

# Winning the Home Business Jackpot

By Donna Schwartz Mills

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Well, once again I \*did not\* win the California Lottery.

I can always tell when things are going well in my life, because I don't daydream about getting rich quick. When I was working outside the home full time, I found myself buying tickets every week and checking the lottery website on a daily basis. I was simply unhappy with that job and desperate to quit to stay home with my daughter.

These days, I have a business I enjoy and I rarely notice the lottery... except when business is slow, which can be expected from time to time, especially when you're a one-woman operation.

Since Memorial Day, traffic for my website has plummeted by about 40% and revenues are bound to follow. This is probably a natural occurrence tied in to the fact that my audience is made up of moms with children who are now home from school, so they have less time to surf the Internet. It happened last year, I expected it to happen this year, and tried to budget for it... but the buzz about the economy got my mind thinking about a quick solution, and when the jackpot hit \$141 million a few weeks ago, I bought myself a \$1 fantasy.

Needless to say, I am one dollar poorer and still looking for ways to get over my seasonal hump, and you may be, too.

It is tempting to step back business activities dramatically and take a long vacation. This makes sense - but only to a point. By all means, slow your pace and enjoy time with your family - that's why we're working from home in the first place. But don't neglect your long-term goals... because

just as a summer downturn is a predictable occurrence, September is only just around the corner and back to school starts the busiest selling season of the year. Ignore your business and marketing plans and you risk having to play catch-up and losing profits.

So what should we be doing this summer to stay on track? Here are some suggestions to help you 'have your barbecue and eat it, too:'

- \* With the year half over, this is a great time to review and fine tune your business and marketing plans. Gather your numbers, see how you've been performing and what you might change to improve them.
- \* Brainstorm your fall marketing campaign. Be ready to go by mid-August and watch your September sales soar.
- \* If some activities don't seem to be working, try something new. Slow times are great for testing new products, methods and opportunities. If they don't work, you can easily shift gears back - and if they do, just think how much mileage you'll get when your customers are back in a buying mood.
- \* If your family vacation or outings include some long, lazy days at the beach, forego the usual romance and mystery novels and tote some new business books. Find out what's new by subscribing to Amy Shellhase's BookReviewZ ezine: [Mailto:ReviewZ-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ReviewZ-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- \* Fewer summertime customers could give you more time for networking. Attend a meeting of your local Chamber of Commerce or professional association. There's nothing like the power of professional referrals for attracting new customers to your base!
- \* If customers aren't coming to you this summer, try going to them. Look into getting a booth at your local farmers market or summer fair. If it's too costly, you may try teaming up with some complementary businesses.

Inc. Magazine's June issue was its annual 'State of Small Business' report, with some interesting insights courtesy of USC Business School's William B. Gartner.

Gartner told Inc. that 'effort and momentum' are key to entrepreneurial success. Keep both going and your business will survive a summertime slump. It may not be as exciting as a big lottery win, but it's a heckuva lot more attainable.

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