



Small Business Ideas, Grants & Plans to Start & Run a Business:

- BIZ GRANT CENTER**
- CYBERSCHMOOZ™**
- Ask Questions | Share Tips
- People in Biz - Profiles
- Coffee Talk with Experts
- STARTING YOUR BIZ**
- Biz Planning | Sample Plans
- Idea Name | Plan | Do It!
- RUNNING YOUR BIZ**
- FREE Trade Publications
- Take Out Info | Biz Books
- Marketing | Sales | Customers
- Financing Your Business
- HR | Employees | Contractors
- Tech | Reviews | Tips | Ideas
- Legal | Biz Forms
- Managing | Operations
- eCommerce
- CLASSIFIEDS**
- THE 'YOU' IN YOUR BIZ**
- Small Biz News
- Gen X Biz
- Work @ Home
- The Fridge - Biz Info on Ice
- Biz Communication Zone
- DE-STRESS & HAVE FUN**
- Contest & Winners!
- Send Awards & Greetings
- Yoga @ Your Desk
- Guide to Find FUN Online
- ABOUT IDEA CAFE**
- Idea Cafe in the News
- Kudos for Idea Cafe

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Why Incorporate Online?

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Spotlight on Top Business Owners in Business Services



Executive Assistance International (Virt

Name: Raquel Nilson

Location: Lake Tahoe, NV

Type of Business: Virtual Assistance for businesses, senior executives, busy professionals and individuals

What does your business do?

We provide personal and business support services to businesses, senior executives, professionals and busy individuals - virtually! We specialize in website development for small businesses and virtual office management for executives and professionals.

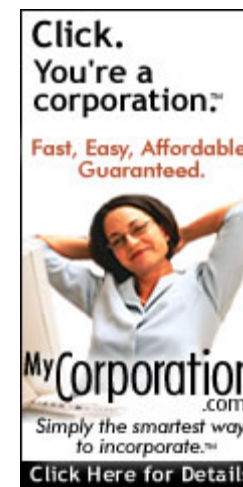
When and why did you start the biz?

December 2001

How Many People are in your Company?





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Where's your office?



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My office is wherever I can plug-in my laptop and charge my PDA! But I do use the extra bedroom in my house for paper files and large equipment I can't haul around with me.

What's the toughest part of running your biz?

Marketing. Selling your service is by far the most challenging. Budget-wise, you really have to find the right mix of money and advertising. Fortunately, there are so many ways to do this nowadays -- thanks to the Internet!

What's the most fun part?

The most fun part is interacting with different types of businesses and people. One day you're talking to Mr. Printing Shop who runs a small printing business about changes in his website, the next day you're schmoozing with a CEO from Hong Kong and discussing expanding his business in Europe. It couldn't get more exciting than that!

Anything you would have done differently?

I should have listened to my husband and gone full-time earlier. He is sort of retired and has been running his own consulting firm for years. He wanted us both to have fun and start skiing together. I wanted to stay in the corporate world. I have been doing this kind of work for more than 10 years. Now.. I think of all the excellent skiing seasons I've missed by being too scared to run my own business and control my own time!

What's next on the horizon for your biz?

We are still working very hard to get the word out there about the benefits of outsourcing your work to virtual assistants. Asia is a tough sell because labor is not expensive. But we plan to be positioned firmly when the business community decides to go for it.

What advice do you have for others?

Make sure you have a lot of Pepto-Bismol and TUMS in your medicine cabinet! It can get scary sometimes because there is no steady stream of income coming in when you are just starting out. There will be more downs than ups. But the reward of seeing your business take-off is a one-of-a-kind feeling. That's when you say the big leap is well worth it!

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How do you use Idea Cafe to help your biz?

I am always lurking at CyberSchmooz. Once in a while, I give away my 2 cents to starting entrepreneurs, help out with some business questions or technical questions. It is a great place to network, learn, exchange ideas, vent-off some frustration and get a little chuckle once in a while.

School (where, still in school, degree)?

BS Industrial Engineering, Santo Tomas U in Manila, Computer Engineering and Networking in San Diego State, Web Development and Publishing at UC San Diego.

Prior jobs or business?

I worked as an Executive Assistant to the Managing Director of an international telecommunications company. Then as the Executive Assistant to the CEO of a computer company in San Diego.

Favorite Food?

Thai and anything else that is spicy!

What are your pets' names?

Just one dog. My assistant NIKITA

Do any of these pets help with your biz?

Definitely. She is my personal trainer and alerts me when it is time to take a walk. She nudges my arm while I am working in the computer and will not stop until I get up and grab my walking shoes. All work and no play does not make a businesswoman successful!

Is there any one person or event in your life that led you to go into business for yourself?

My husband. A very successful man, he was on the cover of the New York Times and had several articles written about him in Forbes, Asiaweek, Far Eastern Economic Review. He is always there invisibly guiding and not pushing, letting me make my own mistakes. He is my mentor.

Anyone you publicly want to thank?

Well, I would like to thank my husband for being as supportive as he is

and for always having something positive to say whenever I feel down.
Thank you for always saying, "Don't worry. You'll get there."

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