

Global Employment Connections



“Your Link to Global Workplace Information”

Becoming an entrepreneur: Starting your own home-based business

Welcome to *Global Employment Connections*, the newsletter with a practical focus on job hunting in the global workplace.

Running a small business may become a portable profession. In this issue, we feature the stories of two successful spouse entrepreneurs, Victor Williams and Sharon Harden. Victor Williams is a spouse in Pretoria, South Africa, who operates his own business selling cars over the Internet. Sharon Harden, a spouse in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and a lawyer by profession, recalibrated her career and currently operates her own business maintaining websites as an Internet services consultant.

If you are considering starting a business, Debbie Thompson, the SNAP Local Employment Advisor in Montreal, shares her thoughts on the essential skill groups nec-



essary for successful entrepreneurship. She also offers suggestions on types of home-based businesses.

Finally, learn what types of home-based businesses Foreign Service spouses have actually started. The team of SNAP Local Employment Advisors went to their respective spouses communities and put together a list for our readers.

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Spouse entrepreneur: Gettin' it done on-line

*By Victor Williams,
Pretoria, South Africa*

Q. How did you come up with the idea to sell cars over the Internet as a business?

Prior to coming to South Africa, I had over three years of successfully selling over 100 vehicles on eBay in the Washington D.C. area. I met with the SNAP Local Employment Advisor, Jacqui Fogg, and she suggested that it would be a great opportunity if I could use that same eBay business model and tailor it to meet the needs of the Diplomatic community in South Africa.

Q. What did you do to get started?

The first step in starting my business was to develop a marketing plan and conduct market research. With the help of Mary Beth Wise, the wife of the Consular Officer in Durban, South Africa, we developed a plan to go to market. Once the plan was developed, I met with knowledgeable people within the embassy (i.e., Elizabeth Hinson, Management Counselor) to find out if selling cars over the Internet would be of some value to the mission. I also wanted to find out about the probability

(GETTIN' IT DONE, continued on page 2)



Spouse Entrepreneur...

(Gettin' It Done, Continued from page 1)

that the community would use such a service. The market research I did led me to the conclusion that the business I had in mind could fill a need in the community.

Q. Was it necessary to notify the embassy that you were about to start a business? How did you do this?

After I completed my business and marketing plan, I submitted it to the Management Counselor and GSO for approval. It was also sent to the Legal counsel for approval. Once the approval was granted from the Management Counselor an official request was sent to the Ambassador for approval.

Q. Did you need a work permit? If so, how did you go about getting it?

In terms of the work permit, it was unclear if one was needed, due to the fact that I was starting a home business and that I would be working for myself. However, I registered my company with the South African Department of Trade and Industry and with the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Once the registration process of incorporating was completed, I then filed for a work permit.

Q. Were there any other legal or tax considerations you needed to be aware of? If so, how did you find out about them?

Other than incorporating with the South African Department of Trade and Industry and with South African Revenue Service (SARS), I had to get a South African Chartered Accountant for tax filing.

Q. How is your business going? What has been the reaction from the diplomatic community?

On November 8, 2004, the web-based service went on line and has averaged

one sale per month. Considering that it was the slow time of the season, I am very pleased. For the month of February, I have sold three vehicles: two to the diplomatic community and one to a Chief Executive Officer of a U.S. corporation operating here in South Africa.

Due to the overwhelming response from these communities, I plan to launch two additional web-based services by the Spring of this year at Douglas Motor-Parts.com and Douglas Wireless.com. These will help to relieve the hassle and stress of purchasing vehicle parts and mobile communications services. I will also look for marketing opportunities in other counties within Africa.

Q. Do you work out of your home? How did you set up your workspace?

Currently, two contractors and I work out of our homes. Since business is conducted over the Internet, via email, and cell phone, workspace is all done from the comforts of a home computer.

Q. What advice would you give to other spouses who want to start a business?

My advice to other spouses that want to start a business is to do your research and speak with knowledgeable people at your post, such as the GSO and Management Counselor. If there is a Strategic Networking Assistance Program (SNAP) at your post, work closely with your Local Employment Advisor (LEA). The LEA is a great resource.

Victor Williams is currently residing in Pretoria, South Africa with his wife and two children. For more information, feel free to contact Victor Williams via email at -

wiliams@douglasmotorcars.com or visit their web site at -

www.douglasmotorcars.com.



Victor Williams (left) with Lourens Botha, Executive Director of McCarthy Limited.





What does it take to be an entrepreneur?

By **Debbie Thompson,**
LEA Montreal

There are four basic skill groups you should possess to be a successful entrepreneur. Prior to committing to becoming your own boss, look over these skill groups and determine if you have what it takes.

Personality

Successful entrepreneurs have a great deal of tact and are exceptionally courteous to their clients. They wholeheartedly follow the adage, "the customer is always right." It is also very important to have a reputation for being honest. That way the customer knows you will deliver the right quality and quantity at the right price. Empathy is another personality trait held by successful entrepreneurs. You must be able to put yourself in the shoes of the client and understand that person's viewpoint or problem. Additionally, an entrepreneur must have will-power and self-discipline and not be easily intimidated. Accepting the advice of others more experienced than you is another important characteristic.

Business sense

Since business is made up of risks and uncertainties, a successful entrepreneur needs to be able to forecast such risks and uncertainties with a reasonable degree of accuracy. This skill makes planning more necessary and valuable. Facing risks and uncertainties requires a strong sense of self-confidence and the ability to make decisions quickly. Self-confidence enables the entrepreneur to look at mistakes as part of the learning process rather than as a failure. Most successful entrepreneurs are courageous

people as they are able to take risks and make plans and follow through on them.

Organization

Although entrepreneurs begin with a dream, they must have strong organization skills to develop that dream into a reality. This requires the ability to take goals and break them down into small, tangible steps that can be achieved one at a time. Part of this organizational skill includes the ability to adapt to all kinds of people and situations. Expecting the unexpected and then accepting the change by keeping an open mind and adjusting to the new situation puts the entrepreneur into a position of strength.

Knowledge

In order for an entrepreneur to operate a profitable business, he/she must understand business well. The owner must be aware of all the factors, both economic and non-economic that affect the business. This understanding of business gives the owner a strong sense of self-confidence and that strengthens one's faith in the dream. It is also necessary to have strong management skills. Understanding also lets you know where your efforts should be concentrated and what steps you need to take next to achieve your goals. Besides having business understanding you must also always be widening your circle of contacts. You never know which of your contacts will be the ones that can help you in the future. Finally, it is imperative to have a very deep understanding of your personal strengths and weaknesses so that you can avoid situations that may require skills, knowledge or abilities that you do not have.

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JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE WEB TOOL

- ◆ Looking for information on companies that are hiring in your country?
- ◆ Want to know about current salary ranges?
- ◆ Maybe you just want to get ideas of occupations that might interest you.

You can link to it through-

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/9888.htm>

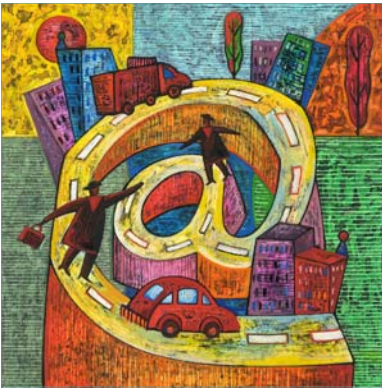
SNAP



Recalibrating your career

*by Sharon Harden,
Almaty, Kazakhstan*

Like many men and women in America, Foreign Service spouses are desperately trying to balance their professional careers with the care of their families. But throw in a foreign location and displacement every two to four years and one does face a unique set of challenges.



In my case, I decided to delay my professional career in order to raise our three young children. However, the reality of law school loans for both my husband and me meant a part-time job was necessary. Receiving news that we were to be posted in Dhaka, Bangladesh, I was not hopeful to find a part-time legal position. Of course, the secretarial/administrative positions were offered up but for someone who graduated along side the man who would be the Regional Legal Advisor, I knew that taking such a position would not be fulfilling professionally or financially.

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What to do? I recalibrated my career so that it could accommodate the many moves required in the Foreign Service, my husband’s extensive travel schedule and the diverse schedules of now four children. Teaching myself basic HTML coding, I held myself out as someone who could maintain websites as an internet services consultant. I found a part-time position with a large non-profit organization in Washington, DC. Although I heard about my position through a family member, these types of positions are now posted on the internet. As I continue to work in this field, I improve my skills through online education and books to keep up with the dynamic and ever improving medium of the internet. Originally, my pay was just adequate, but as my skills increased, my salary more than doubled in less than six years. Now, professional resident-hire positions are not economically competitive with my present career – particularly when I factor in the “temporary” nature of the resident-hire position, the down-time in looking for such a position and the luck of having such a position offered during my posting.

Do I lament that I am not working as a lawyer because I followed my husband overseas? You bet. It is not easy being a Foreign Service spouse. But given the overall benefits of living overseas, I believe that recalibrating my career was a better option than sulking. I have been able to spend lots of time with my children, travel to amazing places, show my children firsthand how fortunate we truly are on this planet, allow my husband to fulfill his dreams, and still stay connected with the professional world.

Sharon Harden is currently residing in Almaty, Kazakhstan with her husband and four children. Ms. Harden is already looking forward to her next posting in Tel Aviv, Israel this summer and fondly remembers her four years in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



Sampling of spouses' small businesses at post

**By Debbie Thompson,
LEA Montreal**

What types of small businesses work in a mobile global lifestyle? We asked the SNAP Local Employment Advisors to provide examples of small businesses that spouses have started at posts.

Here is a sampling:

**From Connie Mueller,
LEA, Berlin:**

- ◆ HR Consultant
- ◆ Mental Health Therapist
- ◆ Piano Teacher
- ◆ Museum Guides (2)
- ◆ Writer

**From John Szramiak,
LEA, Brussels:**

- ◆ Executive Coach
- ◆ Independent Consultant - Communications
- ◆ Trade Specialist

**From Silvia Froats,
LEA, Frankfurt:**

- ◆ Graphic Designer
- ◆ Occupational Therapist
- ◆ Pearl Lady
- ◆ Tastefully Simple Representative
- ◆ Piano Teacher
- ◆ Speech Pathologist
- ◆ English Tutor
- ◆ Newsletter Editor
- ◆ Financial Consultant
- ◆ Webpage Designer

**From Stormy Berney,
LEA, Geneva:**

- ◆ Freelance writer
- ◆ Cross Word Puzzle writer
- ◆ Children's Art Consultant
- ◆ Personal Trainer
- ◆ Photographer
- ◆ Social Worker
- ◆ Massage therapist
- ◆ Community Health Educator

**From Sarah Genton,
LEA La Paz:**

- ◆ Diplomatic Auto Sales
- ◆ A Chocolate/Cake Maker
- ◆ Message Therapist
- ◆ Arts and crafts workshops for kids

**From Rick Furno
LEA, London:**

- ◆ Graphic Designer
- ◆ Tax attorney
- ◆ Dog Trainer

**From Debbie Thompson,
LEA, Ottawa:**

- ◆ Interior decorator

**From Didem Lenz,
LEA, Prague:**

- ◆ Tutoring:
- ◆ Piano teacher
- ◆ Math teacher

That should be enough to get you thinking!





Ideas for a home-based business

Thinking about starting-up a home-based business? Here are a few guidelines to consider first, in addition to ideas for a business:

Pick a business you'll enjoy; focus on your hobbies, interests, and talents for ideas; check out local zoning laws; get a business license; develop a Big Biz image; investigate your insurance coverage.

- ◆ Advertising Specialties
- ◆ Aquarium Maintenance
- ◆ Art Gallery (in-home)
- ◆ Assembly Service
- ◆ Astrological Charts
- ◆ Audio-Video Duplication
- ◆ Backyard Ponds/Water Gardens
- ◆ Balloon Delivery Service
- ◆ Bicycle Repair
- ◆ Birdhouse Building
- ◆ Blind Cleaning
- ◆ Bookkeeping for small biz
- ◆ Button and Badge Making
- ◆ Calligraphy Service/Special Invitation Marketing
- ◆ Car Detailing
- ◆ Car Franchise
- ◆ Cart Vending
- ◆ Chimney Sweep
- ◆ Closet Renovation
- ◆ Commercial cleaning
- ◆ Computer Biz Wiz
- ◆ Computer Tutor
- ◆ Costume Empire
- ◆ Crafts Bazaar
- ◆ Direct Selling
- ◆ Disc Jockey
- ◆ Dried Flower Wreaths
- ◆ eBay Auction Seller
- ◆ Errand Service
- ◆ Family Trees
- ◆ Flowers to Go
- ◆ Furniture Refinishing
- ◆ Garage Cleaning
- ◆ Gift Basket Biz
- ◆ Handyman
- ◆ Herb Garden
- ◆ Holiday Decorating
- ◆ Home Delivery Service
- ◆ Home Inventory Biz
- ◆ Horseback Riding Instructor
- ◆ Hot Tub Maintenance
- ◆ Information Broker
- ◆ Installation Service
- ◆ Interior Design for Kids
- ◆ Keepsake Videos/Albums
- ◆ Kidproof Homes
- ◆ Landscape Design
- ◆ Lawn Service
- ◆ Lighting Design
- ◆ Make and Sell a Food Product
- ◆ Market Your Arts or Crafts
- ◆ Massage Therapy
- ◆ Meal Delivery
- ◆ Monogramming
- ◆ Newsletter Editor
- ◆ Organizing Service
- ◆ Parties for Kids
- ◆ Party Entertaining
- ◆ Party Planner
- ◆ Pastry Profits
- ◆ Perennial Gardens
- ◆ Personal Assistant
- ◆ Personal Financial Consultant
- ◆ Personal Shopper
- ◆ Personalized Books
- ◆ Personalized Greeting Card Service
- ◆ Pet Photographer
- ◆ Pet Sitting
- ◆ Plant Service
- ◆ Pool Cleaning
- ◆ Power Washing
- ◆ Res. Cleaning Service
- ◆ Restaurant Consultant
- ◆ Resume Service
- ◆ Self Empowerment/Life
- ◆ Craft Workshops
- ◆ Self-guided tour development for local museums & tourist sites
- ◆ Services for Seniors
- ◆ Sewing Entrepreneur
- ◆ Special Effect Decorating
- ◆ Special Events Videos
- ◆ Sports Equipment Refurbishing
- ◆ Stepping Stones
- ◆ Teach Your Craft
- ◆ Tool Rental
- ◆ Train Tables
- ◆ Wedding Planner
- ◆ Weed Removal
- ◆ Window Washing
- ◆ Wood Cutting Service
- ◆ Word Processing Service

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