

# Home-based or Office Bound: Which Is For Me?

By Teena Rose

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Home-based Business E-book <http://www.resumebiz.com>

An advocate for stay-at-home parents, Teena Rose of Résumé to Referral writes on various topics concerning small business. She recently authored a book on How to Start a Résumé Service; details located at <http://www.resumebiz.com>. Like other small businesses, Mrs. Rose has inadvertently become an expert on a number of business topics, including sales and marketing, operations, and alliance formation practices. She is currently working on another project relating to online marketing. Heavily involved in online marketing? If you would like to submit an idea or marketing trick for inclusion, send an e-mail for submission guidelines to <mailto:admin@resumetoreferral.com>.

Operating a business from a home or an office can be a "no brainer" for some, but others find it difficult to function continuously and progressively within a laid-back setting; where others, complete more projects due to the elimination of a daily commute or have to step out for lunch.

At-home businesses are generally run from a second bedroom, the corner of a living or dining room, or conveniently tucked away in a closet. Enjoying low overhead, a stay-at-home parent could easily operate a small business from the confines of their home without shipping small children off to a daycare center. This reason alone, coupled with the convenience of the Internet, has caused millions to go online and seek their piece of the forecasted multimillion-dollar (or is it billions?) fortune to be made this year alone. Dilemmas facing home-based business include:

Separating home from work. Children enjoy the undivided attention received by a parent, causing difficulty for them when a computer or phone call disrupts it. It is important to set clear and concise boundaries for a HB business to operate smoothly - for both yourself and your children.

Time allocation. The pitfall of an in-house workstation is the ability to work regardless of the time or day. This same liability can be an asset, allowing a person to answer client inquiries and e-mails quickly; but this may come at a price to your friends and family. Be sure to set work boundaries and stick to them. Guidelines could include allocating working hours, breaks, hands-on child projects, and relaxation time. Working from home should continue to be an asset, allowing you to stay at home with your children, and bring in an income.

Professionalism. Maintaining a professional image is more important for a HB business because customers tend to be more uncomfortable working with individuals that don't have a "regular" office. Ensure that your letterhead, business cards, and web site are professionally designed and truly depict the image you wish to be known for. Other personal touches include having a separate fax

line (some do not), incorporating a customer service / follow-up system, and ensuring press releases and self-written articles are professionally edited.

Although the business owner finds a HB business to be convenient, a client may feel otherwise. Client convenience, in the first years of business, should be top priority when deciding a location. Once the business' client base increases, then the owner can begin to "pick and choose" their own operation logistics to suit their needs.

One downside to being home-based is obviously the continuous seclusion. The constant feeling that you are "facing the world" alone can be overwhelming for some professionals who are groomed to discuss and troubleshoot problems with subordinates or managers.

Mental and physical wellness. An office location allows a person to mingle and associate with other professionals without the feeling of seclusion felt at home. Working in an office also provides a regimen needed by some to ensure timely work completion - with physical and mental stimulation needed to think clearly, and without the home-office temptation to view soap operas or an afternoon movie on a slow afternoon.

Walk-in clients. An unforeseen problem experienced by some HB businesses is repeat customers knowing your home location and being under the impression that you are always available for their every need. Most clients will call before stopping by, but there are small majorities who pay no respect to home and business boundaries. They assume that, "if you're home, you're in." Walk-in clients will pose little problem when arriving unexpected in an office location. The type of service or product you plan to provide will determine which option will best suit you and your client's needs.

The ability to separate business and pleasure (family) can be a key factor when deciding to stay at home or obtain an office. When deciding, ensure you understand the financial aspects of both, the strain on your family, and the demands each facet will place on your every day life. Having a complete understanding of these components will allow you to make a decisive decision that will affect the way you run your business.

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