

**START
YOUR OWN
SCRAPBOOKING
BUSINESS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Direct Sales Consultant	4
Scrapbook Instructor	10
Event Organizer	14
Product Designer/Manufacturer	16
Scrapbook "Expert"	17
Professional Scrapbook Artist	20
Scrapbook Retailer	22
Hiring Employees	23
Providing Great Customer Service	25
Online Retailer	27
Paper Piecing and E-Bay	29
Creating Piecings That Will Sell	31
Organization	32
Advertising Your Auction	33
Custom Orders	33
Providing Excellent Customer Service	35
Before You Start	35
Marketing Your Business	37
Your Website	41
E-zines	42
Blogs	44
Press Releases	45
Traditional Advertising	46
Newspapers	46
Telephone Books	47
Television	48
Radio	49
Other Marketing Tools	50
Naming Your Business	51
What Do You Charge?	52
Trade Shows & Conventions	54
At Tax Time	55
Conclusion	57
Sample Inventory Control Sheet	60

INTRODUCTION

Scrapbooking has been around for years. Teenage girls have taped prom tickets to notebook pages and written their memories of the evening along with pictures and other mementos. We arrange photos into albums and perhaps label them with dates and other information.

Scrapbooking as we now know it got its official start in 1980 by the Christensen family in Utah. These pioneers went on to launch the hugely successful company Keeping Memories Alive. It's been almost 25 years, but the scrapbook industry continues to grow at an exponential rate. And these past four years have really seen a growth spurt!

In the last several years, scrapbooking has taken on a new life. No longer are these albums simply photos and labels or a couple of prom tickets taped to a page. Now they are elaborately styled memory books with fancy embellishments and features. Some people consider scrapbooking an art form, and when you look at some of these pages, you might just agree.

Scrapbooking has blossomed into a billion dollar business. In fact, the latest figures reveal that it's now a \$2.55 billion per year business - and that's only in the U.S.! If true figures were to be told, the amount would certainly be well over \$5 billion.

Many people are cashing in on the craze by starting their own scrapbooking businesses. There are many, many ways to make money if you love to scrapbook. The appeal of starting this type of business is easy to see.

You can operate your business out of your home. You set your own hours working whenever you want. Satisfaction can be derived from the creativity that you can display. But perhaps the biggest advantage of starting your own scrapbooking business is that it can be done for a relatively small start-up investment.

There are hundreds of places online that offer you the opportunity to pay them to show you how to start this type of business and some of them can be beneficial. However, all you really need to have is a love of scrapbooking and the desire to succeed by doing what you love.

What we've done with this book is compile tips and tricks from people who've successfully started their own scrapbooking business. You'll learn so much in these pages: how to name your business, what supplies you'll need, what to charge for your services, marketing your business, and finding creative ways to get your name out there.

You can pursue this business in many different ways. You can create pages for other people, you can sell scrapping supplies, or you can become a consultant for others teaching them how to do their own scrapbooks. Whichever route you choose, scrapbooking can be profitable and fun!

Many people think the only way to build a business in the scrapbooking world is by opening a retail store - not true! There are more than a dozen other ways you can make a living in this industry and some of them are much more profitable than retail! Let's look at your options!

DIRECT SALES CONSULTANT

This is the way most people break into the industry. In fact, ask a successful retailer or product designer how she/he got started, and it was probably through direct sales!

There are currently many of these "home party" companies in the scrapbook/rubber stamp world, and they're a great way to get your foot in the door. Many consultants only join to get a product discount, but if you're serious about building this as a business as well as getting discounted scrapping supplies, there is the possibility of bringing in a good income, many times in the six figures.

You will need to hook up with one of these companies to get started. We highly suggest doing your homework first. What are you looking for when choosing a company to go with?

First, look at the products they have available. Successful direct sales consultants exude a genuine enthusiasm for their products.

Before joining a company, you'll need to have the inner conviction that your company brings products and an opportunity that no other company can. It's important for you to get your hands on the products before you sign. Place an order or, at the very least, request a catalog and product samples before joining.

Start up cost also has to be a factor. What kind of cash outlay will your start-up require? Look closely at the company's joining fee and/or the cost of your business starter kit, but also think realistically about how much inventory you'll need to have on hand and what kinds of business supplies or products you'll need to get your business started.

Does the company you're considering going with require any monthly minimums? If they do, you need to

think long and hard about whether or not you're ready to invest the time and effort into making your quotas. Of course, the harder you work, the more money you make. Be passionate about the company and what they have to offer. You must convince yourself they are the best before you can convince others.

Look at the commission rate the company is offering. Each direct sales plan is different, and it's important to look over the fine print. What is the commission rate and how is it paid? How are you awarded for recruiting others? How does the company handle breakaways?

Before you sign on, find out how much control you'll have over marketing the products. Most companies have a "rule book" you can reference. You'll want to have enough lee-way to successfully promote your business and the products you have for sale.

See if the company has any type of support system in place. You're bound to have questions arise from time to time. A reputable company will offer you the expertise and know-how of their staff to help you along.

Does the company offer any type of advertising for you to use? Marketing and advertising are crucial to business success. The bigger the audience, the more success you'll have. If your company does some type of national advertising, this can only benefit you even more.

You should also find out their requirements for using their company name and logo. The last thing you want to do is advertise the company you are selling for in the wrong way.

What is unique about the company? Do they have any products that are distributed exclusively by them? This can make you stand out from your competition. Also, take a

look at the level of saturation in your particular market. A newer company that offers quality products may hold a lot of promise in your particular industry.

Finally, if the company has an e-commerce option, it should have a huge advantage over the others. Many direct sales companies are now offering replicated websites so each representative can promote an individual online presence. A few direct sales companies even have shopping carts alongside these websites so you can make sales online, too, with the product drop shipped from your home office.

When you go into business as a direct sales consultant, you will want to have enough space in your home office to accommodate your products. Organizational skills are at a premium here. You'll want plenty of shelf space to store papers, die cuts, albums, and stickers.

Spending time digging through drawers and boxes looking for supplies is frustrating and time consuming and time is money. There are simple and inexpensive ways to help you spend less time searching for your supplies and more time exactly creating.

Sorting supplies by categories or themes is very useful and you can tell at a glance what you have in stock. Some useful categories are winter, Christmas, Easter, Valentines, Baby girl, Baby boy, etc. Create interesting labels using 2"x 4" address labels and your computer.

What to do with all those fibers and ribbons? Place fibers in small plastic bags and store them in your theme containers. Smaller plastic containers work great to store fibers by colors. You can also use recycled clear jars, cleaned and labels removed, and sort by color. Add your creative labels to these also.

Photo boxes are a great size for holding spools of ribbon and these come in clear also. Another great solution is to hang a pretty curtain rod on your wall and thread those ribbon spools on the curtain rod.

Paper is one of the most important staples and storage is also a major problem for most at home scrap booking businesses. Paper comes in hundreds of different colors, patterns, textures and weights. It needs to be kept dry and clean, be photo safe and stored in plain sight.

Paper can be stored in a wide variety of ways but horizontal is the best. There are lots of wonderful products out there, from wire storage racks to clear stacking plastic trays and are very good investments.

You'll also want to start some sort of inventory control system so you always know what you have on hand at any given time. This doesn't have to be a complicated task. Start an Excel spreadsheet and update it every time you make a sale. We've included a sample spreadsheet at the end of this book for you to look at as a starting point.

When you become a direct sales consultant, you may wonder how you go about selling your product. Usually, the first outlet people think of is to sell at an online auction site like e-bay. However, many companies have restrictions against selling this way.

Home parties are going to be the best and most economical way to market your product. Tupperware ladies and Avon consultants have been selling this way for years. Count on friends and family to host parties for you. Don't count out co-workers either. Distribute your catalogs and be sure your phone number and e-mail address are featured prominently.

We'll have a separate section on marketing your business, but you may also want to take out a small

newspaper ad occasionally offering your services as a scrapbook consultant. You're selling supplies here, so always have your selling hat on.

See if your community college offers scrapbooking courses and see if the instructor will distribute some of your business cards to those taking the class. They'll usually be happy to do so unless the college prohibits it.

You can also sponsor workshops where people get together to work on their scrapbooks. This is a prime opportunity to strike while the passion is hot. People may look at your book and love what you did with the page about your family vacation. That's a perfect time to whip out your catalog and show them the papers or die cuts that you used from your company.

Another perk about being a direct sales consultant is that you will get a discount on your own supplies. When you love scrapbooking, you know as well as we do that you can never have enough stickers or cut-outs or custom scissors. Being able to buy these items at a discount or even earning these items for free can be addictive and extremely motivational as well!

As we've said, there are many, many companies out there who offer direct sales opportunities to you. We only think it's fair we give you a heads up on a few of the more popular ones. We do not, in any way, endorse one particular company over another. This is just a place for you to start your research.

- Creative Memories – www.creativememories.com
- Leaving Prints – www.leavingprints.com
- Dream Impressions – www.dreamimpressions.com
- I Remember When – www.irememberwhen.com
- Close To My Heart – www.closeatomyheart.com
- The Angel Company – www.theangelcompany.net

- Life and Times – www.lifeandtimes.com
- Memory Works – www.memory-works.com
- Stampin' Up – www.stampinup.com
- Totally Scrapped – www.totallyscrapped.com

SCRAPBOOKING INSTRUCTOR

Think you've got a knack for teaching? Sharing scrapbooking in classes and workshops at your local scrapbook store or on your own can be a good way to bring in some extra money. While this might seem like an easy way to make a few bucks, there are actually a lot of things to take into consideration before you venture into teaching.

Obviously, you're going to have to be nearly an expert in the field before you can show other people how to scrapbook, but that just takes practice. This is a good way to promote direct sales as well if you've decided to sell scrapbooking products.

There are literally hundreds of people out there – even in the smallest town – who want to learn how to preserve their memories in gorgeous, impressive scrapbooks. The key here is marketing yourself and your classes in the most cost-efficient way possible.

The great thing about scrapbooking is that almost everyone has pictures. Anyone can learn to scrapbook. A passion to teach others how to preserve their family memories is a great quality to have if considering being a scrapbook instructor.

If you have a local scrapbook store, contact them and see if you might be able to hold a class at their facility. Usually, they're happy to accommodate since they are

selling the supplies that you will be using, so their sales are almost guaranteed to rise during your workshop.

Contact store owners and talk to them about being a "guest teacher" or a regular instructor at their store. Make an appointment with the store owner so that you can bring samples of projects and layouts that you have done. Have a list handy of all of the classes that you have taught or classes that you are willing to teach.

If you don't have a scrapbook store or want to hold the workshop on your own, look into renting out a facility. You may also be able to find free accommodations with a local community center or senior citizen facility. This is a great hobby for the senior set, so you may want to trade services for facilities to instruct the older community.

When picking out a place to hold your class, make sure it is well-lit and that there is plenty of room for everyone to spread out and work efficiently.

When having classes, pick out a theme. A good rule of thumb is to schedule classes about 2 weeks after an important event. Then center your instruction on creating pages from the photos that your students have taken. Some ideas for occasions should include:

- Christmas
- Easter
- Valentine's Day
- Fourth of July
- Graduation
- New Year's
- First Day of School
- Thanksgiving
- Summer Vacation

You'll also want to schedule periodic classes for other special occasions such as:

- Weddings
- Engagements
- Sports
- Military
- Retirement
- Anniversary
- Pregnancies

You need to figure out what your costs are going to be and how much you will need to make to realize a profit. Most instructors will charge a registration fee. You shouldn't make it too steep - \$5-\$10 will suffice. However, you need to decide if you will be supplying materials or if the people attending will have to purchase the supplies themselves or bring along their own.

Keep in mind that you will be teaching people how to put together their own scrapbooks. This will be much easier if you're teaching everyone with the same materials. Consider raising the entry fee a little and providing all entrants with the materials they'll need to create a memorable scrapbook page.

Make sure your students understand from the outset what will be included in the class and what they need to provide, along with the time, date and cost. Good teachers do not assume that the retail store owner has provided all that information. Your store owner may be Wonder Woman but she will still have days when a crisis happens and she may not get your class members called.

Take the responsibility off her busy shoulders and call your students. You will make loyal learners by your cheery call. Tell them you're glad they are coming to your class and remind them of cost, supplies they'll need to bring and

any added benefits...such as "Remember, you'll get 10 percent off anything you purchase the night of the workshop, so bring your wish list!"

Ask if they have any questions ahead of time and add a request that they provide 24 hours notice if something comes up. Most stores now have a 24-hour cancellation policy unless there is an emergency.

When making up your class ideas, make some notes on any tricky things involved. What may seem simple to you might throw a new scrapper for a total loop. Look your sample over with a critical eye and see if there is anything that takes extra explanation or time, or if there is a new product that everyone might not have used.

You may also want to provide a free gift for attendees. One instructor reports that she likes to order bulk quantities of stickers and papers and hand them out at her classes to give her students the added satisfaction of getting something just for showing up. We all love free stuff, don't we? Your students will too!

When teaching the class, there are a few things you need to keep in mind to be successful.

First and foremost, be prepared. Review your class materials the night before so they are fresh in your mind. Have a checklist of everything that you need to take along to a class. Show up early and have the room set up before people arrive.

Be enthusiastic. Even if you are feeling sluggish or having a bad day, you need to always be enthusiastic and smiling during your classes.

Be personable. Try to make eye contact and/or talk to each and every person in your class. Keep an eye out for anyone that may need extra attention and be willing to offer

help to them if needed.

Always thank everyone for coming to class. Have evaluations forms that can be filled out and use them to improve any future classes.

Take some of your profit and send out Thank You cards to all the students who attended your event. Since you'll probably be hosting other classes, they'll remember your personal touch and are more likely to come back for more classes.

EVENT ORGANIZER

There are retreats, crops, getaways, cruises, conventions, and more being held every single weekend now! Scrapbookers love to connect, and you can help provide the connection. If you're well-organized and can put together the kind of event that will generate excellent word-of-mouth, an event planning company could be a profitable venture for you.

While this is along the same lines as teaching a class, events are meant to be all day affairs – even multiple day affairs. So many women are hankering to get out of the house and get away from the stresses of every day life. A weekend scrapbooking retreat would be right up their alley!

One website we've found gives an account of her "Scrap Camp" that she hosts where a camping experience combines with scrapbooking to provide attendees with not only a getaway, but a way to talk and interact with other scrapbookers and get ideas from each other.

Just like the classes, you'll need to set a price and decide whether or not supplies are included in the price.

Obviously, the cost is going to be a bit higher, but often times, your attendees won't blink an eye to paying it.

Concentrate a multiple day event on putting together an entire scrapbook. Encourage your students to bring along as many pictures as they can find and then show them how to organize them into beautiful layouts.

An event might require you to spend more one-on-one time with those attending, but personal service could be the difference between you and your competition.

Contact scrapbooking suppliers and let them know about your event. See if they would be willing to donate supplies in exchange for liberal advertising at your event. You might be surprised at how many companies would be happy to sponsor T-shirts, flyers, and even supplies. This is especially true if you really play up your event and have great attendance.

If you can find a company willing to donate toward your event, you want to keep them on your valuable contacts list. The best way to do this is to send a follow-up after the event is over to show how successful your event and their products were.

You can do this in many ways. We would suggest having all participants sign an over-sized card with personal comments and include pictures of that company's products being used. They'll surely appreciate the advertising and are more likely to sponsor one of your other events further down the road.

The best part about scrapbooking events is that you can plan other activities to go along with classes to enhance the experience. After all, you really don't want to spend 12 hours doing nothing but scrapbooking, do you? It would seem too much like work.

Even though scrapbooking is the main reason for the event, networking, sharing ideas, and making friends is also important. This is an excellent way to promote scrapbooking in your community and share your love of the hobby.

PRODUCT DESIGNER/MANUFACTURER

Many scrapbooking products were designed by scrapbook enthusiasts, who saw the need for a product and filled it. Product designers can either license their idea to a larger manufacturer or take the plunge and start their own company!

Success stories abound in this industry about people who went from an idea to a multi-product corporation. And if you're the next success story, prepare for profits! Of course, going it alone also means an investment of time and money, so be sure you have both before starting your company.

What types of qualities does a product designer need? Above all, creativity is the best thing you can offer. Perhaps you've come up with an excellent new die cut. How about inventing a new pair of decorative scissors? When you're a product designer, literally anything is possible.

You need to find a niche that hasn't been filled. Then do product research. See if your idea is feasible and what kind of investment you'll need to make in order to bring it to reality.

Use the library or Internet to locate information about your product. While conducting your research, you'll notice that products with a good reputation or success story are

easily located. That's because companies who've had success with a product are not afraid to boast about it.

Rely on your experience. All great success stories begin with a person that has knowledge or a great interest in the product they're selling. Is the product interesting to you? Will you use it on a continuing basis? What is the life expectancy of the product? Do you know people that are familiar with the product?

Contact a scrapbook supplier and tell them about your idea. See if they think it has marketable potential. A word of caution here – don't be too specific about your new idea. You don't want to risk someone "honing in" on your new invention.

However, an informed opinion about the product's potential in the marketplace and value is possible after you have gathered all the information possible. All you really need to know now is if there is a real need for this product in the marketplace so do not rush into making a decision prior to bringing all of your tools to bear analyzing the item.

SCRAPBOOKING "EXPERT"

Scrapbook enthusiasts who get published in the major magazines and idea books sometimes develop a "fan club" of other scrapbookers. That fame can sometimes be translated into connections with manufacturers to teach nationally or design products, retailers as "celebrity" guests, and other industry opportunities. So go ahead, submit your pages!

This is akin to being a freelance writer. If you think you've created an especially beautiful page, send a picture to a scrapbooking magazine. If they publish it, you've made it! If they don't, keep trying.

Start out by subscribing to at least four of the major scrapbooking magazines. Some to consider would be:

- Creating Keepsakes
- Memory Makers
- Simple Scrapbooks
- Paper Kuts
- Paper Crafts
- Your Creative Spirit
- Scrapbooks Etc.

When submitting your pages, you have two options. You can scan your layout and submit it through e-mail or you can make a color copy and send it through "snail mail". If you make copies to send, your costs can add up, especially if you're submitting to multiple magazines. Email might be your best option,

With each layout submission, you'll need to include your name, address, phone number, email, and supply list. The supply list is important, as magazines will not publish your layout without one. If you're working on a layout you think you'll want to submit, keep track of what supplies you use and the manufacturer of each one. Be as detailed as you can!

You can submit the same layout to every magazine, but be aware that when one magazine publishes your layout, other magazines won't use the same one. If you decide to submit, it's also a good idea to take those layouts off of the popular Web sites, such as ScrapJazz.com.

Magazines typically keep layouts on file and will ask for them when the need arises for a layout like yours. You might be contacted months down the line, so try and be patient.

Sometimes the magazines will say what types of layouts they're looking for in advance. Check the mags and their Web sites. Remember that most magazines are working on issues that won't be out for months, so your Kwanzaa page may be accepted in the summer.

Just do it! I've heard from so many scrapbookers that they haven't been published, but they "haven't submitted as much as they should." Write it on your To-Do list! Schedule a time to submit your layouts on a regular basis. It may seem elusive, but consider that the magazines need to fill space with as many excellent layouts as they can. So keep submitting!

If you are going to be published, the excitement will be great the day you get the call! Be ready for some down time while you wait for the issue to come out, and then it's excitement time again! You'll usually get your layout back when the next issue of the magazine is published.

If more than one magazine chooses to publish a layout, you'll need to tell the other magazines that unfortunately, another magazine contacted you first.

Some magazines pay with product and others with cash. But the opportunity to put "published designer" after your name is priceless! Good luck!

Set up your own website and publish your amazing pages on there. Offer up complete instructions on how people can re-create those pages for a small fee. Then watch your sales soar!

Once you've established a "name" by being published, you can approach manufacturers (or they might approach you first!) about teaching for them at national conventions and trade shows. That "name" might also unlock the door to

getting your own product ideas and designs licensed to a large manufacturer.

Retailers can advertise the fact that they, or staff members and instructors, are "published designers." There is much power behind those words! Scrapbookers want to learn from the best, and some aspire (even in their own minds) to be the best – and what better way than to hang out with the "stars" and hope some of it rubs off!

PROFESSIONAL SCRAPBOOK ARTIST

There is a growing market for those who make scrapbooks for others. The appeal for scrapbook enthusiasts is great – minimal start-up costs - you really can start with almost nothing! You get to work from home, choose your hours, and make money. There's lots of money out there, for many professional scrapbook artists.

See, a lot of people like the look of scrapbooks, but don't have the time, knowledge, or creativity to do it themselves. And, as with other service businesses such as professional organizing and interior design, it's easier for some people to hire out than to do it themselves.

This career has really started to grow in the '00s, bringing in hundreds and thousands of dollars per album for hard-working professional scrapbook artists who believe in their service and promote it to the target markets who understand what it is worth. This service has the potential for the most income – but again, that success is ultimately up to you.

Professional scrapbook artists who make scrapbooks for others can certainly use the fact that they have been

published as a draw. Include it in your marketing materials, on your Web site, in your portfolio, etc.

As a scrapbook business owner, you have clients supply you with their photos and you use creativity and you artistic ideas to design the books. Professional scrap bookers also offer the written word and catchy captions to increase their marketability.

Anyone can throw some pictures, letters, postcards, and the like into a scrapbook. People who want the services of a scrapbooking home business, however, are looking for more. They want scrapbooks that are more than just things flung between the covers of a scrapbook to show their family members and friends.

Often people want to be sure they leave behind a legacy and hiring a professional to put together their life and memories is something many people will pay a lot of money for. Sometimes you will be asked to piece together fifty years of someone's life in a chronological order of presentation. This includes anything from articles, high school items, pictures, certificates, etc.

This is a great gift business. A professionally designed scrapbook makes a wonderful gift for someone's monumental birthday or special occasion, like retirement.

When you decide to make scrapbook pages for other people, a website can be crucial to your business success. With the worldwide web, you can attract customers globally instead of just locally. Of course, this will take a little know-how and a lot of customer service on your part.

You can have your customers e-mail you their photos or they can mail them to you. You need to thoroughly interview them as to what they are expecting from the pages you create for them.

You're going to have to spend a lot of time talking with your clients to get the real story behind the photos, but it will be worth it for both you and them! When you are able to journal the events behind the pictures, the pages will be especially special. They're hiring you to preserve their memories – you don't want to let them down!

If you prefer, you can have them do their own journaling and then hire an outside service to turn that handwriting into its own font so you can print it out and include it in the scrapbook. Keep in mind this service will cost extra and it should be included in your bottom line cost to them.

You may want to devise some type of questionnaire that they can fill out online and submit it to you. Payment options are important as well. Consider signing up for Pay Pal if you haven't already. You will be able to accept credit cards through this service without paying extra fees to each credit card company.

SCRAPBOOK RETAILER

Between four to six years ago, opening a retail scrapbook store was a viable option for most people who wanted to get involved in the industry. Although it can still be a successful venture for many, certain circumstances need to be examined carefully before jumping in.

A large initial investment and time commitment are needed, as well as detailed research into your local area of present and potential competition. Profits differ, depending on the area demographics and competition, and though many stores report not taking home a paycheck for at least the first year, other stores are quite profitable and open multiple locations.

This is the most expensive way to get into scrapbooking as a business. You will have to purchase a large amount of inventory and find a storefront to operate out of.

However, this can be a very profitable venture when you consider all of the options that you will have available to you. You can bring in guest instructors to teach classes for you which will increase your sales – especially if they use your inventory to create their pages.

You can schedule weekly crop nights where fellow scrapbookers get together and put together their pages. Charge a small fee for this service and offer up your expertise as a professional to help them in making a memorable page.

Hiring employees to help you run your business is also an important part of opening up your own store. Find employees who love what they do! Hire people who are passionate about scrapbooking!" There's a reason this is repeated so often - because it works.

Hiring Employees

Running a store is hard work, and you'll need to have someone to help you to avoid having to spend your every waking moment running the business. Hiring quality employees is important because they will be representing you and your business.

First, decide why you're hiring people and what you want to accomplish. If you want to increase sales, you need a salesperson. If you want someone to do a little bit of everything, they will be an assistant. An employee who helps with the books will be more of a bookkeeper than anything.

Once you know what type of position you're trying to fill, sit down and write an outline of the position and what the job duties will be. Specify what jobs the hiree will need to do. Make this list specific and outline the hows and whats of what is expected of them.

Knowing what to pay these employees is the million dollar question! You can only afford so much, but in order to get a quality employee, you'll need to add a little extra to minimum wage to attract people who will give you the best work ethic.

See what you can reasonably afford to pay and make concessions for the worker's comp insurance and employer tax contributions that you will be required to pay. If you offer health insurance, add that into the bottom line as well.

Offer all employees a discount on the supplies that they buy from you. 30 percent is a good number to offer. By doing this, you'll encourage them to use your inventory and be able to rave about them to potential customers to make additional sales.

When advertising the position, the obvious choice is to put an ad in the classified section of the newspaper. This will work well, but also consider placing a flyer on a local college bulletin board or simply place a sign in your window. These are free options and can work reasonably well too.

Be specific in your ad as to what type of person you are looking for. Specify the hours and any benefits that you can offer them. Don't worry that you're a small business. Most often, part-time employees are going to be mothers with children in school who are just looking for a way to keep themselves busy during the day. This is the type of employee you want!

When interviewing possible employees, have them bring in samples of their own scrapbooks for you to look at. If they don't have one, they're probably not going to be a good fit for you. You want someone who is passionate about scrapbooking and can speak with knowledge about supplies, techniques, and such to potential customers.

Providing Great Customer Service

As independent stores trying to compete with a growing influx of chains and franchises who want a slice of the scrapbooking pie, providing passion to your customers is a must. And that means more than just excellent customer service.

Make sure you greet everyone who comes in. Walk people over to the products they ask for and show honest-to-goodness passion for your business! This may even be one of the main things that keep customers true to you at all times.

Obsessed scrappers who want to turn their passion into profit by opening a store need to make sure they are as informed and knowledgeable as they can be. And this knowledge isn't just knowing what fixtures to buy, or what products sell best, or even how much money you need to invest.

It's knowing that, generally speaking, by saying "hello" to becoming a store owner, you are saying "goodbye" to time and money.

A lot of people think that opening a store means scrapping all day, or at least more than what they are able to do right now, when in fact it's just the exact opposite. Expect to work 70 to 80 hours per week, minimum....and sometimes more when you have a workshop or have to be doing bookkeeping, just to keep up, or try to catch up.

It's an extremely high maintenance business, the overhead is HUGE, and you are also in constant competition with the online stores, as well as the other brick and mortar stores.

But if you think this is the route you should go, don't hesitate to do so. The rewards can be HUGE as well! What's important is to take in more than you spend. While this might seem like an easy concept, it can be more difficult than it seems.

What can make the difference? Marketing! Which, of course, we'll talk about later!

You may wonder how in the world you'll be able to compete with corporate giants like Wal-Mart when it comes to selling your scrapbook supplies. Do you lower your prices and risk going out of business? Do you offer sales constantly? No. Figure out what sets you apart from Wal-Mart, and concentrate on those traits.

Continue offer outstanding personal customer service. This includes helping out customers who have questions about designing a particular page or album, demonstrating new products and having the customer try them out, offering special orders, greeting people warmly, and remembering customer's names and/or details.

Make sure all of your employees employ the same practices at all times. If you are not there, your employees represent you and your store. Upon hiring, go over "store policy" with them, outlining all of the ways that customer service should be handled, and WHY it's important.

Stay in contact with your customer list, with a regular newsletter AND various direct mailings. Send your direct mailings at various holidays or times of year. Prepare a direct mailing to customers who haven't been in for awhile.

Prepare a direct mailing that outlines all of the services you offer (extraordinary customer service, crops, playroom, classes, hard-to-find items), that implies why scrappers would benefit more by shopping at your store, rather than the large chain.

Research and carry hard-to-find items that the large chains don't carry.

Naturally, some people are going to want a "bargain" and the convenience of doing all of their shopping at once. A lot of people don't even realize what they are doing to the mom-and-pop businesses every time they give their money to a corporate giant.

If the Wal-Mart in your town is taking away business, just concentrate on the above-listed steps and stay focused on all of the ways your store is superior to a generic chain.

Now don't get us wrong, we love Wal-Mart just as much as the next guy. But the success of your business depends on going above and beyond what they have to offer.

Sure, they have low prices, but do they have people willing to help with their needs when they're shopping? How many times do you have to go looking for an associate when you have a question? Providing exemplary customer service will keep your customer coming back for more – even if Wal-Mart beats you by 1/3 of the price.

ONLINE RETAILER

Opening an online scrapbook store gives you the opportunity to open up shop in your house or garage, but the business should be treated just as professionally as a "brick and mortar" store.

You'll have the chance to choose your own hours and work in your pajamas if you want, but competition from the hundreds of other online scrapbook stores makes it necessary for things like in-stock inventory and professional design to be a priority.

Online retailers who research and develop a niche have a good chance of making this a profitable venture. E-bay can be a great place to market your wares. Whether you're selling supplies or your services, you will be able to realize quite a bit of profit by marketing yourself at an online auction site.

Find out what people want from an online store. Find out your target market's priorities – is it product selection? Is it cost? Is it free shipping? I would spend at least six months doing background research like that. Find out what's already being offered by many online stores, then figure out how you can be different.

That difference is what will make your business viable. Then take that research and create a plan. It doesn't have to be a formal business or marketing plan, but you need to define your business goals, and have a tentative idea of how you can reach them. Having a plan and goals for the future will also help your business stand out; your customers will perceive you as more professional.

One note about shipping out your supplies to people: the U.S. Postal Service will give you FREE Priority Mail supplies like envelopes, boxes, and such for you to use with your business. Log on to www.usps.com and go to "Shipping Supplies" to order as many as you want.

This will cost you a little more to send supplies out Priority Mail, but your customers will be grateful, and you'll save a ton of money by not having to buy envelopes at an

office supply store at your own expense. In the long run, it'll be worth it!

PAPER PIECING AND E-BAY

This is an amazingly lucrative way to make money by using your scrapbooking expertise and taking advantage of the global marketplace that is e-Bay!

What is paper piecing? Basically, you put together pre-made scrapbook pages and sell them to people online. All they have to do is add their pictures and any journaling they want to write down and their scrapbook page will be complete.

Initial research on e-Bay shows that people are willing to pay – sometimes pay BIG – for this service which can be an amazing way for you to make a lot of money with scrapbooking!

If you are unfamiliar with selling on e-Bay, it's really quite easy to do. You'll first need to set up a selling account. It's a good idea to include "scrap" in your name if possible.

Once you have your user name, you'll need to establish your selling account. This usually means providing a credit card or bank account to e-Bay and verifying it to get started. Don't worry – it's safe and secure.

We could write a whole entire other book on getting started selling on e-bay – in fact, it's already been started – so we would suggest you visit e-Bay's website at www.ebay.com and look under "Site Map" to read

information about setting up a seller account and getting started on e-Bay.

When you have some product you want to sell, take pictures of it or scan it into your computer. Pictures will be a huge selling point, so make sure they are of good quality and you provide as many as you possibly can to give potential customers a better idea of what the product looks like.

Since e-Bay charges an extra fee for more than one picture, sign up for Photo Bucket at www.photobucket.com and use them to host your e-Bay pictures. There are a lot of other sites that host pictures, but we like using Photo Bucket because of its ease of use. You can make your own decision as to which photo hosting site will work best for you.

In your title, include the words "paper piecing" (without the quotation marks) since that's how people will search for listings.

List the dimensions and a brief description of each part of the set. Also let people know if you used pens and chalks to add detail to your sets. If any part of your set is computer generated, it is a good idea to note this in the auction.

Let everyone know whether your background paper is included or not.

Make sure you let your potential customers know if you use all acid-free, lignin-free products when making your sets. A lot of people also list information such as "comes from a pet-free, smoke-free home."

At the end of the description list all payment and shipping information. You want to make sure that customers know the following: what payment methods you accept/prefer, your shipping rate, how the items will be

packed, whether or not you offer insurance and how much you charge, and your email address for any questions.

Set the price at the absolute minimum you are willing to accept for this paper piecing. Most auctions start in the \$3-10 range. Adjust your minimum bid price according to time, materials used, and the detail of the piece.

You have a choice of 3, 5, 7, and 10 day auctions. Most paper piecers use either 5 or 7 day auctions. It is a good idea to have your auction extend over Sunday evenings because it is a very busy time.

Each time you create an original paper piecing it automatically has copyright protection. You do not need to register a creation to have it protected. It is a good idea to put a notice with your auctions when it is an original design. If you are using a pattern from a Tole/Pattern book, you should not use a copyright notice. A basic copyright notice looks like this:

Copyright 2002 Your Name Here

This also means that all of those other original paper piecings that are listed on eBay are protected. It is okay to browse around and get ideas and inspiration, but you should never make copies of paper piecing that you see.

Creating Piecings That Will Sell

Save some time by eliminating the "tracing" of patterns. Take your pattern, lay it over your cardstock and use your stylus to "trace" it onto your cardstock. You won't need a light box or copier for this and you can re-use your patterns again and again.

Use the Fiskars soft-tip micro-touch ones. They have an ultra fine tip that will allow you to get into small spaces

and make precision cuts. You should also try to move your paper around instead of moving the scissors. This will allow you to cut a smooth and even line.

Sets that have more than one matching piece do better than a stand alone paper piecing. Even a title or matching smaller accent piece of paper helps! Other things that help are matching tags, journaling boxes, corners, borders, or stickers.

Learn how to do details. Invest in a very thin tipped black pen and a white gel pen to add detail to your pieces.

Use lots of shading on your paper piecings. Shade with chalk - use the small pompoms with hemostats to hold the pompom to do your chalking and shading in small places.

Take a look at some tole books to learn how to create proper shading on your sets. Practice shading techniques by taking a household object and shining a light on it. Note where the shadows and highlights are. Move the light and see how the shading changes.

Make your paper piecings special or unique. Try to use the latest scrapbooking trends in new and unusual ways.

Pay attention to color schemes. Invest in a color wheel and learn how to use it.

Organization

Use a set of drawers, page protectors or other filing system to keep track of all of your paper piecings. Separate them by:

1. paper piecings that have been bid on/sold but not sent out

2. paper piecings that have not been sold
3. paper piecings in progress

You can also have them packed and ready to ship as you list. You may need to combine some paper piecings for a customer that wins multiple pieces, but the packing is already done and makes shipping go faster!

Advertising Your Auction

Don't count on your auctions to advertise themselves! Create an email list and ask every customer if they would like to be notified when you list new auctions. Repeat customers will become some of your best customers.

Keep your email addresses grouped in your address book on your computer and send using the "BCC" so that you are not revealing their email address to everyone else.

When you list new auctions, just send out a short email letting them know what you have listed and include a link to your listings page.

You can also send out advertisements on scrapbooking related "groups" or email lists. You can do a search on Yahoogroups.com, the MSN groups or any other email list to find scrapbooking groups. Email the list owner to find out what their policies are regarding ads. A lot of lists allow ads to be placed once a week.

There are also "For Sale and Trade" message boards at scrapbooking sites that you can advertise at. I don't recommend advertising on regular message boards, though, because most of them don't allow it and it will really get everyone upset!

Custom Orders

From time to time, you may be contacted by e-Bay users to create a custom piece for them. This is a good idea as long as you have a commitment from them to buy.

You should try to charge right around the same price of the ended auction. Maybe a few dollars short of that. Only do this if you are satisfied with the ending bid price. If the price was too low, feel free to quote a higher price for your work.

Be sure to make it worth your time and effort. Don't sell yourself too cheaply!

Here is a sample form letter you can use to reply to custom requests:

"Hello! Thank you so much for your interest in placing a custom order for XXXXXXXX. I would be willing to make this paper piecing for you for \$XXXXX plus \$XXX for shipping. Please note that insurance is optional and would cost an additional \$XXX.

Custom orders may be slightly different than the set you have seen because these items are handmade. Colors may vary slightly also, but I always attempt to get as close to the original as I can.

Please be advised that I am currently allowing XXX weeks for any custom orders. You can pay for this order using PayPal, check or money order.

Please respond to this email to let me know if you still want to order this set. Include your name, address and any special instructions for the paper piecing. Thanks again for your interest!"

Doing custom orders can be the staple of your business as people who are not necessarily scrapbook talented can provide the illusion that they are – with your help!

Provide Excellent Customer Service

Working with customers through online auction sites is the same as working with any other type of customer. Do your best to provide good customer service. If somebody isn't pleased with an item that they receive, do your best to replace the item or refund the money.

You may want to offer incentive programs to repeat winners. You could offer a discount after so many wins or even offer to do a free paper piecing after the person wins X amount of your auctions.

Always answer emails in a timely manner, ship items as soon as you receive payment and be polite in all of your correspondence.

When you have a successful auction, be sure to leave feedback for your buyer – but never leave feedback first. Let them leave feedback for you first then reciprocate with them.

Doing paper piecings on e-Bay can be a very profitable and enjoyable way to build your scrapbooking business. Do your research, and provide the services that people want and need.

When starting up a business, there are some things that you'll need to think about before jumping in.

BEFORE YOU START

It's exciting to think about being your own boss. Some people really thrive on working independently, setting their own hours, and working only as hard as you want to. Before you "hang your shingle" and start your business, there are some very important questions you need to ask yourself.

- Do I want to do this part-time or full-time?
- Are there any supplies or equipment I need to buy?
- Will I need financial assistance to get my scrapbooking home based business going?
- What type of scrapbooks do I want to provide?
- Are my skills and talents suitable for this business?
- Should I have a partner?
- How much should I charge for my services?
- Is there a market for my scrapbooking home based business in my area?
- Are there any zoning regulations for my neighborhood that could prevent my having a home business?
- Should I get a business license?
- Would it be a good idea for me to take a scrapbooking course before I begin the process of starting a scrapbooking home business?
- What sort of accounting system will I need?
- How do I charge and plan for taxes?
- What's the competition doing in my area?
- How will I market and advertise my scrapbooking home business?

- Should I think about incorporating my business?
- Where do I want my scrapbooking home business to be in six months?
- What is the goal I want to achieve through my scrapbooking business?

Once you've answered these questions, you need to devise a business plan that will lay out the steps you will take toward making your business succeed. Use your answers to these questions to formulate this plan and put it into writing – for yourself and to keep the focus on your goal.

Write down what you want to accomplish by opening up this type of business. It's important to identify your goals so you don't lose track of why you wanted to have this business in the first place.

These are some of the many questions anyone thinking of starting a scrap booking home business should ask themselves and plan for. Getting the "business" details nailed down and in place before you actually begin your scrap booking home business will be invaluable to you as you proceed. It will give you much less to worry about and allow you to thoroughly enjoy making scrapbooks for your clients. And, after all, that's what your scrap booking home business is all about!

No matter what area you choose, however, marketing skills are a must. After all, you can have the greatest business/service/product there is – but if no one knows about it, it won't matter.

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

Whichever area you choose to specialize in, it's a good idea to have samples of what you can do close at hand. This means making your own scrapbooking creations and making them available to potential clients as examples of what you can do. Always keep a couple in your car. Networking and word of mouth is the best way to market this business.

Practically any event in a person's life is material for a scrapbook—which is great news for those who have a scrapbooking home based business. One woman specializes in making scrapbooks for the kindergartners at the elementary school near her home. And there's a man who has an extremely successful scrapbooking home business where he only does military scrapbooks for veterans.

If you're already into making scrapbooks, then you know about all the exciting new products available for scrapbooking home businesses. Beautiful and fun papers are just the beginning. And the scrapbook covers are often works of art - which is the point. When you're preserving someone's memories through your scrapbooking home business, you're an artist and should think of yourself as one.

There are many, many ways to go about marketing yourself and your new business. Most of all know who your target audience is and talk directly to them and their needs. If there is more than one target group, have a different set of materials to send to them. Basically, you'll need to tailor your marketing materials according to what you're trying to accomplish.

You want the person who sees your materials to say to themselves "That's what I need!" Get to know each group you want to reach and speak to them. If you want to teach teens how to scrapbook, make your marketing materials

teen-friendly. Use their language and terminology. Tell them what a fun time they'll have making scrapbooks. Make it seem like they NEED to attend your sessions.

The same philosophy goes for your other target audiences. Speak to mothers, fathers, seniors, kids – the possibilities are endless. When you find the needs of a certain demographic, you need to make them WANT to buy your services.

Never assume you know your audience completely. Not all scrapbookers are alike - in fact, you might be surprised at the wide variety of people who enjoy our hobby! By letting your target markets know you took the time to get to know them, you're already halfway there.

Probably one of the best ways to get your name out in the business is to attend trade shows. Almost all local Chambers of Commerce holds some type of business expo. Spend the money to rent a booth and have samples of your work readily available.

Be sure you have plenty of business cards to hand out. Have a drawing to give away your services. Use the drawing slips to make a direct marketing list for future promotions. Be sure and have a place on the entry slip where entrants can indicate whether or not they want to receive future information from you.

A great way to promote your business is to compile a newsletter that you send out periodically to potential customers. To save on mailing costs, have people provide you with their e-mail address and take the time to send out your newsletter electronically.

Call your local newspaper and see if the reporter who covers local community news would be open to doing a story on your new business. Many times, they will be happy to do

a story, but it has to be newsworthy. There's a fine line between advertising your business and offering the media valuable news and information. How do you generate excitement?

- Let them know why you started your business in the first place. If you are one of the only scrapbook businesses in town (this is divided by areas of business - for example, there may be a store in town but you're the only custom scrapbook artist), let the media know why you decided to open. Were there no stores within a two hour radius? Did many people approach you to create scrapbooks for them?
- Show that you are unique. Many people think that scrapbook enthusiasts are all basically the same - female, married with kids, of a certain faith, etc. This couldn't be further from the truth! There is a growing diversity among scrapbook enthusiasts, embracing many cultures, religions, genders, and ages. Write a press release spotlighting this fact.
- Sponsor a day just for kids to teach them how to scrapbook. Make it feasible for them and limit the ages to 7 and older. Invite the local paper to cover the event.
- The media love human interest stories – especially from local residents. Tell your story to them. Are you a stay-at-home mom who wanted to supplement the family income and have realized success? Perhaps you got laid off from your job and were looking for a way to occupy your time that would allow you to make money.
- Try putting together a project for the community. Provide free classes for underprivileged youth or a church organization. Solicit sponsors and donations then give all the money to a charitable association.

This will not only promote your business, but it will give you a great reputation within your local community.

- Throw a customer appreciation party for your loyal clients and invite the media. Center the party around a theme – the 70's, a luau, a Mexican fiesta, etc. Your customers will love this type of personal attention and the media will love the human interest aspect.

Your Website

As we've mentioned before, you **MUST** have a website to adequately promote your business. Get your own domain name – don't use one of the free services that require you include their name in your web address.

It will be much easier for people to find you online if you have a unique dot com or dot net address. Let's say your business name is Scraps R Us. You want potential customers to be able to type in www.scrapsrus.com rather than www.scrapsrus.geocities.com.

It's easy to find places to register your domain name and get your own website. The first place to check is with your Internet service provider. Many companies offer this service to their customers for a small monthly fee that includes registering your name, giving you your web space, and providing e-mail addresses that go with your domain name.

A note here about e-mail address: **DO NOT** use a free e-mail provider like yahoo or hotmail. Most web-savvy people know that these are free services and it makes you look unprofessional.

These free service mailboxes are relatively small and can fill up quite quickly. This could cause customers to have

their e-mails to you bounced back to them with a note that the mailbox is full. Again, it makes you look unprofessional.

You can also find plenty of places online to register a domain name and get your web space. I did a Google search for "register domain names" and found plenty of places that provide services for a small amount of money per month. Many of these sites also offer web site builder that give you tools to design your web site and get it up and running.

If you're good with software programs, two of the most commonly used programs used in designing websites are Front Page from Microsoft and Dream Weaver. Both of these programs are relatively easy to use and they allow you to get really creative with graphics and fonts.

When you start advertising your web site, make sure it is up and completely running. If it isn't ready yet and customers receive an "Under Construction" message, the chances of them re-visiting your site later are lower. Why take the chance? Don't advertise your web site until you are fully ready to accommodate visitors.

E-Zines

As part of your website, you may want to publish an e-zine for an added feature. This is an ideal way to showcase your business. By sharing your knowledge and expertise, you build credibility as an expert, while spreading the word about your services and products.

Not sure how to start? It's easier than you might think. Start out by sharing general information about you and why you started your business. Give a short biography about your background, how long you've been scrapping and what your credentials are. This will lend to your professional

image and people will take you seriously as a scrapbooking expert.

Tell success stories about customers you've helped in solving a problem. Then use that as a springboard into more general advice tips. IF you show potential customers that you are creative in solving problems, they're more likely to take you seriously. Plus, by giving general advice, they'll appreciate that you know what you're talking about.

Think of questions your past clients have asked you about scrapbooking and publish these as an "Ask The Expert" section. You can use one or two of these questions in each issue and answer with a short article addressing the problem. If you compile a list of 8 questions and use 2 per month, you've already got some great content to start with. If you publish monthly, that's 4 months of content right there!

You can write a review and summary of a recent article published in a trade magazine. This is a great way to expound on ideas that are already out there and add to any suggestions that article presents. Plus, you could prod people towards subscribing to the magazine that the article is in – we're pretty sure the magazine would be happy to have a new subscriber!

Try to do interviews with experts in the field. You can conduct this interview completely through e-mail. Look through your trade magazines or find other business owners. Send them 3-5 short questions through e-mail and then edit their answers. Be sure to give their business a short plug in your e-zine. This will make them more eager to participate – everyone loves free advertising!

Invite readers to send in their own questions or profiles along with any advice they may have and feature them as a

loyal reader. They'll love to see their name "in print" and it could get the ball rolling for others to do the same.

If you're really in a crunch for content info for your e-zine, you can borrow an article for reprint. There are many available online that are free to use, but you must use the entire article and include the author's information.

One note about using other people's articles, you shouldn't do this very often. If your e-zine's main objective is to get you more clients and customers, you should not feature other writers' articles more than once in a blue moon. Showcasing other professionals on a regular basis undermines the idea of establishing YOU as the expert in your readers' minds.

Blogs

As part of your website, you will also want to include a blog section. Although we're relatively sure you know what a blog is, for clarification, it's a place where you can write down thoughts, musings, suggestions, give advice – practically anything you can think of.

A blog is another form of communication with your customer base. A blog allows you to keep visitors informed of new arrivals, shipment delays, and pre-orders. It also allows you to share your enthusiasm for the hobby, and what products you're excited to play with.

Best of all, it allows for two-way communication – you can present information, and visitors can leave comments, so you can get a sense of what they're thinking and what they want. The comments feature of a blog also allows you to solicit feedback – ask what products customers want you to stock, offer choices of this product line or another. You can encourage participation by asking a question of the week, or offering product challenges, or holding a contest for

the name of your newsletter. All of this can be done with a blog.

Press Releases

Many media outlets will publish or air press releases for free if you submit them to you. They have control over when and where to put the release, but it's great filler for them and excellent advertising for you!

How do you write a great press release?

First, to establish an audience, give statistics about scrapbooking as a hobby. Many people might not realize how popular the hobby has become and even how it can help THEM specifically.

Mention a current trend that is saturating the industry. Make this something that is "hot" right now like using unconventional items on your pages. This not only broadens your audience, but it establishes timeliness and generates interest in your article.

Use quotes from experts. You want to project the image of being a professional and using quotes will show that you are a credible source of information.

Suggest ways to incorporate scrapbooking into home décor. Scrapbooking techniques can be used to make picture collages to hang on the wall or personalize home décor in general. Scrapbooking doesn't have to be exclusively displayed in an album – you can place beautiful pages all around your home for all to see!

Finally, describe your company and you as well as give information about services that you offer. You may want to include a picture of some of your work to provide a visual to go along with the copy.

Include your phone number, e-mail address, and web site address. Then send it off to your local paper or a trade magazine and wait.

TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

Newspaper, phone books, radio, and television are the general media outlets that people go to for advertising. The problem with these places is that, as a small business, they may be too expensive for your business budget.

The good part is that you will gain massive exposure and great results through advertising in these places. This author has worked in the media advertising business for over 15 years, so hopefully, I can shed some light on the requirements and where you can get the most bang for your buck!

Newspapers

Newspaper advertising is going to be your best bet as a way to start getting your name out into the community. They tend to be less expensive than the others and you'll have a wider audience.

You control the content of your ad and can make changes to it as changes are needed. The downfall of newspaper ads is that often people just glance at them and then move on to the rest of the paper. Because they appear in black and white, it's difficult to get yourself to stand out without a huge ad and a huge ad will probably be cost prohibitive.

How can you make your ad stand out? First, use graphics along with a catchy tag line. "Scraps R Us make

your memories live forever”, for example. Provide a coupon in your ad for money off services or products. People love to save money and once you get them as a customer, they’ll likely return for more as their needs change.

Don’t overcrowd your ad with unnecessary words and phrases. If you provide too much information, the print will have to be smaller to fit in the space provided. People don’t like to have to read a lot of words. Be concise and to the point. Use the line “For more information, visit our website at _____” or “Call today to learn more”.

We suggest running your ad at least 3 times a week. You don’t have to run them every week, but the more exposure you can get at any given time will increase the possibilities of your message getting out there.

Most newspapers offer up package plans that can be affordable for you, so ask what they have available. Don’t go overboard and spend more than you can make. Be mindful of how your ads are working for you by asking new customers to indicate where they got your information. That way, you’ll know what’s working and what isn’t.

Telephone Books

The phone books are going to be one of the more expensive options, but they have advantages all their own. Most areas have more than one book, so if you can’t be in all of them, the general rule of thumb is to go with the one that has the largest coverage area.

With phone book advertising, you get advertising for a whole year. Your name is out there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is available when customers need to find you. If they’re not looking for scrapbooking in January, but they need your services in April, you’ll always be there as opposed to the paper which is more immediate.

On the downside, once your ad is printed in the phone book, it's there for a whole year. You can't make any changes as your business grows and evolves, so you'll need to be sure that the information you provide will still be timely throughout the course of a whole year.

Be sure you choose your category wisely. Do you want to be listed in "Scrapbooking Services", "Scrapbooking Supplies", or "Scrapbooking"? Be sure your white page listing with your main phone number stands out. Print it in bold. This way people can find you easier and your name will stand out from the other smaller listings.

One note here, as a local customer, you are usually entitled to a free listing in both the white and yellow pages. You don't HAVE to purchase ads or upgrades. You are entitled to these listings, so if you can't afford to buy advertising, make sure you get your free listings no matter what.

If possible, use color in your ad. Buy the largest ad you can afford and ask your sales rep for any promotions that are going on with their company. Some will offer two categories for the price of one or free color with the purchase of a certain size ad. If you are a new customer, they may also be able to include you in other phone books they have in the area for a discounted or even free rate.

Television

Television advertising will be your most expensive option. The cost of producing a television commercial and then airing it during peak times can be very prohibitive to the small business. If you decide to go this route, remember that your ad will be quite short – usually 60 seconds and people can generally only remember what they've seen for an average of 3 minutes after it is aired.

Repetition is the way to make your name stand out and stay in the minds of your potential customers. However, this can be quite expensive, so choose wisely.

Radio

Finally, radio advertising, we've found, is the type of advertising that truly works. It can be a little expensive, but your returns are likely to be much more tangible. People listen to the radio everywhere. They listen at home, in their cars, and at work.

You need to go with the radio station that fits your demographic if there are multiple stations in your area. Ask around and see what station most people are listening to. Keep in mind that if the majority of people are listening to country music, but you hate country music yourself, this doesn't mean you shouldn't advertise on there. You want to reach the most amount of people with your ads and your personal opinions should stay out of making smart business decisions.

Just as with television advertising, repetition is the key here. As with TV ads, your commercials are going to be short – usually 30 seconds, so the more times your commercial airs, the more exposure you're going to get and the better the chance that people will remember your company name.

Many radio stations also sponsor various events and promotions. If you can afford it, get in on these specials. They're a great way to piggyback along with the station's promotion of these events and you will likely get mentions to go with your advertising.

Ask for packages. All stations have them and you can save a lot of money by going this route.

Ideally, you should combine a couple of these types of traditional advertising together to get maximum exposure, but we know that's not always possible. Take a look at your advertising budget – as a business, you should always have one – and decide what you can spend then choose which route meets your needs the best.

Other Marketing Tools

There are a lot of other ways to promote your business. You may want to look into give-away items that you can offer as free gifts during crops or workshops. If you decide to do a trade show, these gifts will be immensely popular!

Many people go the traditional key chain/pen route with your business name on it. This is great, but you're a scrapbooking business. Why not make your giveaways a little more pertinent to the scrapbooking venue?

Craft bags can be an excellent marketing tool. These can be simple carry-alls with your company information screen printed on the front. Give them away at crops and/or workshops so people can carry their materials in them. This is advertising that is out there all the time and can generate interest in your company just by having people carry them around.

You can have pens imprinted with your company name and information, but instead of the standard ink pen, why not choose a decorative type of pen like a glitter ink or colored marker that your customer can actually use when they are scrapbooking?

There are many other items that you can look at such as customized sticker pages, mini albums with your name on the back cover, specialty scissors, rubber stamps, etc. These products are out there, just seek them out and spend

a little extra money by adding them to your marketing arsenal!

NAMING YOUR BUSINESS

Having a catchy name can make your business a real success. But how do you go about choosing a name? There really are many, many ways to do so.

The obvious initial tip we have is to include some form of the words scrapbook, scrapping, and such into your company name. You want it to be catchy but not too cutesy. After all, you want people to take you seriously, so use care when choosing your business name – you'll have it for awhile – we hope!

You'll need to check on copyright infringements when choosing a name. The laws are different all over, but you don't want to pick a name that has already been taken in the general area where you are located as there could be a conflict of interest.

We can give you a few suggestions, but ultimately the decision has to be yours. Pick something that reflects you and your business goals. Take the name and make it your own – promote it, be proud of it, and wear it with pride!

Some possibilities for company names we've come up with include:

- Scrappin' It Up
- Scrappin' For You
- Scrapbook Designs
- Eternal Memories
- Forever Preserved
- Professional Scrapping

- Scrappy Doo It For You!
- Scrapbook Station
- Memorable Scrapbooks

WHAT DO YOU CHARGE?

While there is a great potential to make money in the scrapbooking business, deciding what you will charge for your services is a big decision. Obviously, it will depend on what area you are located in and what the community can support.

If you are going to be a direct sales consultant, the prices will generally be set by the company you are selling for. However, the other careers in scrapbooking allow you a little more leeway in setting your prices.

If you are going to be a brick and mortar retailer or an online retailer, a good rule of thumb when you are just starting out is to add 25% to what you pay for the supplies and set that at your selling price to the general customer. A brick and mortar shop may need to mark prices up a bit more to cover the overhead of having an actual storefront and the expenses that are involved with that location.

When setting prices for services, there is always a general rule of thumb that many people agree on as a fair price. The rates are typically charged on an hourly basis or \$15 to \$25 per hour or per scrapbook. Costs can start at \$50 and go up to over \$300 for a fully complete scrapbook.

If you think this is a bit steep and are uncomfortable charging that much, look at the time that will be required to complete a page and decide what type of an hourly rate you want to make. If you think \$10 per hour is fair – which we

do – then figure out how many hours will be involved in creating the pages and charge accordingly.

Workshop pricing and crop nights should be priced moderately to get people through the door. As we said before, usually \$5 - \$10 is good for a one day/night workshop/crop. If you will be supplying the materials for the pieces your customers will be creating, up it to \$20 - \$25 inclusive.

Be sure to check and see if you need to share any of the profits with your host or hostess if you are holding these events at a scrapbook store. This should factor into your decision as to how much to charge.

When pricing scrapping retreats, you'll need to secure group rates for the location and pass that on to the attendees. Charge a little extra for your time and the supplies you'll need, but in general, all the activities besides the scrapping workshops should be passed on to the people attending.

They won't be surprised at this, so don't hesitate to tell them everything that is involved in the price being charged. What they're looking at is the opportunity to get away and spend some time doing what they love with other people who love it too.

When you hold workshops, crops, or retreats, provide the people who are there with special perks like gift certificates, promotional merchandise, and a percentage off coupon for their next purchase from you. They are much more likely to book business with you again if you show them that they matter to you and you appreciate them.

Reward regular customers with bonuses for referrals. If they bring someone new to your next crop, give them a gift certificate or a goodie bag to keep the word of mouth spreading.

TRADE SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

Almost every business in the world holds some type of trade show or convention whether it be nationally or locally. While some of these may seem out of the realm of possibility financially, you really can benefit greatly by attending these shows.

By going to a trade show or convention, you can make some amazing contacts that will grow your business. Networking is essential, and you can make some great new contacts at these events.

You can also get some great new ideas from the other scrapbookers who are attending the convention. Almost everyone will bring along their own books to show off what they can do. The purpose of conventions is to gain new insights into the business and learn from others, so take advantage of it! You can bet your fellow attendees will do the same!

Trade shows are a bit different. At trade shows, companies will set up booths showcasing their new products hoping to get some business from you in the future. This can be an excellent learning opportunity for you plus you get the advantage of meeting the people behind your supplies.

They will most likely be offering up discounts and perks as well in an attempt to get your business. Don't pass up any opportunity. Take their promotional items, get catalogs, make contacts, and use their services when you get home.

Often if you mention you saw them at a trade show, they'll be willing to offer you even more discounts with a bulk order. This can be a great way to procure even more supplies for your business at a discounted rate.

When you attend trade shows, there will probably be workshops and classes that you can attend that will showcase new techniques as well as hot items in the business. When you learn how to use these techniques, you can bring that skill back to your own business and have an edge over your competition.

Attend as many workshops as you can – they'll be well worth your time! They're included in the admission price of the trade show, so you may as well learn as much as you can while you're there.

AT TAX TIME

It's a sticky subject for any home business. What do I need to when it comes time to pay taxes? Do I have to report my income if I'm a home based business? What kinds of deductions can I take?

The answers aren't always that easy. While you could do your taxes yourself, if you are going to be operating a business, we highly suggest you get an accountant familiar with tax laws and who is able to maximize your deductions.

The IRS considers you a business if you are actively engaging in business transactions and make a profit at least three years out of five. If you have registered your business and gotten a business license, regardless of whether or not you've made a profit, you must report your income and expenses on form Schedule C of the 1040 tax form.

The good part about operating a home based business is that there are many everyday expenses that can be deducted if they are used to conduct your business. If it's used for your business, you can deduct the associated costs. What kind of things can you deduct? Here's a list of a few of the expenses that the IRS will allow:

- Telephone and voice mail
- Magazines and books related to the business
- Mileage if you travel to meet with clients
- Classes and workshops – this would include trade shows!
- Postage
- Memberships in professional organizations
- Internet connection
- Advertising
- Office supplies
- Printing and copying

You can also write off a portion of your house payment, taxes, and utility bills if you have a home office, however, you must have a portion of your house that is set aside and used exclusively to operate the business.

It's very important as a small business owner to save all paperwork and receipts associated with your business. You'll be glad you have them if you happen to get audited plus, you'll have everything handy when it comes time to prepare your return.

It's a good idea to invest in an accounting software program like Quick Books or Microsoft Money. Not only will these programs keep track of your expenses, but they can easily show you where you stand financially at any given time. You must, however, stay on top of entering in the information so that it is current and up-to-date. If you don't have the money to buy one of these programs, you can always use Microsoft Excel.

Save every receipt that you think might be considered a business deduction. Keep an envelope with you at all times to save your receipts. Have a small notebook in your car so you can keep track of mileage.

CONCLUSION

Yes, scrapbooking is a billion dollar business. Where is all this money going? Into supplies, workshops, classes, retreats, conventions, cruises, you name it. And innovative entrepreneurs are capitalizing on this obsession by designing new products, opening stores, writing books, organizing events, making scrapbooks for others, teaching classes, and becoming direct sales consultants.

Is there room for more? You bet there is! Most industry insiders say the trend isn't even near its peak yet, and there are still many areas that aren't educated or aware of the hobby yet. What does this mean for you? Opportunity – in all kinds of ways!

Memory preservation has always been a huge business, and as the technology improves for preserving photos and keepsakes, so do the methods and hobbies surrounding it.

If you have a passion for scrapbooking, and are talented at making original designs, you can create custom designed scrapbooks, scrapbooking for others, and scrapbook kits, templates, accessories, and stock.

You could also write how-to books and give classes.

Attend workshops and classes to hone your skills and learn the latest trends. This includes trade shows, conventions, workshops, and retreats. You want to be as good as you can be and these are amazing learning opportunities that shouldn't be passed up!

In this business, you create scrapbooks and photo albums to help people organize and develop keepsakes of special events like birthdays, anniversaries, vacations or any milestones that are important to them.

Scrapbooking is a fun and exciting business that can be perfect for earning an easy part time income or a lucrative full time income. This is a business that is generating 1.4 billion dollars in sales each year. You deserve to have a part of that pie!

The only real requirement is that you be creative, open to new ideas and ready to learn what others have to offer. Make yourself be well organized so you can fully take advantage of all this type of business has to offer and get out there to market yourself.

You're not just selling a business, you're selling yourself and what YOU have to offer as the business owner. If people believe in you, they'll believe in your business.

It doesn't matter if you want to be a direct sales consultant, an online retailer, or open up a brick and mortar store, you can cash in on the scrapbooking craze while doing what you love. What better way to make a living?

There are many things you'll have to do to be successful – the least of which is to get your name out there. Networking opportunities abound. Join your local Chamber of Commerce, attend various events around the community, and at every chance you get, talk about your business.

The best advertising is word of mouth, but it has to start with you! When you share your love of scrapbooking, bring others on board with you by displaying the fire you have for this wonderful venture you have undertaken!

Remember that there are countless occasions that people want to remember and have their memories preserved. Weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, holidays – the possibilities are endless.

You have the opportunity to do what you love and make others happy in the process. Making money is just the icing on the cake.

Starting your own business is an exciting venture – one that comes with its own built-in rewards. Working from home, setting your own hours, and experiencing the satisfaction of being your own boss are just a few of the perks.

There's never been a better time to go ahead and start your own scrapbooking business. Strike while the fire is hot and get started today!

Good luck and happy scrappin!

The following websites were referenced in researching this book:

www.about.com

www.frugalmom.net

www.at-homeworks.com

www.howtostartup.com

www.bellaonline.com

SAMPLE OF AN INVENTORY CONTROL SHEET

[illegible]