

# Promote your business and get paid for doing it

By Cathy Goodwin

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How can you gain credibility and exposure for you and your business, reach a motivated audience, develop a far-flung network, hone your presentation skills -- and get paid to do it?

Many writers, artists, speakers and entrepreneurs have found an answer: they teach classes in adult education programs.

Adult education is big business. In the new century, "change" is a hot topic and learning is no longer confined to traditional degree programs.

As people want to grow their careers and enrich their lives, specialized programs have evolved to reach this market. Some teaching venues require at least a master's degree. Others allow you to share your unique skills, from designing brochures to tarot reading. Temple University's continuing education program has offered a half-day class taught by a cleaning lady. The subject? Speed cleaning.

If a target market exists for your business or if you have knowledge that people can use on the job, chances are a target market exists for you in the world of adult education. By entering this world, you can demonstrate your skills to a receptive audience, meet some terrific people, learn more than you expected and even have some fun.

Teaching requires more than a good speaking voice and a knowledge-filled brain. Every minute you are in the classroom, you are marketing yourself to your students. You must keep students involved for up to eight hours. Since the average adult attention span is about fifteen minutes, you have to design exercises, activities and questions. You have to deal with the unexpected. Students will arrive late, ask off-the-wall questions and challenge your expertise. Occasionally, students will be rude, insulting or even abusive.

Most people who teach find themselves exhausted after even a short class, yet also exhilarated. Teaching can be a high when everything goes well. The secret of successful part-time teaching is to identify your purpose in teaching and fine-tune your skills to your target market. You want to reach students who are also potential customers. If a school features astrology and visualization, your course on finding the lowest mortgage rate won't fit, unless you suggest people consult the stars to meet their financial goals.

People who have added teaching to their promotional toolkit report finding success and fun along the way. One public relations consultant gets forty percent of her clients from adult education classes. A writer has developed a second stream of income and a never-ending source of ideas. The opportunities are available to almost anyone, anywhere.

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