

# Getting the business idea ... the first steps to being a mumpreneur

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Once you have children, going out to work every day can feel less important than spending time with the family. If you need to work it can seem impossible to find a job that allows you time to meet family needs. Becoming one of the growing number of mumpreneurs in this country (see note 1) could be the answer, believes Antonia Chitty, author of *The Mumpreneur Guide* (<http://www.themumpreneurguide.co.uk>) (released on 1st September 2009) and family friendly working expert (<http://www.familyfriendlyworking.co.uk>).

“Being in control of the hours you work, having the flexibility to pick the kids up from school and be home if they are sick is the ideal scenario for many mums. It is possible, but having this flexibility and still making a valuable contribution to the family income is not always plain sailing,” says Antonia Chitty.

As a mumpreneur herself, Antonia knows the joys and pitfalls and has written *The Mumpreneur Guide* to help other mums who want to start their own business. To get mums on the right track, Antonia has some top tips on how to come up with an idea for a business:

1. Do you love your hobby? - Why not turn your hobby into a business? This is not a way to get rich quick but plenty of women, and a few men, find that they can boost the family budget whilst doing something they enjoy. You may be an avid collector and want to turn your hand to selling as well as buying. If you are a crafty type, you could start selling your creations at local craft fairs or through online craft marketplaces like [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).
2. Set up a service - You may have a skill that will allow you to go freelance, like web design. If you have good secretarial skills, you could become a virtual assistant offering typing and admin services from home. You could offer to do ironing, collect dry cleaning or wait in for deliveries for busy office workers. Think about what you could do that would fit into school hours, evenings or nap times.
3. Retraining - If you have small children, there are lots of initiatives to help you retrain for a new family friendly career. Ask your local Sure Start Children’s Centre for information on courses with crèches. Call into the local college. Look at training in a complementary therapy: you could offer appointments at times to fit in with the kids. Alternatively, you might like to brush up on your computer skills and set up as a virtual assistant or web designer. Or join a creative course and start selling what you make at craft fairs on the weekend.
4. Direct selling - Direct selling involves selling to consumers away from a traditional fixed retail outlet like a shop. It covers door-to-door selling, personal demonstrations and party plan. There are many companies offering direct selling opportunities where you pay up to £200 for a starter kit, including sample products and promotional materials. If this interests you, pick a product you like and which will sell well in your area. Check that there aren’t lots of other local reps competing for the same sales. To be a successful rep you need to look beyond family and friends, and make the most of opportunities to sell at groups and get people to hold parties for you.

5. Find a niche - Try to work out a way to make what you offer different to your competitors. Try to find something that will make your business have a unique appeal. It could be the service you offer, the hours you open, or the people you are targeting. The internet has made it far easier to offer a specialist product and reach out to those who will be interested.

“Once you have an idea, sound out friends and family about your plans. If it is something no-one has done before then ask them to sign a non-disclosure agreement to say that they agree to keep your idea secret. Note down what you might need to get started and think carefully about the resources you might require in the way of time, money and equipment. Then make a start,” advises Antonia.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

1. There are an estimated 167,353 self-employed mums working from home in the UK
2. Antonia Chitty has run her own PR business since the birth of her daughter in 2002. She took advantage of being on maternity leave with her son in 2006 to write her first book, and combined writing and PR until taking a break to have her third child earlier this year. She lives on the Sussex coast.
3. Antonia is the author of The Mumpreneur Guide which is due for release on 1st September 2009. Chapter 1 - Getting the Idea - includes case studies of mums who have started their own business and has exercises to take which asks probing questions to make the reader think about what they are going to do. Please get in touch if you wish to contact the case studies.
4. Antonia has written a number of books (Family Friendly Working, What to do when your child hates school, Special Educational Needs: A Parent's Guide, Insomnia: The Essential Guide, Commercial Writing: How to Earn a Living as a Business Writer and A Guide to Promoting Your Business). She also runs a successful blog, [www.familyfriendlyworking.co.uk](http://www.familyfriendlyworking.co.uk)
5. Testimonial: “I refused to compromise between career and family – both are so important to me and I was determined neither should suffer just because I wanted ‘to have it all’. This guide is a great starting place for new mums who would like to try juggling. It is definitely not the easy option but if it works for you then the results are well worth the effort.” Laura Tenison MBE, Founder & MD of JoJo Maman Bébé and mum to Toby & Ben.