



YOUR OWN HOME-BASED BUSINESS: IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY

Balancing work life with family sure can be challenging in this day and age. Most of us are working harder and longer just trying to keep up with the bills and the overall cost of living. The cost of everything keeps going up: food, utilities, gasoline, insurance, and day care, just to name a few. It's hard to keep up and still spend quality time with your children. As a result, more and more people are choosing to start their own home based businesses.

While it's true that working from home can keep you closer to your family, it also requires a well-organized and consistent approach in order to meet the needs of both your business and family life. To be successful, you must find ways to put in the hours necessary to start and grow your business without being detoured by family matters. You will need to manage your tasks and optimize your time. If you or your spouse hold a regular job, then conscientious time management will be even more crucial. By establishing boundaries and through careful planning, you can manage your time and priorities so that your family can be an asset to your business rather than a distraction.

First, think about how you could divide business specific tasks between you and your spouse. Plan your work, then work your plan. For example, while one spouse is at the workplace holding down a conventional job, the other can stay at home and spend time working the business by writing and posting ads, doing research, ordering product, and so forth. In the evenings when the spouse returns home from the office, that person can take over duties such as answering emails and making phone calls for training and prospecting purposes, while the other attends to the children and household tasks.

Also, consider recruiting your children into your home business. They may be able to help with certain tasks. Perhaps your oldest child can babysit the younger siblings during certain times of the day or evening. Children may also be able to help by preparing items for mailing, cleaning your office, and organizing and filing paperwork (don't be shocked, however, when you get asked to raise their allowance!).

Talk with your family and come to some agreements about the importance of your home business. Make them aware of the demands it places on each member as well as yourself. Gain their understanding and cooperation. Restrict personal use of the telephone to specific times so that your line will not be tied up during your business hours (or better yet, consider having a second phone line installed to be used just for business). Lay down the law that family must stay out of your office area during working hours. To make it easier for them to adhere to your rules, try to coordinate your work schedule with family activities, and schedule some non-business time during crucial times of the day, such as when the kids get home from school and at mealtimes. Be sure to discuss your business schedule with extended family members and friends. Inform them of your working hours and ask them not to drop by or call you during those times when you are working on your business.

Work hard and fast to build your home business, and keep going! Make the whole family aware of what you are doing and what you need from them. You'll probably find that they are all willing to help however they can. The rewards will be worthwhile, and you and your family can reap the benefits for years to come.

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