



THE COMPLETE HOMEWORKER

INTRODUCTION

This guide seeks to serve the interests of those who aim to earn their living by means of work or businesses carried out entirely from home.

For many, that decision will be one inspired by reasons of circumstance rather than choice, whilst for others the occupation chosen will be one to further their aims as entrepreneurs in home-based and consequently lower overhead businesses.

Many a highly successful business enterprise has commenced life with nothing but the humble kitchen table as its entire complement of fixtures and fittings.

We seek to identify only those opportunities that are likely to be easiest for the newcomer to start up in, and which are also likely to offer more by way of financial incentives.

Please read all sections carefully before you decide which opportunity is for you. It is by no means unusual to discover a venture one considers highly unlikely to be of much benefit, to subsequently find that venture is the very one from which the individual comes to owe a very handsome living for him or herself and family.

WE WISH YOU LUCK IN WHATEVER COURSE YOUR NEW CAREER TAKES!

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTORS' ITEMS

Not always an area in which any specialist knowledge is required of the businessman or woman, the world of antiques and collectors' items can be as basic or as specialised as one might wish it to be.

At one end of the scale, there are dealers whose entire operations revolves around extremely rare and valuable specimens; at the other there are those who deal quite happily and profitably in small items of household 'junk', and just as many who deal exclusively in the highly specialised fields of old postcards, stamps, ephemera (paper items), books, coins memorabilia and so on.

Some dealers work entirely from home; others venture to car boot fairs, antiques fairs, collectors' fairs and flea markets to supplement their already lucrative incomes.

Those who choose to operate entirely from home do so via many varied means, almost certainly reaching their customers via the postal services, or else by personal and prior invitation into their homes.

For some the manner of reaching their customers is to have lists of suitable items prepared for perusal by one's potential customers. Sometimes that list is printed into the body of collectors' or special interest magazines, that is where the cost of such advertising is not prohibitive. At other times, that list might instead be posted out to intending customers who will then place their orders direct.

Many dealers in books, stamps, ephemera and postcards, operate an approvals service for their customers, whereby selected items are posted out to customers who then look through their packages usually with a certain time limit being set on the task. Customers subsequently return unwanted items along with remittance for those items retained. Exactly how to mail those items is something which presents itself by several means. The operator might compile a list of all persons who have approached him or her from press advertisements. He or she might instead join any of the many specialist collectors' clubs designed to bring interested parties together and cater for their specialised needs. Many such book and stamp collectors' clubs exist, and 'The Ephemera Society' provides for the more exclusive needs of the collectors of yesterday's paper items. At other times, the collectors' needs are met via the many newsletters available to special interest groups, as is certainly the case for the collector of early vintage postcards. Simply joining these clubs brings the great advantage of access to a list of all collectors and fellow members, and of course their interests, from which the basis of a specifically targeted mailing brochure might be planned.

Acquiring stock is not the difficult exercise it might seem. There are many specialised auctions operating in Britain alone, details of which

are usually available in ' Exchange & Mart' and numerous collectors' magazine. Car boot fairs, fleamarkets and antiques fairs, fleamarkets and antique fairs, even jumble sales, are known to yield excellent items for stock. Suitable items can also be acquired by means of ' wanted' advertisements placed in local magazines, shop windows and specialist magazines. The latter in particular finds a steady stream of regular contributors to the honest dealers' stock. By ' honest' the intention is to stress that a fair price should always be offered for stock, if that is you are to come by that band of browsers and part-time dealers who in looking out for items for their own collections and stocks, will also scour local fleamarkets and car boot fairs for items you too require.

Costing of stock is the factor most likely to cause concern to the beginning dealer. Here the best yardstick is usually to settle for a little but definite profit, one which takes into account cost and time in acquiring stock, postal charges, cost of advertising and so on. It's a matter of trial and error and something which always becomes easier with time. And given that we all allegedly have a Magpie instinct, there must be millions of eager customers out there ready, willing and able to pay for what you have to add to their collections.

Incidentally, those known to have an immediate and successful impact in the antiques and collectors' field, have frequently been those to have hit upon a collecting trend shortly before it takes off. Such was the case around ten years ago when old postcards from pre-1st world war times were almost universally available for a token 10p per specimen, but which today can command anything available from 01 to several hundreds of pounds each for the right items.

Other trends that created a very useful and profitable wagon upon which to climb, included ' Beatlemania' , anything to do with the 1950s, Guinness memorabilia, and for book collectors there now is a positive dearth of Dr. Who, William, Billy Bunter and Rupert bear titles.

COACHING TUITION CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Whatever it is you do best, you owe it to yourself and to others to pass your knowledge on. And so we find the keen and proficient swimmer taking classes in the local pool the experienced typist teaching his or her skills to others; the proficient pianist catering for the needs of those who would love to have a similar talent in their own hands.

Teacher of whatever subject, whether academic, sporting or leisure interests, will find a ready demand for their services. The infant school teacher can offer coaching at evenings and weekends to parents who might think their offspring a little slow in learning, or else want to prepare them for school in the first place. For secondary

school teachers the chance of out of normal school hours work might be more likely to present itself in the immediate run to GCSE examinations, or else at re-sit time in the autumn.

Qualified personnel managers teach the basics of successful interview techniques to eager job hunters; cake decorators and microwave specialists invite parties of 'wannabees' into their homes for one-hour coaching sessions every week; craft workers, artists and writers pass their skills on to others by all manner of means, including private tuition, working in local schools and colleges, and giving demonstrations to local clubs and societies.

And further down the line are those who teach their skills and pass their knowledge on by self-publishing their experiences and information in manuals and sometimes correspondence courses which will subsequently be marketed by direct mail or advertisements in appropriate publications.

In this respect the person actually knitting the jumper or whatever is required, might choose to personally design the required garment, or else have it professionally designed by some outside expert. Consider the fact that a great many intricate designs can easily be produced with little more than the assistance of graph paper or unused football pools coupon, with each small square taken to represent one stitch in the pattern, and it becomes clear that almost all of us can, if we set our minds to it, produce highly original pictures and motifs for ourselves. One method of doing this is to section an actual picture or photograph into squares of equal size to the grid of the graph paper or pools coupon used, thereafter transferring the colour of the square on the original design to the corresponding square of the pattern one is designing. From then on, it's a simple matter of knitting these colours into the body of the garment itself.

Other openings for the experienced knitter might come as outwork from knitwear suppliers, and providing services on a self-employed basis. Consider for instance.

- Producing dolls' clothes
- Creating seasonal Christmas motif-festooned garments
- Informing local parents that they may obtain school woolies at a lower cost than local shops are currently asking. Note too that they will more than likely receive superior quality from you, with perhaps a little personalisation of design included. Maybe you could incorporate a subtle pattern; perhaps you might include all children's names labels free of charge.

- What about a highly original service, producing Victorian-type wedding dresses, with the bride's choice of design incorporated, and perhaps offering to include panels bearing designs of sentimental value?

- Producing heirloom christening gowns.

- Designing and producing a range of clothing for premature and smaller than average new-born babies.

Those experienced at sewing, similarly have much to offer those seeking something just a little bit different from what is available in our local high street stores. How about a range of frilly, ribbon-bedecked and generally very fussy creations in which to sow off our children? Such dresses often come with a high street price tag of o50 and over; if you can produce something slightly lower in price, then surely an advertisement in local papers, freesheets, and shop window will bring an endless source of orders your way? Local craft shops and children' s outfitters are similarly keen to take such items on a sale or return basis.

Again, alternative openings are available to the experienced needle person, many of them basically similar to those for the knitting enthusiast. Take or instance: a range of christening outfits, premature and smaller baby clothes, fancy dress outfits, wedding and bridesmaid outfits, and what of that perennial favourite as December approaches - dolls' clothes?

Hand and machine sewing professionals would no doubt benefit from a little literal thinking, taking their minds away from the usual opportunities that spring to mind in the creation of everyday garments and one-off celebratory designs. Have you thought for instance of commencing a design service, one in which you will measure up clients' windows, take their individual design and colour scheme requirements into account, and produce curtains entirely personal to them? Those with flair for design, whether inherent or acquired by appropriate training, will find themselves occupying status much akin to interior designer than curtain-maker, with fees and profits suitably inflated as a result.

Amongst the many other areas desperate for your work are local ballet and dance schools, amateur dramatics and pantomime companies, jazz bands, and many other organisations heavily reliant on costume for their promotions. Securing a contract with any of these establishments, or else offering your services to parents and participants, might well find steady stream of work coming your way.

Knitting, sewing, crochet and embroidery, though they might be those crafts with which many of us are familiar, are most certainly not the only areas in which outwork or opportunities for self-employment exist. Think for instance of the skilled woodworker who is able to turn out toys, ranging perhaps from simple building blocks to those intricate rocking horses we would all love to acquire for our children but often can' t afford the hefty prices involved. Someone who can undercut those prices asked by larger and specialist toy firms will almost certainly find a great deal of business coming their way. That person may also find his or her niche making dolls' houses, garden furniture, perhaps even bird boxes, rabbit hutches and so on.

Tapestry is one of today's more popular crafts, perhaps explaining the existence of several highly skilled individuals who will either transform your photos of pets and family into tapestries, or might instead create a pattern from which you might personally create your very own heirloom. Look into the many publications available for craft workers today, and amongst the many original services available, you'll find patterns for dolls' clothing, toy making kits and pattern books, model making kits, quilting packs and templates, embroidery kits, and so on. You'll also find specialist services such as those which offer the design, perhaps also the completion of a unique nursery sampler ready to present to proud new parents.

We have talked at great length about actually turning your own hand to making things in order to profit in this highly lucrative field of handicrafts; but what of teaching your skills to others? How about writing instruction manuals for instance, or else complete correspondence courses for really enthusiastic beginners?

Writing is in itself a very easy task; one simply lists all points of relevance, which when combined will give the reader a working knowledge of the craft concerned, following which the writer produces the document in much the same manner as when writing the very same information in a letter to a friend. Then he types up the document or has it typed up for him. A study of suitable places in which to advertise your book is now all that is required. Books can be photocopied and collated quite inexpensively and efficiently in most local print shops.

Plan your advertisement, studying and perhaps emulating the style of other publishers whose advertisements appear alongside your own; then telephone or write to the publication concerned to place your own advertisement. When the orders come in, you simply pack your books securely, post them off, and that's that!

Have you thought of selling your work yourself, perhaps offering a range of toys at car boot fairs, craft or from small rented stalls in already established craft centres and retail outlets?

But it really needn't all stop there. You might for instance offer your services as a teacher or instructor of your craft - try the local papers, freesheets, shop windows, even local colleges and adult training centres.

ENGRAVING

Another prospective kitchen table enterprise, here one can offer various options to those seeking engraving whether for decorative, celebratory, or commemorative reasons, or else simple seeking to have their personal possessions engraved and consequently made less likely prospects for the opportunist thief.

Consult *Exchange & Mart* and craft magazines for essential equipment.

Engraving can take many varied forms from etching onto glass, to simple printing names and addresses onto key rings, making commemorative plaques, and so on.

Your customer will come from all sections of the community, from private individuals, to jewellers shops, clubs and societies, sports centres and so on.

JEWELLERY

Jewellery is another craft product which can take on many varied forms, from inexpensive and sometimes gimmicky ornamentation, to expensive and just as elaborate and highly personalised creations.

It's another craft for which a wealth of appropriate 'how to' publications, craftwork periodicals, local authority and correspondence courses exist. In the pages of the many craft workers' publications on the newsagents shelves, as well as in the perennial advertising favourite *Exchange & Mart*, there are hoards of complete business packages awaiting those interested in making money from jewellery making.

Selling can take place in person, from sales on commission to local craft and jewellery shops, car boot and craft fairs, by party plan, at fleamarkets and trade fairs, and so on. For many, the answer is to sell wholesale packages of finished items to those intent instead on selling the end products themselves at any of the venues mentioned here.

PICTURE FRAMING

Here the demand is for high quality craftwork, which if it can also come at a realistic price, will command a steady stream of eager customers. As for so many other craft and art services, a wealth of 'how to' books are available to guide the novice through to professional status as a picture framer. Equipment need not eat too heavily into your capital and can be located in most of the major craftwork and model making magazines on the newsagents' shelves, as well as in advertising publications, including *Exchange & Mart*.

Customers might come from the general public, via advertisements placed in the press or in shop windows. You might instead provide a service to local artists and art shops, photographers, antique shops selling antique prints, print and poster shops and so on.

You might instead start in the really lucrative field of selling antique prints, posters and early advertising material at local

antiques and collectors' fairs. The service of someone to colour your material before you frame it will again find a great many customers flocking to your stall. Many individuals known personally to the author, operate this service via mail order, from their homes or from traditional retail premises.

Other skills from which to make money from home, whether on a self-employed or outworker basis, include model making, for which a variety of options exist, ranging from toy soldiers, to chess sets, model cottages and so on. One highly enterprising individual turned his love of old buildings into an extremely profitable enterprise, designing and crafting miniature designs of local historical interest, which were then transformed into moulds for the making, painting and selling of miniature designs. Selling takes place at car boot fairs, fleamarkets and collectors' fairs, through the post from press advertisement, and in many shops and crafts stalls operating in the locality. The business is set to expand into creating models of famous locals, living or dead, but nevertheless preserved for posterity via this talented model maker's skills.

Sewing, knitting, dressmaking, quilting and embroidery - are all skills that lend themselves equally to profitable business ventures, as a glance through any of the magazines dedicated to craft working enthusiasts will testify.

TOYMAKING

Toy making can range from very basic soft toys intended for heavy and frequent handling, to a range of specialised items intended more for decoration or celebratory reasons than play. Into the latter category come such as the now highly successful Teddy Bear gift service which, operating on a national scale, produces customised teddy bears, sometimes with the name of the recipient hand embroidered on its clothing; sometimes dressed in a manner which would indicate the profession or employment of the recipient. And so we have teacher teddies, traffic warden teddies, building site teddies and so on.

The same firm will also do a range of 'teddies to hate' and use for dubious purposes a effigies; again the poor old traffic warden features prominently in this section. But perhaps the greatest part of this particular business is not only the highly personalised service involved, as much as the fact that each teddy comes complete with its own name, adoption certificate and usually is delivered by carrier instead of less personal postal service.

Have you noticed when cult figures creep onto our screens, that a similar variety finds its way almost instantly into the craft shops, this time in soft toy version? Here we find Mickey Mouse and Minnie, Turtles, Marios, Care Bears and so on. At local fetes, rallies, seaside resorts and anywhere potentially thousands of people

congregate, so toy makers or their representatives are there to provide for seemingly insatiable visitors' needs.

Soft toys can be sold privately, by mail order, by party plan, or on commission to gents selling on the creator's behalf. Car boot fairs, fleamarkets, craft fairs and trade fairs also lend themselves more than adequately to the selling of such items. Additionally many shops, craft and toy shops, are more than happy to carry your goods on a sale or return basis, with commission earned for every sale made on your behalf.

Into this section come the masses of wooden toys that prove so popular with younger and older children alike: building blocks, dolls houses, forts, rocking horses, and so on.

CURRICULUM VITAE SERVICE

This rather ominous-sounding title may at first be a little off-putting, and I wouldn't blame anyone tempted to skip this proposition in favour of more familiar-sounding business ventures. But think again, for here we have an excellent opportunity to make up to £25 each time a conversation takes place with the potential customer and the details of that conversation are put to paper.

A curriculum vitae is nothing more than the biographical details, personal and career-related, of persons wishing to change jobs, seek advancement, and undergo virtually any change in their working lives, which necessitates them giving interviewers, employers, and college heads sufficient details to make a full and accurate assessment of the candidate.

At one time the humble application form was the order of the day, requiring one to neatly present personal data in little boxes on the employer's or whoever's individual forms.

But forms presented several problems, not the least being that their designers, who like the rest of us are not infallible, often asked ambiguous questions, or else allowed no space for the inclusion of information which those labouring over the form considered of vital importance. In the latter case, the astute applicant would add a typed or hand written addendum to the application before submission. On too many occasions though, even the experienced applicant could be left with that niggling feeling of, albeit inadvertently, answering a question 'not quite accurately' or inadequately, or wishing that extra space had been available for more detailed information.

Here the curriculum vitae comes to the rescue, offering the candidate the facility to include in the application all of those details which he and the intended recipient feel necessary for a fair analysis to be made. It contains all of the information required on a standard

application form and those additional points peculiar to the individual applicant. But how does the inexperienced applicant or those with insufficient time or inadequate facilities go about the task of preparing this ostentatiously named document in a neat, orderly and professional manner? The answer is - they don't they get someone more experienced to prepare the document on their behalf.

This service, much needed in today's competitive job and education market, has led to the emergence of many specialist ' CV' enterprises. Fees range from o20 to o25 and more, and all for what essentially amounts to handing over a few copies of a short document.

Some offer the document in ' designer' folder, often with the customer's name and address gold-leafed on the front. ' Very nice' you might think, and yes it is - and very expensive too. To my mind such glossing over is also highly unnecessary. The documents will not be forwarded to the intending employer in their glamorous cases, and surely, the more costs and kept to a minimum whilst still providing a reliable and accurate service, the more competitive will be the price asked of the customer, and the more customers will thereby be attracted.

The person who decides to enter this lucrative business must of necessity possess two prime qualifications: an ability to put his or her customers at ease as personal details are elicited as fully and accurately as possible, and, access to a good typewriter or if all possible, a word processor or typesetting facilities. The end result is professional, and in the majority of cases where word processors are used, also completely free of typing and spelling errors.

Should this business seem a likely proposition for you, then send off to several existing CV agencies for details of their services, obviously presenting yourself as someone likely to require their services. You will then be able to judge for yourself what documentation and advertising is employed by the better firms, as well as taking the undoubted advantage of incorporating the better points of all agencies into your own.

:HOME PUBLISHING

It's one of the most lucrative businesses ever, one requiring very little in the way of starting capital; yet surprisingly, few people have even heard of ' Home Publishing' . Good news indeed for those business men and women currently earning anything from 1000% to 4000% profit on each and every sale they make, often charging o20 or more for an item that has cost o1, perhaps less, to produce.

Just how much home publishers make each and every week depends entirely on the time and effort they put into their businesses; into the analysing of advertising trends and techniques; into selecting suitable titles to offer their customers; into establishing a good and regular list of

customer who, being satisfied with past purchases, will continue to buy from them in the future.

' Publishing' , loosely defined, is the preparation and distribution of printed material, from which we can conclude that a ' home publisher' is a home-based entrepreneur, needing no special business premises, and requiring no stock other than one master copy of each publication he or she intends offering for sale.

Some home publishers deal exclusively in publications relating to one particular hobby or interest, for instance, consumer competitions or stamp collecting. Others deal in a wide range of subjects, from leisure interest, to self-improvement, to perhaps the most profitable line of all, namely that of information concerning business and income boosting opportunities.

Basically, the publisher selects and acquires those titles that form his or her stock, decides upon the means by which they will be advertised for sale, and subsequently place appropriate advertisements to which prospective customers are invited to apply.

He or she then forwards the publication or publications, where cash in advance has been requested, or else provides the potential customer with a detailed sales leaflet, from which the inquirer will decide whether or not to order the publication. The publisher usually takes the opportunity to include details of several other publications in which the potential customer might be interested. If the original enquiry does not result in a sale, there is every chance that one of these other publications will appeal to the inquirer.

Customer manuals and folios may be produced as photocopied versions of the master document, or in professionally printed form if the publisher desires. By shopping around for the best rates in photocopying, or else installing a photocopying machine at home, the cost of manuals can be kept extremely low, thereby making for far higher profit margins.

The market for information is vast, some would suggest unlimited, and the means of reaching potential customers are similarly many and varied, and perhaps best of all, inexpensive. Without costly business premises and similarly prohibitive overheads, the publisher can afford to concentrate his or her efforts and financial resources into reaching that vast clientele awaiting each and every publication brought onto the market.

To build and maintain a good customer list you must of course offer only quality information, and for this reason the prudent publisher will always choose the titles that form his stock with the utmost care. It's surprisingly easy to acquire a good, extremely saleable title for anything from 010 to 040 for reproduction rights; more of course for sole copyright, the latter affording an enviable situation indeed for the publisher to find himself in, for he alone will have authority to offer the copyrighted manuscript for sale.

Your titles may come from one or more of several sources; direct from the writer or his agent in the case of copyright; from the writer or agent, or other publishers in the case of reproduction and resell rights.

Reproduction rights as the name implies, allow you to produce and sell as many copies of the document as you wish, often at a price you yourself decide. If these rights come with 'resell rights' you may also transfer reproduction and resell rights to other publishers, thereby making very handsome profits indeed, and usually recouping the cost of your own outlay with your very first order.

With exclusive copyright you might, quite rightly so, feel reluctant to share your market with other publishers, which of course would happen if you decided to sell reproduction rights, with or without resell rights. Many publishers jealously guard their copyrights, especially in the case of titles much in demand. Such a title could well continue selling to the public for many years to come. With copyright the profits are entirely yours; pass on reproduction rights and the chain grows rapidly, until after just a few transactions your title is shared by many publishers. If selling by direct mail, remember too that the very same people contacted by you will almost certainly have been approached with the same title by several of your competitors - a huge waste of time, energy and money.

Home publishing is one of many sub-sections falling under the umbrella of mail order, and as such those rules, tips and techniques that make for increased profits in mail order apply equally to home publishing.

Arm yourself with as many books and manuals as you can on the art of advertising, direct marketing techniques, and standards of mail order professionalism in general. Remember to keep abreast of the times, never stop learning and never ever stand still.

LIST BROKING

This is one big business proposition that requires an absolute minimum of capital, but nevertheless offers extremely high rewards to the operator.

'It's not what you know that counts, it's who you know' or so they say. In the business world this is indeed the case. Some firms survive very nicely from dealings with only passing trade, or with customers drawn into their premises as a result of effective local advertising campaigns. Many firms though, and primarily those with no obvious business premises for customers to visit, depend heavily upon postal contacts to sustain an adequate level of trade.

In this category we find mail order traders and those dealing in specialised product for particular sections of the public. There are also firms for which business premises might be wholly unnecessary,

perhaps because they operate in short-term undertakings, as would be the case for someone seeking to rent out sales and promotion pitches at once-off exhibitions. What these businesses need above all are lists - lists of potential customers who might otherwise remain unaware of their existence.

Having acquired this list of potential customers, they themselves contact the firms and individuals concerned, usually by post, in contrast to normal business procedures where it is more often the customer who arranges approach to appropriate sellers or service industries.

For firms requiring such contacts, the task of compiling lists for themselves would n doubt be so arduous and time-consuming a task, as to leave little or no time for normal business obligations.

The specialist list broker therefore collects or co-ordinates all necessary information, and either sells his list outright, or more likely hires out the addresses for once-off use only.

But it' s not just potential business customers who may be contacted by means of appropriate lists. addresses can be similarly provided for:

- * Private individuals requiring set services and products
- * Specific businesses, eg undertakers, grocers, hotels, etc.
- * Schools
- * Persons involved in particular sports or hobbies
- * Craft workers

I have personally seen offers to sell or rent lists of people who take an active interest in entering consumer competitions, people who collect antiques and books, stamp collectors, even people interested in contacting pen pals or being entered onto dating agency files.

The person involved in the mailing list business can compile lists from scratch, (a time consuming exercise), or else he or she can act as the middle man or woman for other people' s lists, renting the list at one price and subsequently hiring it out at another obviously higher price.

The middle person or broker often buys or rents very many large lists which are then split for hiring or sale to firms unable to afford the larger lists, or not needing vast quantities of names and addresses.

Ideally, the names and addresses are offered on self-adhesive labels to facilitate easier usage by the buyer or renter, and also to lessen the temptation to use a rented list more than once, thereby breaking the usual conditions upon which the list is supplied.

Lists should be kept ' clean' , that is free of people no longer living at the stated address,, or perhaps no longer active members of that group to which they purport to belong. This cleaning exercise can be done by making frequent mailings yourself, or else by analysing the

results of someone else using the list, and removing from the list all communications removed as gone away or non-deliverable for whatever other reason.

Prices vary greatly for these lists and it is not unusual to sell or rent the same list several times each year, at a price ranging from £25 to £125 or more every time. Very nice indeed!

MAIL ORDER

Far from the bustle and throng of shops with their queues, busy streets, traffic jams, recessions and closing down sales, there's a group of traders for whom business flourishes, though many might never even come to see a customer, let alone make a personal transaction. All dealings are carried out by post, with sometimes a telephone call to supplement the deal, or to convey some message between dealer and purchaser. This is mail order, widely accepted as one of the easiest of businesses to begin in, and certainly one of the few in which massive fortunes still lie in wait for those keen to join the ranks of dealers by mail.

Mail order is not easy, though it can for some be a quick route to riches. Fast profits go to those determined to succeed, individuals who seek never to be content with their efforts, and who strive continuously to improve those already high standards they set themselves.

Mail order proves attractive to customers for many varied reasons, primary amongst them the fact that most things offered by mail are just not available from everyday high street shopping. For some, the sheer ease of buying by mail is sufficient to warrant repeat and continued custom. No queuing; no parking problems; no time battling your way into town; and no travelling or parking cost involved once you get there. And as we have already said, all of this assumes that the customer can find the good concerned in the shops: for as many a successful mail order dealer knows, success sometimes comes entirely from locating and offering for sale items not available from any other source. This may perhaps best be illustrated by reference to the current boom in mail order publishing, where hundreds of guides are available to those seeking business and moneymaking opportunities, of which there is very little on offer in book shops.

For many dedicated buyer by mail, the principal allegiance is one of excitement such as only mail order offers, in that once the order has been placed, sheer anticipation is the order of the day until that delivery is made.

So what do people buy by mail? The answer is 'practically anything!' Anything that is, which the customer can be adequately informed of by means of advertisements placed in publications, or communicated by direct mailshot. The items should also be sufficiently light to keep down the costs of postage or whatever form of delivery.

And so amongst those thousands of items sold by mail, we find clothes, books, household items, and hobby items. Services too can be offered by mail, as is discovered by a profusion of typesetting services, stationery design facilities, writing services, insurance, printing, circular mailing, and so on.

For the dealer, the benefits are numerous. It is in fact surprisingly easy to make a good living in mail order, whilst benefiting also from the inherent advantages of working one's chosen hours, working from home, and selling whatever one wishes.

Mail order is also a very easy business to enter, and also one in which to make massive profits for very little effort. It is also, ironically, one of the main businesses abandoned in the newcomers' early days, simply as a result of disillusionment of promises of vast fortunes coming through their doors failing to materialise. The entire business though, is one which becomes easier with experience, and even the big names in mail order will admit to making massive and usually very costly mistakes in their early attempts at selling by mail.

Selling can take place by several methods. That which is used at any particular time depends upon the product or service involved, the price, cost of advertising in relation to product price, and the amount of information that must be conveyed to the potential customer if a sale is to be forthcoming.

SELLING 'OFF-THE-PAGE'

Here the item is described via advertising in appropriate publications, or by display advertising or usually less costly lineage advertisements in classified advertising sections. The reader is requested to send the price of the item advertised, following which the dealer will complete the transaction by fulfilling the order to the purchaser.

THE TWO-STAGE 'ENQUIRY' METHOD

Selling by this means involves placing an advertisement, briefly outlining the main features of what is on offer, and inviting the reader to write to the advertiser for further details. The dealer then sends out a sales circular for the item or service concerned, and additionally includes circular relating to other items available.

DIRECT MAIL

Direct mail incorporates many of the features of the enquiry method, since the prospective customer is usually sent the very same circulars that would be provided if instead selling by the enquiry method. The mail order operator here, is not involved in promoting his wares by

means of advertisements placed in publications; rather he or she sends mailshots (sales circulars) to names hoped to represent fair targets for the items or services being promoted. That mailing list might be the dealers own list; it might instead be hired from a mailing list broker or fellow trader. The importance of a good mailing list can never be over-estimated - it is the life blood of effective and profitable direct mail.

When deciding what to sell, it is ironically better to sell something already available from other dealers. Monopoly of stock on offer is of course an ideal situation for which to aim, if that item is also one actually in demand. An item extremely different to those offered by your counterparts in mail order tough, is unlikely to earn you very much by way of profits, if that item has no ready market.

In choosing to offer something in the same mould as that your competitors offer, you are of course offering something that someone, somewhere, will already have tested market demand for. You are on fairly safe ground, even if in choosing something similar, you will inevitably be sharing your potential market with many other dealers.

And because you share that vast market place with other traders, here comes to the fore one of the main means by which the astute trader can ensure that his is the firm with which the order is placed. The trader must therefore endeavour to make his or her offer different in some respect; perhaps by offering a gift or special discount to purchasers, that item being something not available from any other source.

One's advertising strategy must be planned carefully from the very outset, by investigation of all publications in which one's competitor, if any, advertise. The operator is also advised to study the frequency with which specific firms advertise, by what means, at what product prices, whether by display or classified advertising, and so on.

It is essential that advertising is never skimmed on; NO ADVERTISING = NO ORDERS = NO BUSINESS. It is however, equally essential that you do not simply place advertisements haphazardly, without a full and meticulous investigation of the likely suitability of the medium concerned.

Look to those publications in which competitors advertise, particularly those whose advertisements have been placed for some time. Advertisements that stand the test of time are working; from these very same advertisements you may therefore learn a great deal about choice of words and techniques, as well as the selected method of advertising.

Similarly, items that are promoted almost exclusively by direct mail, speak volumes for the effectiveness of this particular marketing method. This is often the case for business plans which require a substantial outlay from investors, and which might also require much 'telling' before 'selling' can take place.

So mail order is a learning process, and a business which must never be taken for granted, even when massive and regular profits start coming your way. Learning and striving for improved standards are essential if the successful businessman expects to continue enjoying the fruits of his labours.

A business allowed to stagnate whilst the proprietor takes inordinate periods of time off, albeit deservedly, to enjoy too much in the way of leisure time, is one which will invariably be overtaken by those whose owners put business first, at least until that happy time when the well-established business can indeed be left to run itself for short periods of time, or else can be left in the capable hands of staff the owner's new found affluence has provided.

SECRETARIAL AND OFFICE SERVICES

For those who can turn out neat and accurate typing within set deadlines, a regular and often very high income awaits them. This might not be a business with any place in the 'get rich quick' category, but certainly it will provide extra cash for family commitments, and for offsetting the burdens of unpredictable, but generally rising interest and inflation rates.

Running a freelance typing or word processing service can also be an ideal business opportunity for those who much of necessity spend most of their time within the home. We find this business extremely popular with mothers, the disabled, even 'failed' or discouraged' writers, who nevertheless have equipped themselves with the typing skills their preferred profession would have benefited from.

A business such as this takes time to build up in terms of clientele, and your own reputation for good, efficient work, as well as ability to meet customers' deadlines. You might in the very early days consider the whole thing anything but worthwhile; perhaps you are spending more on advertising than you are recouping in custom. Keep at it though, for all businesses relying so heavily on advertising need time for what's on offer to filter through to the ultimate customer, often from the shop floor of a large corporation to the upper echelons of its management structure.

Regular advertising leads to a faith in your ability to produce the goods. You are, as yet, a faceless quantity, and one that can vanish as easily as it appeared if your work is unsatisfactory. But someone whose service has been advertised for some time gains a position of trust in the minds of those they are seeking to attract. One hit wonders and those who can't stand the pace, are unlikely to meet often tight deadlines most businesses work to. Gain their trust and you will find yourself the recipient of regular custom. Repeat custom and word of mouth advertising from satisfied customers, could find your business growing to full-time status, perhaps find you needing to sub-contract

work out to other efficient sources, or perhaps looking to employ adequate emergency staff yourself.

WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL I NEED?

Naturally, you wouldn't start a venture such as this without the physical ability to produce good type. You need not be a highly qualified typist to offer such a service; you might not need any qualifications at all; some of the best typists are self-taught. I have known some keyboard operators who, falling into the latter category, could batter the highly qualified ones into submission when their accuracy, presentation, speed and professional abilities are put to the test. Don't offer what you can't deliver though. If you are accurate but your speed requires improvement, don't offer to deliver a huge report at breakneck speed, when you know full well your speed will need to be boosted to such a degree that your accuracy will suffer. Wait until you can produce work at the speed such work necessitates before you make rash promises. At the very best you'll be paid, but you'll almost certainly lose the customer concerned and suffer adverse word of mouth publicity at his next meeting with counterpart in the business world. Don't bite off more than you can chew!

As to the gadgetry you will need, there are many types of typewriter and word processor on the market, ranging from the humble manual, to the electric version, and on to the most wonderful of all inventions - to my mind at least - the word processor. Which you choose to operate with will depend largely upon finances available, and will no doubt be influenced by what equipment you have so far been accustomed to. Each as its advantages, though for the manual typewriter I am somewhat at a loss to find more than its need for a cheap energy supply from tired typists' fingers. Energy of the electrical variety leads to a better, more even type and required far less effort on the part of the user. 'Sorry' to advocates of the manual, but today, unless you prove to the contrary, I think it fair to say that the manual typewriter has long since outlived its usefulness.

An electric typewriter will not set you back a great deal, and purchasing one is something you should seriously consider if your work is to be of consistently high standard. Equipment necessary to the running of a business can be set against Income Tax liabilities, so contact Inland Revenue office for advice.

But, if you really want to create a stir in your new business venture, you can forget the word 'typing' and substitute in its place the highly respectable concept 'word processing'. Little more than a computerised typewriter, the word processor renders typist correction fluid a thing of the past, and dirty carbon residue need never again soil your hands or the precious newly-typed documents they come into contact with.

At first, the thought of using a word processor can frighten the typist rigid, but within weeks he or she will be using it like an expert. No photocopiers and carbon papers are necessary, since the machine's memory banks store work for as long as the operator wishes, thereby allowing hi or her to churn out copies of past work at the mere touch of a button or two. Work can also be produced virtually error free; any errors that do remain are due usually to lack of observation, since errors can be rectified before the document is ever produced on paper. Typing appears on a computer screen and errors can be corrected immediately. Additional software allows your spelling to be checked by the machine, thereby allowing one of the great problems of any an otherwise accurate typist, or now word processor operator.

All of these benefits of the word processor can lead to a doubling or even trebling o your output. Never again need you start afresh on a document that fails to come up to standard. The machine will adjust layouts for you, alter typefaces, remove errors, change spacing, etc., etc. Remember too, you are effectively able to offer the customer something of a back-up filing system, merely because his or her work will remain on disk, if necessary and convenient to both parties.

Advertising your service as one of ' word processing' instead of ' typing' can also create a more professional image, thereby leading to greater customer interest.

HOW DO I ADVERTISE MY NEW BUSINESS?

There are several ways to bring yourself and your business to the attention of potential customers, but remember that you are offering something of an artistic service, and your first communication with prospective customer must be one of total professionalism. A tatty business card in the local fish and chip shop window will lead the reader to wonder if your typing will be prone to a similarly ill-thought out standard.

Take your business cards with you everywhere. Nothing looks worse than a hastily scribbled telephone number on a tatty piece of scrap paper when a potential customer' s interest is aroused. That would likely be the last you' ll see of him or her, since subconsciously that person will convince him or herself that your work is likely to be of a similarly unprofessional standard.

Business cards are not limited to personal delivery. They can be left in any suitable place where those requiring your services are likely to congregate. I recently saw a batch of cards for a word processing service, neatly displayed on the counter of a local photographic centre. I have also seen them built into the covers of home videos. Well, not only the kids need the relaxation offered by the box - the TV that is! I personally thought this method of advertising little short of ingenious.

Your card can be pinned in many places where custom might be attracted: business clubs, job centres (for curriculum vitae and job application forms), in youth clubs and on college notice boards (students need their theses typed to a professional standard), etc.

You can also have postcards printed to advertise your business, and A5 handbills are invaluable for popping through the letterboxes of businesses old and new. Deliver them before the summer holidays begin and you might find yourself inundated with work that would normally have gone to agency temps when staff shortages necessitate an additional pair of hands. You might even address a letter to company managing directors informing them of your services at holiday times and at other times when staff shortages are likely to exist. Such an approach sows initiative - something usually much admired in today's fast moving business world.

You can if your capabilities and other commitments allow, offer an emergency service, with collection and subsequent delivery of documentation. But never put another client's work to one side for the purpose of attracting higher fees, unless you are already ahead of any predetermined deadlines for that other customer. In gaining the gratitude of one, you may well lose the respect and repeat custom of another.

Your postcard advertisements can be placed in suitable shop windows, perhaps in larger stores and post offices which we all need to use at some time or another. Don't disregard the little corner shops either. You are unlikely to get big business deals from them, but you might attract students, small business people, club secretaries, and so on. Since such an advertisement is usually extremely cheap you should consider it a worthwhile investment however little custom it generates, unless of course that 'little' fails to rise above zero for any length of time.

Don't be tempted to type these postcard advertisements just to save a little cash. Remember the 'first impressions' rule and have them properly printed. You'll save time to concentrate on the business your professionally prepared advertisements generate. Again, with the printed variety, you can have an attention-grabbing but subtle design incorporated, that will inform the public of what service you offer, long before they have read the text hidden amongst many other advertisements displayed in the window.

WHO ELSE NEEDS SECRETARIAL SERVICES?

You will, as your business grows, find yourself serving businesses large and small. Some will want a one-off service, and you might never see that customer again. Others might need a regular service for a very small workload on each occasion. At the other end of the scale you might be offered one enormous job by a business whose secretary has taken extended sickness leave. That same business might be so impressed

with your work that its management later decides to sub-contract to you the entire workload of another employee who subsequently leaves the workforce.

Never underestimate the importance of the smallest jobs you are offered. Those small bread and butter pieces might not even seem worth the time and effort involved, but a satisfied customer of whatever standing is an added avenue for your much needed ongoing advertising campaign.

Local Newspapers

Local newspapers and freesheets are excellent places in which to advertise your services. The same people who place their advertisements in these publications are in all probability the same people who will need your services at some future time. Temporary secretarial agencies are expensive propositions; once the middle man is cut out, your business becomes a much more inviting financial proposition to businesses large and small, almost all suffering under the weight of high running cost.

Advertise in the classified section until you are able to withstand the higher charges of display advertising.

Business Enterprise and Self-Help Groups

Many such groups exist, some under government auspices; others created by men and women for the promotion of their own business interests. You will find entire buildings devoted to small workshops and retail outlets, the businessmen themselves often working under Enterprise Allowance Schemes. Other buildings are sub-divided into units, by groups of private individuals for their own use, or else for sub-letting to other usually smaller concerns. Craft shops flourish in such environments, as do antique shops, printing establishments and book shops. Almost all such entrepreneurs at some time will have need of a typing facility, and you should therefore advertise your business by distributing individual handbills, or having a postcard advertisement placed on any communal notice board you might find.

Always be on the lookout for new business groups, and make sure you are the first typing agency to get that all-important foot in the door.

Job Centres and Colleges

Wherever students congregate, whether for educational or social needs, you have a large and ready made market for your skills. Students, not all of whose lessons include typing, require their theses to be presented in a manner that will create a good impression for the assessment body responsible for grading the work concerned.

In colleges and job centres you will also find one of your largest and most regular sources of business, namely in the constant demand for newcomers to the jobs market to have their curriculum vitae (CV)

and application forms neatly prepared, if they are to stand much chance of entering the highly competitive world of work.

Obtain permission from college officials to have your advertisement placed on suitable notice boards, and register the services you provide with the appropriate personnel.

Many schools, colleges and universities, have student magazines which again would provide an invaluable advertising opportunity.

Specialist Publications

Many specialist publications cater for people whose businesses are largely dependent on mail order. Book dealers, stamp dealers, ephemera specialists, dealers in a wide range of products, have regular lists of offers prepared, often monthly, or distribution to customers old and new. Their entrepreneurial talents do not always extend to the typing of such documents they require, which must look as professional as the service they offer. They must therefore discover some means of having the sales list prepared on their behalf.

Advertise your services in book trade publications, stamp dealer and collector magazines, 'Exchange and Mart', 'The Trader', and many other similar publications. Browse round the larger newsagents to familiarise yourself with likely advertising outlets.

Writers, of which there are thousands in this country alone, often need someone to transform their notes into professionally typed manuscripts suitable for the eyes of busy editors and publishing executives. Many writers will have acquired the necessary typing skills but a great many more will not, perhaps have no interest in doing so, particularly if their work is in demand from very high paying market. Again, advertise your business in the many specialist publications for writers and via the chairpersons of local writers' groups. Your library should be able to assist you with details of local groups. A glance at 'The Writers and Artists Yearbook' will provide you with details of some of the many publications writers obtain, usually on a subscription basis.

Anywhere Potential Customers Congregate

Here lies perhaps the largest marketing opportunity of all. Most people however busy, find recreation and leisure facilities an essential part of their lives. Whether it is the local pub, or the sports centre of small villages or massive city centres, an ideal opportunity presents itself for you to reach hundreds of potential customers. Ask if you can have your card or advertisement displayed prominently on notice boards, or even on counter - in better establishments of course - you don't want to soil your business reputation by having a pile of your cards end up as missiles in the regular Saturday brawls some watering holes are renowned for.

You might even offer to type certain items free of charge, in exchange for publicity for your business. College magazines, club newsletters and church bulletins, all lend themselves well to such a prospect, if their readership is sufficient to compensate for the loss of profits you will incur whilst doing this unpaid work. If the readership is small, forget it, unless of course the item being typed is of minimal proportions too, in which case you might include such a public spirited gesture in your overall business strategy. Ensure that your advertisement or acknowledgement will adequately describe the services you provide.

New and Expanding Businesses

As soon as you are aware of a new business coming to your area, or one that is opening additional premises, have your advertisement delivered through its door. You might discover many people who otherwise would seek full-time or part-time staff to cater for their needs, but who would infinitely prefer to relinquish the responsibilities of employer status in favour of a freelance service which will involve payment only in respect of work done and doesn't include hours spent awaiting work.

Restaurants, Hairdressers, Taxi Firms, and all Businesses issuing price lists, etc.

Many businesses have need or revised price lists and information bulletins, either for the windows of their business premises or else for delivery to potential clients. Remember to include these in your advertising plans.

And Also

Many typing and secretarial agencies offer various spin-off services to extremely good effect. Hairdressers for instance, might jump at the chance of having their documents delivered to homes in the locality. Whether you personally do the job of delivery is entirely for you to decide, but it takes the burden from them, and might tie the balance in your favour when deciding where the initial job of preparing the handbills should be offered.

Many businesses would no doubt appreciate a secretarial service that offer to collect work to be undertaken and usually deliver the final product. A same day typing service might gain you the edge on other typing agencies.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

ACCOMMODATION ADDRESS SERVICE

This is a business proposition presenting an attractive level of

profits for very little effort expended. A business operated from home, with few overheads, here we also have something which can be operated with very little time and space at one's disposal.

The service provided is that of allowing others to have their mail forwarded to your own or your business address. Often the reason is one of protecting the customers' own privacy; at other times it's because customers live in accommodation that isn't their own, and from which they have no absolute entitlement to operate a business.

All you do is allow customers to use your address, following which you will have their mail forwarded to them on a prearranged basis. Take a look at the many advertisements offering such services in 'Exchange and Mart', and the scope will no doubt become apparent, particularly where an attractive city centre or decidedly rural address can be offered. It may be that certain customers will have particular requirements; some might want their post forwarding daily; some by recorded post; some will be happy with a weekly delivery. Your charges will be dependent upon what specific requirements might be expressed.

Contact a few already established accommodation address services for details of what charges and special facilities they operate. Then make yours even better.

GROWING AND SELLING HOUSEPLANTS

Here we have a product for which a ready market exists amongst young and old alike, whether requiring such plants for their own enjoyment or as presents for relatives and friends. Nurseries, garden accessory shops and florists are also amongst the many customers for whom your 'growing' business will cater.

Usually all you need to start out in business is a selection of donor plants from which cuttings will be taken, before being replanted in small pots and grown to a sufficiently attractive size for marketing.

Apart from those outlets detailed earlier, I have also seen plants presenting a constant stream of customers for their growers, when displayed in the boot of cars at local car boot fairs, at fleamarkets, from roadside stalls, and from pitches at indoor and outdoor markets.

:GENEALOGY

RESEARCHING FAMILY TREES

Recent years have witnessed the emergence of a great interest in our heritage. More and more people are interested in discovering their roots, although not necessarily as some mockingly suggest, to discover possible family fortunes or hidden links with royal houses, and thereby facilitating access to titles they always believed were rightly theirs. As memories fade or the older of our relatives die, essential information

is often lost for ever. Or is it?

In government records, parish registers, graveyards, and in many other places, there are segments of information which when located, and pieced together, offer an extremely accurate and interesting profile of one's family history. Here a problem presents itself which precludes many a man or woman from researching his or her family history. Time! Time in many of our lives is in extremely short supply, and other demands allow insufficient time to undertake the painstaking research which might of necessity take us to the far ends of the country, even the world.

For a specialist researcher though, several histories may be researched during one trip to the appropriate archives or whatever, and since he or she will be paid for hours worked, there will be little worry over long hours researching, with not a bean to how for it. Because costs can rise alarmingly due to these fruitless hours searching for marriages and births that have been inaccurately recorded by those before us, it is advisable to keep the customer informed of the progress made on his behalf, and where necessary inform the customer that further research is likely to be time-consuming and consequently costly. He or she may then be content to accept what you already have discovered. In the vast majority of cases it is relatively quick and easy to accurately present the details of the past few centuries since official records became mandatory. For many people, that information will in itself prove more than acceptable, and will almost certainly be more than they would have discovered for themselves.

The end product should be presented attractively and in an easy to understand way, perhaps with a family tree format to guide the customer through the maze of dozens of forebears who often bore common ancestral names through several generations.

BABY SITTING AGENCY

Not usually something for you might need to offer personal service, but rather one in which you can act as co-ordinator between those persons requiring a baby sitting service and those prepared to offer their services as attendants. As co-ordinator of so vital and important a list of potential baby sitters, it will be one of your major responsibilities to ensure the suitability of those you place on your list. Mature teenagers, adults of both sexes, teachers and nurses, are usually likely to feature amongst your most reliable 'workers'; but be careful and always make assessment of suitable candidates one of your primary objectives.

Your services can be advertised in the press, in local shop windows, to mother and toddler clubs, in maternity clinics and hospitals, even children's clothes shop windows.

Usually you will be required to do is maintain an efficient appointments diary, and perhaps keep a reserve of 'on call' baby sitters who might

jump in at the last minute to cover emergency situations. Cash is usually paid to the person dropping the baby-sitter at the client' s door, with accounts submitted for time over and above that initially paid for. Baby-sitters themselves might be paid on a weekly or monthly hour-related basis.

Rigid rules and regulations not unnaturally govern all those responsible for children' s welfare. Contact your local Department of Social Services before you set out in this highly lucrative and much in demand business venture.

CHILDMINDING

A little like baby sitting, but here children are usually cared for in childminders' homes. Again rigid rules govern those responsible for children' s welfare, details of which are available from local Social Services offices.

Children are usually cared for during the day, often because both parents go out to work. Occasionally the childminder' s services are required on an emergency basis only, perhaps during parents' illness or incapacity.

Register your services with the local Department of Social Services who will send out representatives to investigate your suitability for this work. Nothing untoward is required other than a safe haven for other people' s children.

Advertising can take place by much the same methods s those outlined under ' Baby Sitting Ageay' .

:GIFTSEVICE

MAIL ORDER GIFT SERVICE

A mail order gift service might exist to fulfil any of several requirements, not all of them much to do with finding and providing the ideal gift for the recipient. For many, the sheer ease of ordering is the deciding factor; for others it' s the opportunity to offer something unique; for others it' s status that proves the deciding factor when we discover a service so expensive and outlandishly expensive (messages trailing behind light-powered aircraft; thousands of balloons released into the air; bottles of ever so unashamedly expensive champagne delivered to the door). For others, the mail order gift service simply allows guaranteed delivery at a distance and overrides the possibility of forgetting the occasion.

Amongst those to have discovered the potential of the mail order gift trade and exploited it to the full, are flower specialist Interflora, now a nationwide concern that allows the donor to place his or her

order by means of a telephone call to provide necessary delivery details.

These coming into the arena a little later include as varied an assortment of businesses as one is ever likely to encounter: the teddy delivered to the recipient's door (sometimes he or she the teddy - wears clothing emblazoned with appropriate and highly individual message); baskets of individually selected items just as much expensive as they are appropriate to the needs and interests of the recipient; original copies of the 'Times' or other national and provincial newspapers published on the actual day the recipient was born; hand embroidered quilts in which each patch portrays some event or item of importance to the recipient, and so on. Usually a quick look through some of the more up-market women's glossies is sufficient to convince the reader that here is a market worthwhile penetrating, particularly if he or she can come up with something just that little bit different to what is already on offer.

GROWING AND SELLING HERBS

Take a look at the uninviting packets of herbs and garnishing products available in many supermarkets and it's not surprising to discover that many people would walk miles to discover an alternative to this particular 'convenience' product. For those with fine palates and purses to match, only freshly picked herbs will provide for their superior requirements. Into this category fall many higher-income households, restaurants and hotels, delicatessens and up-market food outlets. Someone who can provide potential customers, perhaps on contract, with a regular supply of herbs in which quality and variety are also significant factors, might well find their businesses achieving hitherto unexpected proportions.

Yet other herb growers have extended their enterprises to cater for those who would prefer the bagged and dried variety, perhaps offering a greater range at lower prices than the shops; often shops are their major customers for herbs provided in bulk at reduced prices.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPING SERVICE

For those willing to carry out a few menial tasks before the real work of earning begins, a newspaper clipping service could be just the answer.

The aim of the exercise is to select and cut out all items of news reportage that might prove of interest to other than the newspaper's or magazines original readers. But who wants news when it's yesterday's news? Actually, quite a lot of people, amongst them writers and historians, genealogists and geographical researchers, and not forgetting the actual people or organisation at the centre of the news or article concerned.

Many clippings services cater almost entirely to the needs of writers, whose time as for all of us is limited; the less time spent researching, the more time for writing and consequently earning their living. The clippings service will offer items under categories - as many different categories as possible! And so, the writer might be able to request all available information on ' hats' , or ' boxer dogs' ; perhaps he or she might instead find a mass of information relating to a particular geographical location he or she intends making the focus of a future article. Such services are usually listed in ' Writers and Artists Yearbook' and in all of the many magazines and newsletters produced for writers, both aspiring and professional.

Alternatively, instead of the potential customer coming to you, you might offer the information you have to that person it involves. Many firms would be pleased to receive details of reports about them placed in various parts of the country. A potentially unlimited market awaits you in respect of trade journals. For instance, all magazines and journals relating to such as hairdressing or carpentry, will be interested in clippings from other publications, and if from other countries the market can be almost unlimited. The service would of course extend to providing such clippings to all trade journals in whatever part of the world, something that could best be done be either obtaining duplicate cuttings or else having them photocopied before dispatching. Most journals set their own prices for the information they use, in much the same way as they set the fee paid to writers; at other times you might be able to indicate your cost per cutting. For old cuttings, the fee you ask will obviously be much higher than something cut from yesterday' s paper, but not always, and writers for instance often expect a set number of cuttings for a specified fee.

SELLING BOOKS

Either sell cheaply all books that come your way, or specialise in books on set subjects: local history, biographies, specialist subjects, novels or whatever. Such can be sold by list or on approval to those attracted by advertisements placed in book collectors and special interest magazines.

CHERISHED NUMBER PLATES

Many drivers seek number plates a little bit different from those of fellow drivers, whether for investment purposes, to hide the age of their vehicles, or else for pure snob value. Massive profits can be made in this business, by firms which do not always have to acquire the plates concerned in the first place, but might instead offer to sell plates on behalf of current owners for percentage of the takings.

:CALLIGRAPHY

CALLIGRAPHY

This is the rather grand name for the even grander art of creating beautiful handwriting and printing. We find swirling flows of lettering, created by hand with the aid of special pens and inks, adorning menus in the better eating establishments, on examination certificates, formal invitations, signs, notices and doorplates.

Courses in calligraphy are available at local colleges and sometimes from correspondence schools.

CROSSWORDS

Crosswords are surprisingly easy to produce with a little practice, and many books on the subject of writing will guide the beginner through the basic techniques. As an adjunct to producing crosswords for the many markets requiring the services of the compiler, there is the opportunity to provide 'personalised' **crosswords** for clubs, presents, individuals and so on. I have seen advertisements from people offering to create crosswords incorporating words appropriate to that person who will receive the end result as a gift: names, dates, pets, occupations, hobbies and such, all proving suitable for inclusion.

THIS CONCLUDES ' THE COMPLETE HOMEWORKER'

THANK YOU FOR READING

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