

(Plan your Career) This may be a good time to launch a small empire of your own

Written by Julie Desmond
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Have you given up on looking for work yet? If your job search has stalled out, and your expenses haven't, you know you're going to need to generate some income.

Bill Gates launched his empire during times like these.

Maybe out of necessity you'll find this a good time launch a small empire of your own.

Start by thinking about what you already know best. Word processing, sewing, gardening, baking, coaching, construction? People

continue to spend money on things they need.

Consider offering your service at a reasonable rate.

Mary is a shop owner whose sales are down right now. She knows things will pick up, but has to supplement that income for a while. S

she happens to be a talented seamstress, so she has added tailoring to her service line, and is designing wedding dresses which she sells online.

It means long nights at the sewing machine, but the extra income is definitely worth the effort.

Letting others know you're out there is obviously your most important task. You are going to have to speak up. L

Let friends and family know, through email and phone calls, that you are available.

Tell strangers, too, when it makes sense to do so.

A server in a restaurant overheard me describing a problem we are having with the closet doors in our house.

He told me he does some handy work on the side, and handed me a business card from his pocket.

It's a small job, but those dollars add up.

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Consider spreading the word by teaching your skills to others. Call your local park and recreation or community education office to find out how to offer a class.

You typically set your course fee, and the community education department collects a percentage of that per student who attends.

They handle the advertising and registration; all you have to do is create and teach an awesome, engaging class to people eager to learn.

Consultants are in demand right now. Consider going back to the company who laid you off, and offering to work as an independent consultant. Their headcount stays where it needs to be, but their work gets done, too. Win win.

If you decide to charge money for a service, pay attention to ordinances, laws and regulations, of course. You will have to claim your income at the end of the year and maybe pay some taxes. But your efforts can pay off both by bringing you a little extra income during tough times, and by giving you something to think about besides your job search.

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