

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.

If you'd like to know more about us, our sites, and how we came together to write this Guide, check out **The Background Story**. It's an interesting read!

Throughout the WAHM-IT! Guide, you'll find *quotes from real Site Build It!-owning WAHMs!* These nuggets of wisdom and inspiration come from one of the Site Build It! Forums (a friendly gathering place for the SBI! (Site Build It!) community) and the thread about WAHMs that led to this Guide's creation. 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 directed our thoughts 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.

To make it easy, we've broken your WAHM download into three separate sections:

- **WAHM-IT!, The Masters Course** – all the how-to information you need to successfully build a real business on the Net.
- **Get Organized to Work at Home** – tips on managing your household and family successfully while you work.
- **Case Studies** – inspiring stories of real-life SBI! WAHMs and their websites.

Finding Your Way Through WAHM-IT!

In Part 1, 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 a website 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 Site Build It! 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.

In Part 2 – we love Part 2 - you'll find three of our favorite **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. (And if that whets your appetite, remember there are lots more inspiring case studies in the separate book included with this download.)

In Part 3 is **The Background Story**, where you can find out more about us and how this Guide came into existence.

And finally, in Part 4, we've pulled together some **Helpful Resources**, everything you need to learn more and get started.

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.

Before you start, we suggest you print out all three books. Fine Print is simple to use. (Click here to access it... <http://www.fineprint.com/>) It will keep the bulk manageable, by allowing you to print 2 or 4 pages on each 8.5" x 11" sheet. We recommend that you put your printed copies into a 3-ring binder for convenient access.

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 these three books 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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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.

Part 1: The Pathway to Internet Success

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

My background is as an IT Business Analyst... all I can remember about my techie life was how I'd end up in a cube with another mom talking about how to get the heck out of there! Kristin

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.

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'.

We'd go to baby showers in conference rooms at lunchtime and mood was sombre at best because all the moms knew we'd be back to 70-hour weeks 6 weeks after delivery. Kristin

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.

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?

Here are some of the offline possibilities that WAHMs we talked to 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 you either take the wear and tear on your home or rent premises.

I'm a WAHM with 2 little boys, one who just started kindergarten. I used to run a hairdressing salon out of my house. I worked in the evenings when my husband was home, but guess what, we never saw each other, and we rarely were together as a family... the four of us. Michelle

- **Sales businesses**

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

- **Make your own product**

Crafts, quilts, baked goods, etc., which you market 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.

- **Network Marketing: Multi-level 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”. 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 train and/or strongly encourage your downlines to get results. Products are usually expensive, and you might need to store stock. These jobs involve inconvenient hours and travel, plus you have deadlines, hours that suit others and fluctuating income. You also need an extensive personal network, and must feel comfortable selling goods to people you don’t know.

- **Network Marketing: 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.

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 take orders at parties held in customers’ homes, and also deliver products. You earn by re-selling the company’s goods and making commissions on sales made by your downlines.

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

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.

Step 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

2.1 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?

What's more, if you're living outside the US or Canada, you may already know how difficult it is to work these types of online opportunities. Companies often restrict their employees to North America, making it even more challenging for "mums" living in places like Europe, South Africa or Australia to find realistic money-making opportunities.

- **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 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.

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

3.1 Building an Information-Rich Website

Yes, *an information-rich website* 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.

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. Michelle

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 sites, flashing banners “shouting” at you, messy sites stuffed with ads, or information that's way off the theme. Whether it's 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, and go back 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 4.5.

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. Again, we'll provide more details in Step 4.5.

We WAHMs are a committed bunch, and knowing I could earn income from something based on my passion... and do it in my own time... that's really the ultimate situation. By the way, I just stopped taking clients and have replaced that with income from my site and freelance work that has come my way through the international exposure my site has given me. Michelle

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?"

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

For us, it's because a website fits in so beautifully with our priorities. After all, how many times have you considered a work prospect, 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. You can handle 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 baby, a 3-year-old and a 5-year-old and 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.

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 if it grew into a passive source of income that only required a small amount of upkeep?

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. My second site currently earns between \$600 and \$1000 per month. Rena

If you approach it 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.

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" inside who 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?

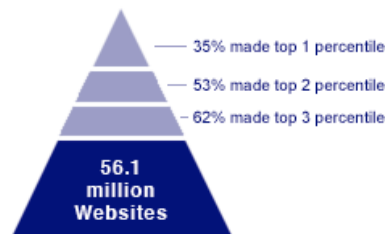
So now, for the details on how we do it, let's move on to Step 4.

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 1% 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 based on 10 million surfers.)



Will it be easy? Building a business is not exactly *easy* – there's no such thing as get-rich-quick – but it's *very* possible. (The triangle shows how many SBI! owners make it to the top 1%, 2% and 3% traffic levels. If they can do it, so can you!)

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

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.

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.

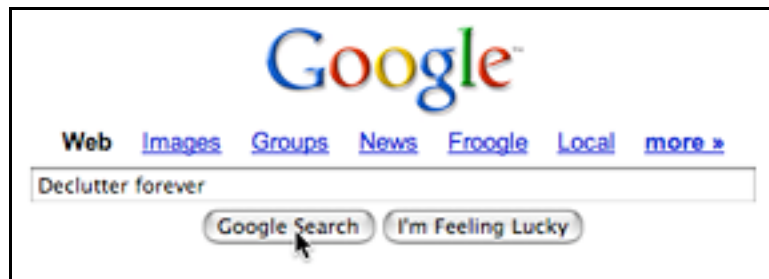
After all, a website doesn't have a shop window, or a prime site in the local shopping mall. In the mall, it's easy for stores to pull in customers. You take your kids in there and before you know it, you're dragged into a toy store, a candy shop, a computer games store...

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.

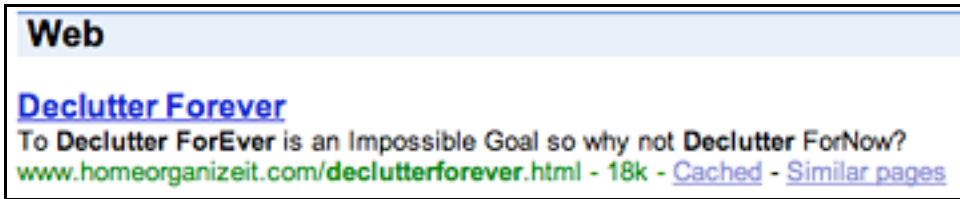
Think about it. When you surf the net, you search for **information**, for **solutions** to whatever was on your mind at that moment. You want cloth diapers, a new stroller, an online kids' game? You're looking to book a vacation, bake a cake, sort out your house once and for all? For each need or wish,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

Here's a page from Erin's site, *www.home-organize-it.com*, at top position on Google!



And here is the page itself...



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 focus on that role. 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? To read about? To 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, every 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 online? 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 goal 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 is 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 Site Build It! 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**.

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.

Here's how one WAHM's site attracted a valuable targeted visitor...

Success hinges on getting your site seen, and many millions of them never are. 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.
Michelle

What's the secret of attracting targeted traffic?

We'll use another one of our sites as an example. Jennifer launched her site, *www.favorite-puppy-names.com*, because she's keen on canines! She chose a dog-related niche by following the **CONTENT** ➡ **TRAFFIC** ➡ **PRESELL** ➡ **MONETIZE** process, and discovered that thousands and thousands of people each month look for the phrase "dog names" in search engines.

Like Jennifer, one of your first tasks will be identifying the search terms people use to find information about your topic on the Web. These terms 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. So, if you build your site using lots of sought-after keywords, wrapped around plenty of original content, search engines will send you visitors in return.

Jennifer built her site around the “dog names” concept, and provides her visitors with the free information they want. She offers thousands of ideas on what to name their puppy. Because every single page on her site is built around a high-demand keyword from her list, she gives the search engines loads of opportunities to find her. And they do.

The traffic that arrives at her site is made up of people who went looking for all sorts of concepts to do with the naming of puppies, like “favorite puppy name”, or “German puppy names”. Each time, they find exactly what they were looking for at Jennifer’s site. The more carefully targeted pages she builds, the more her traffic grows.

Her traffic stats confirm this trend...

Daily Statistics for February 2006						
Day	Visits		Visitors		Pages	
1	544	3.50%	510	4.14%	1386	3.30%
2	559	3.60%	531	4.31%	1372	3.27%
3	555	3.57%	522	4.23%	1424	3.39%
4	557	3.58%	528	4.28%	1483	3.53%
5	490	3.15%	476	3.86%	1367	3.26%
6	534	3.44%	525	4.26%	1732	4.13%
7	508	3.27%	489	3.97%	1363	3.25%
8	529	3.40%	511	4.15%	1256	2.99%
9	558	3.59%	529	4.29%	1431	3.41%
10	557	3.58%	525	4.26%	1361	3.24%
11	550	3.54%	517	4.19%	1642	3.91%
12	569	3.66%	542	4.40%	1764	4.20%
13	566	3.64%	555	4.50%	1443	3.44%
14	548	3.53%	525	4.26%	1341	3.19%
15	573	3.69%	552	4.48%	1453	3.46%

There are other ways to grow your traffic. You can pay for it. There are plenty of sites out there. Their owners 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
- discovering a helpful message you've posted on a forum

- 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**.

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 about 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 Jennifer, they’re people who’ve just brought home a cute little puppy. For Elizabeth, they’re moms who are short on time, and want to feed their families fresh, healthy food. For Cate, her target readers are 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 a 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
- Scheduled e-zines
- Discussion forum

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. You'll reap the rewards.

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 focuses on its visitors. And know what? It makes your income potential soar!

Let us show you how...

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?”

I started my first site – I have three – four years ago. My average monthly income is \$1857 per month. Generally, there has been a steady climb in income each month. Tracy

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.

Debs, from above, has limited time to devote to her site and yet her income generation continues. In our **Case Studies** section, 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 or Yahoo! YPN have revolutionized the Internet business world. Take a peek at any of our sites and you’ll see Google AdSense in action. When visitors click on an ad, we earn a referral commission.

Here are two AdSense examples...

Ads by Goooooogle	Advertise on this site
<u>Rice Krispies Recipe</u>	
Convenient, Fun Snack Any Time Easy to Prepare & No Baking!	
www.ricekrispies.ca	
<u>VegCooking</u>	
Vegetarian Recipes, Products, Restaurants, and Much More	
VegCooking.com	

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 my 10th Google AdSense check last week 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 to be accepted. (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 the theme of your website... and their own 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. More than likely, these people are also interested in related advertising. And so, visitors click... and you earn.

Once in place, the ads require little maintenance. That's 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!

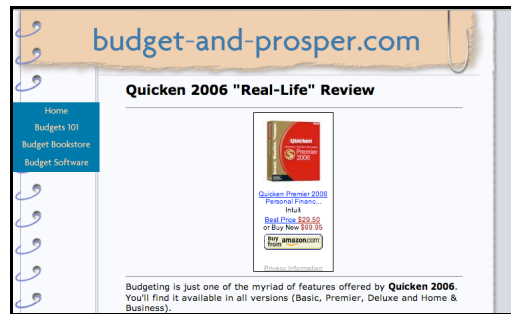
- **Affiliate Marketing**

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 place a special 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 or warm up our visitors. We do this 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 publications and software on her site, www.budget-and-prosper.com.



She utilizes a very successful method of PREselling by offering product reviews on her site. Cate's visitors appreciate the volumes of helpful info they get, and 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 Cate's review and then makes a purchase, Cate 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.

This type of PREselling means that you avoid offline marketing costs, you don't need a store *and* you reach a broader audience world-wide.

(If you are selling goods within a party plan or as an MLM distributor, the goal is to get people to contact you. Then you close the sale offline.)

- **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, and so on.

- **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, a gardener? 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, www.homeorganizeit.com. Offline, Erin owns a residential organizing service. Now she's taken her business online, and offers 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. Result? They generate online income for Erin.

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 for their owners 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.

- **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 site.

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 the effort 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.

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. Let us introduce you to some other work-at-home moms who are building sites successfully, right now...

Part 2: 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.

In this section of the Guide, read and enjoy these three case studies:

Rena Klingenberg: Read how Rena took her existing craft business, which involves making and selling handmade jewelry, online – with a twist. By providing unique information that other jewelry makers need, Rena now makes a full-time income.

Claire Kolarova: Starting an online business coincided with plans for a move abroad for Claire, a teacher from the UK. She sees building websites as a job you can do anywhere, as long as there's an Internet connection.

Kari Anderson: Kari took her existing small business online. Now she makes money, not just by selling her product, but also by providing information about it. Oh, and she fits her site-building activities in around home-schooling her children.

We want to thank all of the moms who participated in our WAHM questionnaire. While we originally intended to include just a few select case studies in this Guide, we quickly discovered that our respondents came from a wide-range of backgrounds, education levels, work experience, nationalities, and more. Every single one of them added value and shared helpful tips; so much so that we wanted to include all of them here. But with only so much space, what could we do?

The solution? Produce ANOTHER e-book, of course! So as part of this download, you received an e-book solely comprised of case studies for you to read, learn from, and more importantly, connect with. You're sure to find one that makes you say "that's me!"

Case Study #1 Jewelry Proves to be Big Business

Rena Klingenberg is a single mother of one son living in South Carolina, USA. Currently developing more websites, Rena's first site, *home-jewelry-business-success-tips.com*, is not only in the Top 1% of websites on the Internet, it also earns enough to support her family.

Rena, tell us about your website.

My first and most successful SBI! website is www.home-jewelry.com (<http://www.home-jewelry-business-success-tips.com/>) which I started in October 2003. I was looking for ways to earn money by publishing information. 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'm also working on three additional SBI! websites in different niches, which are not yet as developed as *Home Jewelry Business Success Tips*.

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.

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 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. My second-most successful SBI! site currently earns between \$600 and \$1000 per month, and I'm working on increasing traffic to that site so it will perform better. My other two SBI! sites are new and not earning anything yet.

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 #2: Online Opportunities Not Hindered by a Move Abroad

Claire Kolarova is a British national, currently living in Bulgaria with her husband and seven year old son. With one successful site and two more in the works, Claire finds that working online offers her that flexibility a family living abroad needs.

Tell us about your websites, Claire.

My first was www.littlekidsgamesonline.com, in September 2004. Since then, I've started up www.how-to-choose-baby-names.com, (<http://www.how-to-choose-baby-names.com/>) and www.first-birthday-parties.com (<http://www.first-birthday-parties.com/>)

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

Degree in French, post graduate teaching qualification. Foreign languages teacher in the UK, teacher of English as a Foreign Language abroad.

What was your motivation for starting an online business?

Most of the WAHM opportunities I knew about seemed to involve door-to-door selling, which did not appeal to me at all. I love using the Internet – it's an unbeatable way of going to work! Once I saw that it was possible to work online and use my skills there, there was no question – that was what I was going to do.

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

The kids' games site seemed an obvious choice - once I thought of it! I did go round in circles a lot with other themes. Then it suddenly occurred to me - Claire, you know about online games for small children and kids' games from school and so on - so there it was!

The baby names site is a work in progress! I love words and meanings, and first names are a fascinating subject. It was a theme I'd considered for my first site, but I thought it would be too much work... and maybe I was right! Experience from my first site told me that I had to angle it and write content that nobody else

offered. So that's what I'm trying to do.

The site for first birthdays is new. I wrote two pages for the kids' games site about first birthday parties and realized that I could probably write a site about this one subject. It's a bit of an experiment - so we'll see what happens with it.

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

Very difficult to say as there are days or even weeks when I do very little due to our move abroad to a house that is still being built. Maybe around 20 hours a week.

How do you make money from your site?

Only (contextual advertising) so far, but I'm about to implement affiliate programs.

What is your average monthly income?

\$200 and increasing.

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

I'll talk about the kids' games site. It took two months before I had any traffic at all. It took seven months before I was getting a regular 100 visitors or more a day. Since then traffic has steadily grown to around three to four hundred-plus visitors a day, including around ten percent returning visitors.

I started monetizing a year after I began using SBI! and began earning immediately. This is success for me; I don't know when that success could be said to have started, but now I am in profit and things are taking on a momentum of their own.

I think that now, having established the site, I can say that I do in fact know what I am doing - which makes things easier! - and so I feel more confident about what I do. What I mean to say here is that it's not just the site that gets established - your position as a mother at home running her own small business also starts to establish itself. That certainly gives you a feeling of accomplishment. However, I hope my success so far is only the beginning - the sites are still all relatively

young. There's a lot more to do!

What convinced you to purchase SBI!?

The sample sites featured on the SBI! pages inspired me; I knew I could "build a site like that." I could see that there was enough information, real meat, for me to learn what I needed to know and do it.

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

When I decided to build my first site, we had just decided to sell our house and move abroad. I was teaching a little as well as being an almost-stay-at-home-mum and organizing the move. I had no plans to work once we had moved, and saw my SBI! site as a long-term project and interest that would keep me busy during the months of chaos ahead! I didn't feel that for me it was a situation that needed anybody to be convinced about anything - I just went ahead and did it!

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

My kids' games site has too broad a theme; I could have done a site just about online games or only party games, for example.

Claire, how do you "do it all"?

I do most of my work when my son is at school; we have been living out of suitcases for eight months now and everything's pretty basic at the moment, so I don't have a big house to clean, nor do I bother much with ironing or cooking cordon bleu meals! I currently don't need to do it all, and we live in a fairly quiet coastal town where we walk to school and there are no huge shopping centers to distract me! Things will change over the next couple of months, so we'll see.

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

The great thing for me working online 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. For most of that time, I've worked on a coffee table in the lounge with all the activity of the household

going on around me. Nor does it matter which country I'm in - my sites, at least, remain where they are, and have become my homes in cyberspace!

Case Study #3

How To Do It All

Kari Anderson hails from Iowa, USA. As a mother to seven (yes, seven!) children, she understands the importance of finding that balance between being "Mom" and being a "business owner", www.karipearls.com.

Kari, tell us about your website.

www.karipearls.com (<http://www.karipearls.com/>) (is) an SBI! site which I started 2 years ago.

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 children up until college. I'm home schooling our last two children right now.

I have a BS degree in child development from the U(niversity) of Arkansas, an elementary teaching degree from U(niversity) 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 \$500US per month...a good start.

How long was it before you found success? And please 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 and are gradually increasing in amount.

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 until now 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 33 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?

My second son is starting his own SBI! site soon. I'm sure those Google AdSense checks are mostly what inspired him.

We are also getting ready to start another site that will involve all nine of us. We thought an SBI! site would be a great way to share about our family's global ministry. The kids are now writing pages about their travels and experiences which we'll put 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. My 15-year-old 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.

[If you found these three case studies interesting and encouraging, don't miss reading about other WAHMs in the separate Case Studies book.](#)

Now it's time for the "story behind the stories"...

Part 3: 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

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

I live in the UK with my husband, and our two children aged 10 and 14. 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.

The site has grown slowly, but steadily. My traffic builds, month-on-month, and so, steadily, does my income. I have more visitors each month, and I'm about to collect my first check from Google. I'm not in a rush. I'm still working at my day-job, but I can see my site's potential, and I'm looking forward to growing it over the years to come, and creating other sites too.

I found what I was looking for. But I discovered a lot more I hadn't expected – and that's been the secret bonus! I've cured the isolation of working freelance through connecting with other site owners around the world. And I'm forming a vision for my future working life that's better than I could ever have imagined.

Cate

<http://www.budget-and-prosper.com/>

I live in upstate New York, USA with my husband, son and two daughters, ages six through nine. 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 Site Build It! almost immediately. The idea of building content websites had never occurred to me before, but I quickly realized its potential.

I started *budget-and-prosper.com* 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 the traffic to my website had remained constant, and even grown. So I decided to build a portfolio of websites, with different monetization models. While currently revising and re-building *budget-and-prosper.com*, I have two more SBI! sites in development.

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. I am working with some of these new friends on profitable joint ventures.

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

Erin

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

I live in the Midwest, USA. I have 3 children aged 17, 13, 11. 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 Site Build It!, 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 the homes of busy families has also led to a side business... helping parents achieve their own dreams of working from home by building their own content-rich websites, based on their passions and interests. After getting several of these moms and dads started, I began a second site, *www.niche-build-it.com* (<http://www.niche-build-it.com/>) which offers help and guidance to those starting internet businesses. And now fellow e-booker, Jen has teamed up with me to expand this site!

The combination of these ventures gives me variety and a respectable income. But what’s best of all? Flexible hours, so I can be there for my children.

Jennifer

<http://www.favorite-puppy-names.com/>

I live in sunny San Diego, California, with my sexy Canadian husband and our four kids, ages 1 to 14.

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 my dad, the best boss in the world, and suddenly had a lot of time on my hands. How many episodes of "Blind Date" or "People's Court" can one woman watch, anyway?

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.... ack! 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 all of my energy went toward selling product and building my downline... online. I spent days creating a great website with keyword-rich content and uploading terrific graphics to appeal to my visitors. In the end, 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 Site Build It? Because the CTPM process just made sense to me. There's no magic pill, no false promises, no hype. Sitesell's CEO, Ken Evoy,

understands that hard work, patience, and being true to yourself = success. Novel concept, isn't it?

Here I am, seven months after purchasing my first SBI! site. Besides www.favorite-puppy-names.com, I have two other websites in progress, and have partnered with my fellow ebooker, Erin, on www.niche-build-it.com. I love the creative element of building, coupled with the practical aspects of business. And as long as those Google checks keep coming, I'll keep building.

And there you have it... four very different individual WAHMs, all with different backgrounds and experience, all at different stages. So, how did we come together to write this Guide?

We met in the Site Build It! Forums...

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
WELCOME			
BRAINSTORMING			
WRITING to PRESELL			
SITEBUILDING			
FOR TECH-TYPES			
BUILDING TRAFFIC			
MONETIZING ---> Infopreneur			
MONETIZING ---> Store Build It!			
MONETIZING ---> Selling E-goods and Services			
MONETIZING ---> Other Monetization Models			
BEST-OF-BREED E-COMMERCE RESOURCES			
PROMOTING SBI! (For SBI! Owners Who Are Also Affiliates)			
THE SBI! CAFÉ			
THE FIVE PILLAR AFFILIATE FORUMS			

Just about the first thing we discovered when we started working on our sites was the SBI! Forums. Once you start building a site, you have access to these, and they are a goldmine.

Whenever we had a problem or got stuck – and in the early days, that was pretty often – we'd turn to the Forums for help, advice or inspiration. And we found it. The 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.

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.

Just 8 days...

And then, in September 2005, Claire (read her SBI! story in our Case Studies section) put up a post, where she mused on the experiences of work-at-home-moms on the Internet. She knew that lots of moms visited her site:

Now, if readers are reading sites like mine, we know they like the Net, that they are seeking something to fill their time/improve their life... and that some of them will already have their own sites...and that some of them will have thought about "doing something online". But they don't know what...

Claire knew that some of those moms would be very interested in working at home to build a site like hers. She wanted to send those moms to the Sitesell site, where they could learn more about SBI!. But there wasn't a page that "spoke" to those moms.

.... I am a bit worried that the [existing Sitesell] pages just might not fit the bill.
Claire

A simple post, the sharing of a thought – how it opened the floodgates!

A flurry of posts followed from WAHMs who were using SBI! and, like Claire, weren't sure how to tell others about it. The energy began to build. Why not have a page just for WAHMs? What were the special concerns and issues that WAHMs were facing every day? Claire had touched a nerve and as the momentum gathered, post after post came in, posts full of passion and ideas.

My three friends who have all just started with SBI!! have one thing in common that stands out to me. They could not imagine how anyone could ever have enough time around raising a young family to even get started, much less gain momentum. I kept them frequently up to date on how things were progressing with my online "adventure" despite the fact that I was also raising a family, working at other jobs part time and experiencing personal challenges all at the same time.

After a while, they started thinking.. well if SHE can do this with all of THAT going on in her life, maybe... and after a year ALL three of them were convinced that if I could, maybe they could after all. Mary

Ken Evoy, CEO of Sitesell, was right in there too. Despite Ken's heavy workload, he spends considerable time frequenting the Forums and during this month in 2005 he was amazed at what was unfolding before his eyes.

Some more great posts. Sometimes half the world (women in this case) can be sitting right in front of you, and you just don't get it... Dilemmas have been identified. Frustrations are voiced that moms haven't dared to speak of (yet that are normal). Desires and needs uncovered... Each and every post is sheer gold, obviously took much thought. Thank you so much for the collective brain power. Ken

And so, this terrific dialogue continued to build. Dozens of posts rolled in. Moms reflecting on why they bought SBI!... how it worked for them – and what could be changed... Moms unravelling the reasons *why* they work, what they love about working, what they find difficult... Moms thinking about the dynamics of family life, what it means to invest time in children, to step off the gravy train, and into the world of home...

If my husband works, he earns money. If I do housework and run around all day - I don't. There are two kinds of investment here. One is economic, the other human... Kid investment is different. You're moulding a person, helping to build not a house but a character. Teaching a sense of humour through play and interaction. Spending a huge chunk of your time and energy on something that is invisible: the development of your child and his/her future... Eventually this investment flies the nest... Claire

Moms talked too, about the challenges so many women face and how they overcome them. They talked about how a business enterprise to return to, maybe even to take refuge in, can be a life-saver after starting a family. The same themes came up repeatedly: moms are desperate to do a great job raising their kids, but they want something else, as well.

It's interesting to see that while we have extremely different backgrounds, come from places all over the world, with various levels of education and expertise, at the end of the day, we all desire the same things. Jen

More days passed, and still the thread rolled on. Moms pondered – could they build sites together? Did WAHMs need a forum of their own? How *do* you build a site when suffering from rampant sleep deprivation, or working outside the home *and* caring for a family?...

They shared feelings: what it had been like starting out with their own sites, how much they'd learned – how much there was still to learn – and what a blast they were having while learning it!

The communication was passionate – and all done from the midst of domestic life, as the toddler was doing goodness knows what with the magic markers...

Such a level of passion clearly demanded a response – and it got one. First, Ken gave Claire, who had set the whole ball rolling, the job of writing a new Sitesell page, aimed directly at WAHMs. You can see it here: <http://wahm.sitesell.com/>

But it didn't end there! Once WAHMs get thinking and talking, there's no stopping them. And SBI! tends to attract types who'll pick up the ball and run with it. Ideas and suggestions flooded out, enough to fill far more than just a page and all of them much too thoughtful and valuable to be ignored.

A Guide is born...

And so, gradually, the idea emerged of a downloadable Masters Course, a Guide designed to be a unique resource written by WAHMs, for WAHMs.

You're reading that Guide now.

We four, Elizabeth, Jen, Erin and Cate, stepped forward from the Forums to form a team to write the Guide, and at the end of eight momentous and memorable days, Ken closed the thread, which he described as:

... this perfect example of collective wisdom and collaborative action.

Writing the Guide...

And so it began.

We, the WAHM It! team, started our work. Between us, we have 12 children (ranging from a 1-year old to teenagers), own 12 SBI! websites (in various stages of development), and live in four different time zones. Some of us work part-time outside the home as well as working on our websites. And of course, alongside work, we handle loads of domestic stuff. Just keeping in touch with each other was 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!

It 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 connected to pool not just our experiences, but also the collected wisdom of the numerous other WHAMs we've been privileged to get to know from their voices on the Forums.

And this brings us to a special group of voices to whom 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 Site Build It! 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 women who allowed us to quote their fascinating insights...

Ann www.healthinsurance-help.com

Annabel www.puzzle-club.com

CJ www.yummycrockpotrecipes.com

Cheryl www.simpledebtfreeliving.com

Claire www.littlekidsgamesonline.com

Debs www.debtsteps.com

Dian www.best-child-toys.com

Ellen www.healthy-quick-meals.com

Kellie www.spa-living-for-health.com
Kristin www.natural-health-ideas-that-work.com
Mary www.its-a-girl-thing-ltd.com
Michelle www.style-hair-magazine.com
Nicole www.kids-fun-and-games.com
Patricia www.kids-party-paradise.com
Rachel www.dream-vacation-in-tuscany.com
Rena www.home-jewelry-business-success-tips.com
Rina www.fun-baby-games-online.com
Tracy www.womensdivorce.com

Are you wondering what happens next?

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

Part 4: “Is SBI! For Me?” Helpful Resources

You’ve read our story. 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...

The SBI! Quick Tour

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

Nothing Beats The Proof

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

See How SBI! Stacks Up

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

The SBI! Family Bulletin Board

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

SBI! Sites Are At The Top Of The World

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

Get The Inside Scoop

<http://action-guide.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, doing whatever you decide to do.

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!

[Case Study # 1](#)

Patricia - Kids Inspire Mom's Website Ideas

[Case Study # 2](#)

CJ - Crockpots Turn Out to be a Recipe for Success

[Case Study # 3](#)

Cheryl - Life Experience = Formula that Pays

[Case Study # 4](#)

Linda - Christian Mom Shares Inspiration with World

[Case Study # 5](#)

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

[Case Study # 6](#)

Nicole - Business Keeps Building Despite Moves Abroad

[Case Study # 7](#)

Tracy - Teach What You Know and Success Will Follow

[Case Study # 8](#)

Michelle - Salon Owner Becomes Internet Success Story

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.

WAHM-IT!, The Masters Course

Get Organized to Work at Home

*Tips and tricks on getting you,
your family and your space organized.*

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

Take this important tip from us...

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 cut down on:

- TV-time – aren't there shows you could live without?
- E-mail and Internet surfing – are they all are related to your business?

- Kids' activities – ditch any which eat into 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 Part 4 of the WAHM-IT Guide ("Is This 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!

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 cheque arrives in the mail... he'll clutch it in his hands, grinning at me. Michelle

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.

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 a 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 – and no others – 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!**