



Coast Academy

Starting a Business from home

on

Zero Budget!

Foreword

Marketing your fledgling start-up with zero cash means you must be inventive and use multiple actions to achieve your targets i.e. making your business a success, achieving longevity and providing you and your family with an income.

I have run my own business for over 20 years. I have baked, made chocolates, bottled jams, made bread, attended many a Farmers' Market; ran food experience workshops, given talks and demonstrations to groups of over 100 people, hosted lunches and catered for private parties. Prior to developing my food obsession, I ran my own private complementary therapy school, and also taught adult education classes. I have helped hundreds of people go on to start their own businesses working from home and yes, it is possible to make a significant income, even part-time; with methods I have personally used. In all of this, my businesses have been self-funded, so I know how difficult it can be trying to set something up when you're working paycheque to paycheque.

I give you this information purely to let you know *why* I can write on this subject, I have plenty of experience and a passion to help people start their own business. I truly believe working from home doing what you love is the ultimate freedom, but it has to pay the bills and you have to control it, not it control you.

In this mini workbook I'm going to show you how you can start a business working from home on zero budget. But before we dive into this topic let me direct your attention to the free business resources page of the website, as a subscriber you automatically have access (you'll have received a password in the latest newsletter). Here you will find lots of useful workbooks, planners and booklets to help in your start-up including a guidebook *Go Fund Your Business* which gives you lots of links to finding free funding sources, it's well worth a look.

Throughout *Start A Business On Zero Budget*, I've highlighted links that will take you to useful websites or information, some of these are affiliate links (in blue). All that means is, if you should purchase anything via the link, I earn a small commission. Some companies pay just for sign-ups. Adding Affiliate links to your own website, therefore, is a free way for you to earn additional residual income from your business and one I would recommend no matter what your niche.

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The information given within this workbook is given with the best of intentions and should not replace professional legal and accountancy advice.

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Zero Budget? Really?

What do I mean by zero budget. Whatever business you intend to start you will need a website to host your blog or content; a domain name and an email address. Depending on your choice, all of these can be set-up free. Social media enables you to start marketing your business free and there are other ways to promote your fledgling free. It is possible therefore to start a business on zero budget.

A very small disadvantage to using the free websites is that your site will contain the company's logo; as I'm advocating using advertising to maximise your business income, I don't think this is an issue. Just bear in mind you won't earn anything from this particular advert.

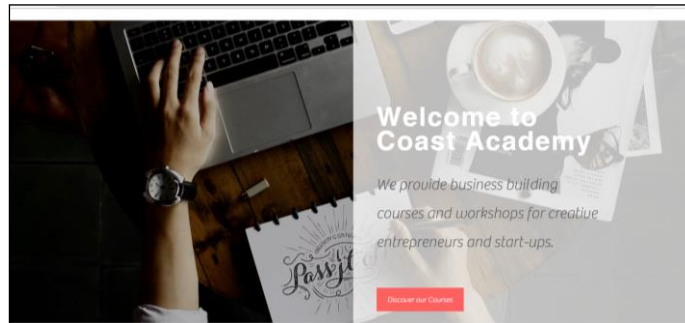
The free domain included with your website will look something like this:

www.wix.com/myworkathomebusiness

Whilst again this is not a major drawback, it does look better if you can buy your own business domain name. These can be purchased from as low as £12.99 per annum. However, if you just want to get your website built quickly and on a zero budget then going the free route is a great way to start.

Building a great looking website takes time but even novice computer users can easily build websites with 'template based' web developer sites on the market today. All you need is a rudimentary knowledge of Microsoft Word, no coding needed.

Before deciding which company to use, I would look around as they all offer different styles, payment plans and add-ons. I have used Wix.com for some time as it provides great templates with a large bank of free photographs and several useful add-on apps such as newsletter subscription. Prices start from as little as £10.00 per month. Alternatively, for £5.00 per month (paid annually), you can buy a hosting plan with a domain name included from Weebly.com.



Here are a few others to consider:

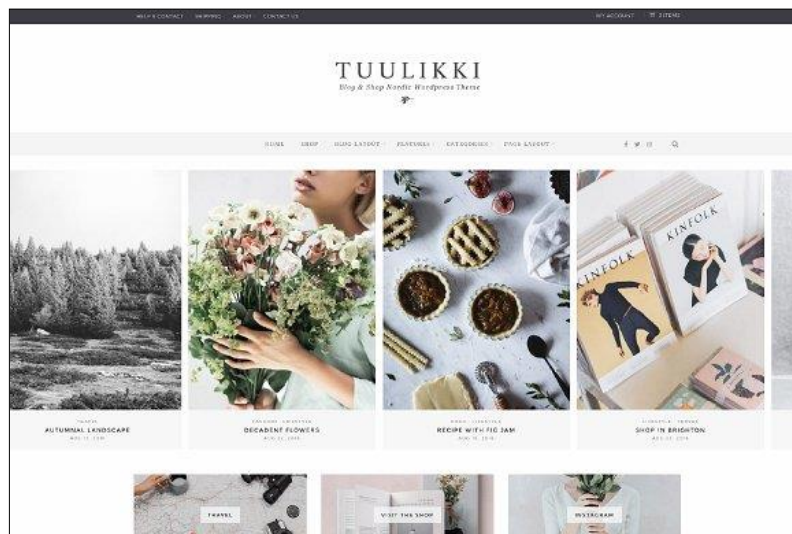
Squarespace.com
Moonfruit.com
Bakedsites.com
Vistaprint.co.uk
123-reg.co.uk

If you have a small budget and can stretch to building a Wordpress website, and you have the time, Wordpress is probably the crème de la crème of websites. It is a different kind of website and needs to be ‘hosted’ separately; it is more difficult to learn than the ‘off the shelf’ template type of websites mentioned above, but it is highly regarded and produces a beautiful, functionable website. In addition, the initial set up for Wordpress is more expensive than the template websites as you will need to buy a ‘Theme’ and then sign-up with a host, however, as hosting is usually inexpensive, from

around £4.00 per month, over the long-term Wordpress could work out cheaper in the long run.

There are many hosting companies to choose from, I advise choosing one that uses 'OneClick Wordpress Install' which makes it much easier to upload your Wordpress Theme. One hosting company you could use is [Fasthosts](#). Others include Bluehost, Hostgator, 123-Reg.co.uk. Fasthosts and 123-Reg are UK based companies, I've used both and find them easy to use and the support desk is very quick and easy to access, something you need when you are working hard to set up a website and get stuck!

Within the Business Resources page of the Coast Academy website you will find a selection of Wordpress Themes – these are effectively your 'shop window'. The themes I have shown here are produced by a very talented blogger called Tiffany Griffin and prices start from £49.00.



Marketing your fledgling business on Zero Budget

Marketing is a huge subject and you can spend a fortune on advertising with no guaranteed results, knowing how to market your business on a zero budget therefore is going to be essential for your start-up.

Before you begin any kind of marketing campaign you need to establish:

Who are your target demographics?

How will you monitor the success of your campaign?

What is your budget, if any?

What is the best way of promoting your business at this time?

What will make the customer come back to you?

What are the benefits to the customer to using your company?

What will ensure brand loyalty?

In general people buy solutions that will solve a problem; they are looking for you to provide the right outcome for their problem. Does your business model fulfil any of these statements? Can you:

- provide a unique product;
- provide a product your customer couldn't or wouldn't usually make at home;
- provide value for money;
- provide quality;
- provide a gift solution;
- provide a 'spoil me' treat;
- provide ethically produced products;
- provide products from sustainable sources;
- provide a locally produced product with low carbon footprint;
- provide an experience they haven't had before.

Think about whether you can provide these solutions, I don't anticipate you would fulfil all of them of course, but at least one or two. These answers can start to form the basis of your Marketing Plan. It is said that it costs 5 times as much to reach a new client as it does to maintain an existing one; creating a Marketing Plan will help steer you in the right direction and keep you focussed on your end goal i.e. finding and then keeping your customers loyal to you.

The next step to launching your business is to open business accounts on social media platforms. Using social media is free and can be the cheapest option for developing your brand. Each platform reaches a very different audience so is useful for a variety of different marketing options. As a creative entrepreneur I would recommend Pinterest at the top of your list, followed by either Instagram or Twitter and then if your business is going to rely on offering services to other businesses, I would suggest LinkedIn, otherwise Facebook. Choosing just 3 platforms ensures you can spend adequate time on each, covers pretty much both genders and all ages.

It can take time to build up a credible presence on social media so by starting now you can begin to build engagement and trust. There is of course a whole subject on the art and science of using social media effectively without paying for expensive advertising. If you're interested in studying this further, checkout my courses on the [Coast Academy website](#).

In addition to a social media presence, consider using directories as a source of free and inexpensive ways to advertise and reach a specific target audience, for example:

- FreeIndex
- NetMums
- Gum Tree
- Local Directories specific to your niche i.e. wedding directories.

All of these provide an opportunity for:

- Advertising & Promotion
- Increasing your brand awareness amongst your target audience
- Help to drive new customers to your website and social media pages which in turns helps to boost your Google ranking.

Groups and Tribes

Groups and Tribes are another way to boost your online presence; an easy way to find Groups and Tribes is to use automation tools such as [BoardBooster](#) and Tailwind. Both have free subscription options and are well worth signing up for.

Consider running online giveaways (such as this one), competitions and prize draws to boost engagement with your brand.

Email Marketing

Is a vital step towards building your client loyalty, creating brand awareness and engagement with your potential clients. Email list building is a crucial step to ‘owning’ your client database, the followers you have on social media do not belong to you and if the algorithm changes, as has recently happened with Facebook, you lose access to a vast number of your followers i.e. your posts simply stop appearing in their feed.

By creating an email list, you start to build a following of people that you know are interested in what you are offering; you can send out updates, special offers and news related to what’s happening with your business and industry.

There are as many companies offering email marketing services, as I've mentioned above if you choose a website template company such as Wix, an email subscription service is included. Otherwise, you could consider:

[AWeber](#)

ConvertKit

Mailchimp

Cakemail

Guest Posts, Podcasts and Video Interviews

These are another way of expanding your business reach, sharing ideas with entrepreneurial people and are great for building your email list. It's more difficult for a new business to get accepted with these opportunities but if you have something unique to offer or say, it's well worth approaching your favourite blogger, podcaster or vlogger and asking if they would be interested in your idea and you appearing as a guest on their platform. How this translates to business for you is it puts you in front of a much bigger audience than you have and helps to build your email list.

Offline Marketing

Even though most of your day to day marketing will probably be done online, there are still many opportunities to promote your business through physical events aimed at retailing your product or service direct to your customer. If you can't find your ideal event, why not consider organising one yourself?

Hiring a local community hall is usually a cheap way of getting your business noticed locally but they can be a bit dingy and there's never anyone around to help you if something doesn't work, plus you usually have to do all the setting up: putting out tables and chairs, sorting out coffee and signing people into your event (if need be). I can tell you by experience, it's exhausting!

Hotel conference rooms by contrast, although more expensive are not as pricey as you might think. Plus, you are in a smart environment, there are generally no parking issues and you have a support network around you i.e. reception, technological (or plumbing!) help if you need it and, they organise the coffee for you!

Networking

Networking offline is another way of building contacts and is also closely related to referral marketing. As with everything there are good and bad networks, you need to do your research and try them out until you find a good fit. Two to consider would be:

WIRE – Women in Rural Enterprise

BNI – Business Network International

Referral Marketing

This type of marketing can work two ways, you offer your existing customer a discount on future purchases or perhaps a freebie for referring a friend. When the friend orders from you, you include the same offer, you will quickly build up a database of new customers.

The next type of Referral Marketing is to look at other businesses around you and see whether you could offer a service they don't that doesn't conflict with what they offer. For example, wedding shops will often allow hairdressers and beauticians to leave leaflets on their counters and in return the wedding shop advertises in the beautician's premises. Wedding shops are usually inundated with this type of request so where else could you look? Perhaps a local café too small to make their own cakes/muffins/bread, perhaps they could also be persuaded to let you stock some retail items for their customers? As a new venture, offering your products on a 'sale or return' basis takes out any risk the café has in stocking potential products they think might not sell.

The advantage here is that you may have a potential trade customer if your products do well, as well as picking up new retail customers.

Other ideas where you might be able to market your business inexpensively include:

- Charity Events
- Talks and Demonstrations – the WI are always looking for speakers
- Business Events, often organised by local councils or Chamber of Commerce
- Craft Shows & Food Fairs
- Wedding Fairs
- Farmers' Markets
- Seasonal Fairs
- Pop-Up Events

Advertising

Advertising is very expensive for a small business and of all the mediums, the least likely to work, unless you can afford a campaign of multiple entries and large advertisements which, let's face it most small start-ups cannot. If you do decide your budget can stretch to advertising, ask the newspaper or magazine to give you some free editorial.

Public Relations (P.R.)

As a small business we want to get free PR and the only way to do this is by having a newsworthy item that a newspaper or magazine would be happy to get hold of that suits their mainstream audience. The best way of achieving this is by having an 'angle' or a human-interest story. Quite a few years ago at the start of the first recession, Antonia Kime got herself a national newspaper article with the headline "Cupcakes saved my home! How I cooked up a plan to bake my family out of bankruptcy". The article went on

to describe how she started making cupcakes from her home kitchen and saved her family from losing everything they had. You can read her story here:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1251860/Cupcakes-saved-home-How-I-cooked-plan-bake-family-bankruptcy.html>

I hope you will not be in such dire circumstances to attract a newspaper article of this genre, but this is typical of the type of article a newspaper or magazine wants. You need to think of a way of creating a hook and then give them some valuable content.

Another method of trying to get a piece in the paper is simply to submit a Press Release. Again, you will still need that all important hook and clever title. Contact your local paper or magazine you want to get featured in and ask for advice and to whom you should submit your articles; and just because one doesn't get picked up don't give up, it may just not have been right at that particular time so keep on submitting your articles and with luck you will eventually have success.

Daily Deal Companies

Working with daily deal companies such as Wowcher and Groupon can sometimes feel like you are selling your soul! How it works is that the company will put your product in front of their audience, which typically numbers in the hundreds of thousands, for no upfront cost. However, you pay heavily in discount. The product or service itself needs to be discounted, usually by well over 65% and the remainder is reduced further still by the company's commission. On a £100 product or service you could end up returning just £15! So why have I included this for your start-up? The biggest reason is it will push your business in front of a massive audience, one that you probably couldn't afford to reach normally and, through attracting additional visitors to your website, will drive your site up the Google rankings thereby allowing organic visitors to find you more easily. And, of course, you

have an increased customer database you can email and hopefully, eventually upsell to.

The disadvantages to using Daily Deal companies are:

- You will be paying out for stock before you earn, so you must make sure you can cover your overheads;
- If your offer is based on providing experiences be sure you have the admin in place to handle the bookings;
- Customers see you as a company that offers deals and will not buy outside the deal.

On balance, I believe the Daily Deal companies can provide a great advantage to a new business and it certainly helped me when I was starting out, including getting published in a local county magazine and picking up large orders I probably would not have done otherwise.

E-Commerce / Online Shops

If you make your own products then consider opening an online store. Again, our template-based websites have inbuilt e-commerce integrations, you'll have to pay a bit more for this service, but you might prefer having everything under one roof. Alternatively, adding your products to a company such as Etsy, Amazon Handmade or Ebay, gives you opportunity to have your company found by the millions of visitors that go to these stores each day. Fees are usually based by a percentage of your sales, so you won't have any large upfront costs. However, as you can imagine with the hundreds of thousands of sellers on these sites, getting found, unless you have a fabulously unique product, can be extremely difficult. Marmalead is a brilliant tool for Etsy sellers and will help you find the right keywords to use get your products found quickly, at just \$19 per month it's an inexpensive tool that will save you a lot of research time.

The most popular and well known online shops you could consider are:-

Etsy.com (US Company)

Folksy.com (UK Company)

Handmade at Amazon.co.uk (US Company)

Ebay.com (US Company)

Hosting Workshops

One of the major income earners for my previous business was running workshops and experience days. The title pretty much means the same but some of the classes I ran from home were privately commissioned for special occasions such as birthdays. The demand for classes of every conceivable subject has grown exponentially so it doesn't matter what your niche is, if you make handmade products or provide a service other people want to learn, you can be sure that there is a market for it; people love attending workshops, taking time out and learning new things; as an expert in your field you can teach them. You don't have to have a fancy kitchen or a palatial home, I know people who have run workshops from their garden studio, but you do need to be confident, have bags of enthusiasm for your subject and be well organised.

Running workshops is not easy of course, it's hard work and if you are running cooking workshops, you'll need help in the kitchen if only to do the washing up. Paying customers do not expect to wash up! However, there are lots of other opportunities and options, not all workshops have to be all day for example; my 2-hour taster and half day workshops were just as popular as the full-day. As a typical example, a group of 8 people on a full day workshop at £120.00 (this would include a two-course lunch) would earn you £960.00. With the addition of possible upsell opportunities such as your own products or gift vouchers, you can see how your income could easily creep over the

£1,000 per day mark. If your business is information, your numbers are only limited to the size of the venue and your confidence in presenting; but consider a 2-hour workshop with just 20 people could net you £1,500.

In summary, it is possible to start a business working from home on zero budget and very little money. If you're working a day job, granted your expansion will be a little slower, but it can still be done. There are many courses on the Coast Academy website especially designed for start-ups and new business owners and, as a subscriber you can access the Business Resources page, download free business resources and sign-up for the regular Business Building Classes.

Finally, I've recently started a Facebook Group simply for Creative Entrepreneurs just like you, if you'd like to join you can do so here:

Creative Startups & Entrepreneurs

If you'd like to give me some feedback on this workbook; or share your story I'd love to hear from you.

Angela x