get my materials into their hands too. All moms will accept coupons! I have found I can drop off the coupon packs at preschools, moms groups and day care centers and they gladly accept them. That gets my brochures into their hands too!

17. Make or have made a banner, button, and logo for your web page and all printing.

There are many other WAHM's that offer this service for inexpensively. You can find them on your yahoogroups. It is important to have a consistent and uniform look on all your printing and web pages. It portrays your image to the public. Look at my banners at <http://www.mypreciouskid.com> and <http://www.preciouskids.org>

18. Put up a banner page on your site so you can swap banner links with others.

This is a great way to increase your search engine ratings. I like to label my page "[More Shopping](http://www.mypreciouskid.com/wahm.html)" <http://www.mypreciouskid.com/wahm.html> rather than just links. The more pages that link to your page the better. I also give away an [award button](#) to other quality sites with my same market audience. It links them back to be. They love being recognized too, I get a better response from than then asking for a link exchange. Link exchanges are also a great way to get more traffic.

19. Submit your web page to all the search engines.

<http://www.google.com/addurl.html> has done well for me. You can submit by hand or doing it in groups. Do a search on google or yahoo for search engine submissions to find many free submission sites to use. You need to do this over and over, at least monthly. There are lots of category type search engines. I used one for kids sites and one for Christian sites. <http://www.submitxtras.com>

<http://www.gospelcom.net/guide/web-directories.html>

<http://www.submittalservice.com/mtg.html>

<http://www.northernwebs.com/set/setsimjr.html>

<http://selfpromotion.com>

<http://www.submitexpress.com/?source=google>

<http://www.submit-it.com/>

<http://www.crosssearch.com/cgi-bin/submit/>

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

<http://www.gospelcom.net/guide/web-directories.html>

20. When you get a request for information on your product or company be sure to respond immediately.

That will bring customers back. I print the request and write on it the date I mailed the info and file it in a SENT folder so I can look back at it if needed. Good customer service is key in WAHM business. Always be timely, polite, and give a little extra.

21. Give more than expected.

Pack a little surprise in each order. Go the extra mile. This will get their attention and they will tell others. Always put in your ordering info for them to give to a friend or order again. I like to put in a magnet with my business info too. I want them to remember my company and me. I also send a coupon good off of their repeat order. Repeat customers are easier to get than new customers.

22. Support other Work at Home businesses.

It helps your reputation. You get when you give. Help another with a problem. Teach others what you have been taught in this business. Have compassion for others problems. Be a kind listening ear. What goes around comes around. The Golden Rule is truth.

23. Barter your products with other work at home businesses.

It gets your product out there to be seen. It gets you other products to use at home or for gifts. It gives you another positive voice for your product. It saves you money. Ask for a "Customer Comment" from them to add to your site and materials!

24. Offer your products for contest prizes.

It gives you added exposure and lets others see and appreciate your products. Be sure to put ordering info in every product you give away.

25. Figure out a budget.

How much you can afford to spend on advertising, barter, free products, printing, etc? Stay within that. Barter when your budget is gone or to make it go farther. Be sure to include advertising costs in the cost of producing your products.

26. If you make your own product be sure to find out exactly how much it costs you make that product.

Rule of thumb is cost plus labor times 2 is wholesale price you would charge others. Wholesale times 2 is retail. Some do cost times 3 for retail. An item that costs me \$5 to produce (including what it would cost me to pay someone to produce it) will wholesale for \$10 and retail for \$20. The industry standard for offering the wholesale price is a minimum of \$100 order.

You must plan for success. Under pricing is one of the biggest mistakes for WAHM's. What will it cost me to hire to do part of my job in producing my product. What would it cost to have some parts done out of house. I have recently worked with a printer to do portions of my print work that I normally do on my computer. It gives me more time to produce more products. Price to include this.

Many work at home businesses think they will under price the competition. I have talked to many that said when they finally got the prices where they need they got more customers. People thought products were more valuable

and then wanted them.

27. Be sure to realize you will need to set aside a portion of your profits for taxes.

This is also a common mistake for work at home businesses. The first year you may not show a profit by the time you write off all your start up costs, printing, postage, and mileage! When you do make a profit you have to remember that Uncle Sam will want his share. Check with an accountant to see how to best cover this. I put 20% away to pay taxes later.

28. Keep a log of every mile you drive to do anything with your business.

Many of us can write off that mileage on our taxes. Last year was 32 cents a mile. This adds up fast. Keep a log of everywhere you drive. Be conscience to do your business errands when doing other errands. Take your products and materials where ever you go so you can write off those miles when promoting your product!

29. Get receipts for every expense you pay for.

This is crucial. Uncle Sam wants a paper trail. Use a business checkbook or business credit card (not cash) for all expenses. Also file away the receipts. Then keep an expense log! This gives you the records in 3 places. Plus your trip is in your mileage log.

30. Do a search on <http://www.google.com> for your supplies wholesale.

I found several good sources for mine, and the companies had very low minimums. With a business license you can usually buy wholesale. For every part of your product, shipping, and printing that you produce look for wholesale sources. You can really bring your product costs down.

Get great [home business magazines](#)

<http://www.bestdealmagazines.com/index.asp?AID=1643792&PID=596417>

(as well as others for gifts) for only \$3.95 a year. You can probably even write this off. They have Entrepreneur and Home Business as well as many other National magazines.

31. Have a contest on your site.

It brings visitors. Be sure to submit your contest to ezines, contest boards, and search engine. Then use an auto responder to answer every entry with an email offering them a discount, how to sign up for your newsletter, and your favorite web pages,

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

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

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

32. Have a mailing list or yahoogroups list.

It can be an announcement newsletter only for your ads and specials. Or it can be an email loop where others can chat with each other. Or it can be an ezine format daily or weekly or monthly. It brings others to your site over and over again. Have a sign up form on your site. You want to bring other back again often and help them remember your web address. Send a blank email to join my newsletters.

HOMESCHOOL-AnewBeginning-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Creativechristiansnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Preciouskids-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

33. Sell your product wholesale to others.

E-mail them and ask them if they want to have a FREE sample/wholesale pack. I have had good results from this. Make sure you are looking for sites with the same target audience as your products. These sites are looking for good products to buy wholesale and then sell retail to their customers. You can do the same by visiting local area business that targets your same customer.

34. Offer a FREE product on your site to increase visitors.

It can be a printable that others can print right from your site. It can be a freebie thru an affiliate program that you can earn money on. It can be other freebies that you find listed and make a list of. It can be a drawing. The goal is to keep them on your site longer. See my [100+ Freebies](http://www.mypreciouskid.com/free.html) <http://www.mypreciouskid.com/free.html> .

35. Join one of the many affiliate programs.

<http://www.preciouskids.org/income/index.html>
<http://www.mypreciouskid.com/affiliate.html>
<http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=pDqdMeOqgvY&offerid=7097.10000005&type=3&subid=0>
<http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/click?id=pDqdMeOqgvY&offerid=27608.10000004&type=3&subid=0>
<http://www.websponsors.com/cgi-bin/referral.cgi?username=kaygreen>

36. Offer your product through an affiliate program to other sites.

<http://www.mypreciouskid.com/affiliate.html> You can make 20% by signing up for mine. You can do it for free through <http://www.mals-e.com> They also have a free shopping cart program. Swap affiliate links with other WAHM businesses. I have a shopping page of other wahm products all of which offer me an affiliate commission. And they have mine on their page too,

37. Find your niche.

What type of customer or business that can use your product/service? Think of a target. Who is the best customer in the middle? There will be other customers that make the ring of the target. Concentrate all your marketing on leaning for that target customer becoming an expert at meeting their needs. Do a google search or a local yellow pages search and

offer your services/products. Do contacts for one type of customer at a time until you have exhausted it.

38. Get "What Others are saying about" statements from others who have bought or gotten your product through barter.

Add those to your site. They add a sense of acceptability and let you be seen as legitimate, professional, and long standing!

39. Decide what your typical customer is like.

Income, location, needs??? Then work at getting your product into those locations. I know my typical customer is a working mom with kids in daycare or preschool. So I am contacting them offering them a fundraiser program with my products. The school/organization gets a portion of the sales. I try to put most of my time and energy to find customers like this.

40. Become an expert in your field.

Write articles with your web address and email in the byline. Offer to speak on your subject for seminars both online and off. I am offering to do child safety talks at preschools along with offering my ID cards and giving the school a portion of the profits. Again this gives you a reputation as an expert!

41. Schedule regular working hours for your business.

I think this is very hard for work at home moms. It is easy to either just say one more minute and keep working when you family needs you, or the opposite, no time for work actually happens. Only you can decide what works for your family. I try to get orders completed or a project done when my youngest naps each day. I want to mark one thing off the list! I am also trying to be on the computer less in the evening when my family is around.

42. Write a business plan.

<http://home3.americanexpress.com/smallbusiness/> has a free outline. A business plan will help you to lay it all out. Who is your customer? What is your budget? What goals will you set? You decide what you want your business to look like.

43. Check out the free getting started in business seminars

<http://www.herevents.com/business/rooms/speakers/> has some. They exist all over the web. See what helps the Small Business Department has too.

44. Use your domain name email for all email.

It puts your domain name in front of people. Much better for them to see you as Kay@mypreciouskid.com rather than kay@aol.com You want them to remember your web page address.

45. Make sure you have an email link on every page.

Make it easy for clients to get a hold of you. I am surprised how often I see a site with no way to reach the owner. I put my contact info at the bottom of every page in my site.

46. Use the first page of your site to tell customers why to order.

Do not have too many other links there to distract them. Make it easy for them to order from you. Tell them how and give them a reason to order. List the benefits, and features, and guide them to ordering.

47. Give every customer you get a reason or need to order from you again.

Offer a discount coupon or incentive to bring them back and tell their friends. Send them something extra. Give them a promo item or magnet with

your name and web site. Help them to come back!

48. Put your web site description and URL under your name in your signature line of all emails.

A signature can be attached in most email programs. List your web site and slogans. List your specials. Swap signatures with other WAHM's.

49. Price check the competition to be sure you are in the market range.

Know what they are offering. Never talk down the competition. Talk up your benefits/features. You do not have to under price all the competition but you want to be in the right range. Know what it costs you to produce your product. Make sure you are making a profit or it is not worth it.

50. Drop off coupons for your product to local doctor office staff, resale stores, preschools, day care centers, and other places you do business with.

Make a list of every place that has customers that you are targeting. Every week drop by a few and ask if you can leave coupons or flyers. If appropriate ask about doing a fundraiser for them. Consistency is the key. If you continue to reach a few every week you broaden the circle that has heard about your business, which in turn brings in more sales. Customers have to hear about you and your products 7 times to buy so keep plugging away at it. I am seeing it really pay off now.

Thanks to the many WAHM's (Work at Home Mom's) who helped add to this list! See this site for free work at home resources <http://www.preciouskids.org/income/index.html>
See here for lots of FREEBIES and affiliate programs.

<http://www.preciouskids.org/free.html>

<http://www.mypreciouskid.com/free.html>

Check here for some great WAHM products and companies

<http://www.mypreciouskid.com/wahm.html>

Go here to join my affiliate program

<http://www.mypreciouskid.com/affiliate.html>

Author Kay Green kay@preciouskids.org and her husband Russell and their 4 children live in rural Oregon. Kay owns 4 websites.

<http://www.preciouskids.org> Christian Adoption & Homeschool Resources,

<http://www.mypreciouskid.com> Laminated Safety ID products for kids,

<http://www.CreativeChristians.com> Christian WAHM Mall and

<http://www.123phonerates.com> home of 4 cent long distance.

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