

Hi

Today I'd like to share some dark secrets with you . . .

Two have caused scandals in my family.

The other, though directly connected, could actually turn into a £31,000 a year home business!

Let me explain: as my father is retired, he'd got a lot of time on his hands. As well as learning how to trade the currency markets and uploading his wildlife photos to digital libraries, he's tracing the 'Laight' family tree . . .

Now, I always thought that family scandals were what happened to other people, but very quickly my father uncovered 2 racy stories that at the time caused a huge scandal in our family.

You see, it turns out one branch of my family tree is Irish. Back in the mid 19th century one of my forbears came to Birmingham to become an 'artist's model' (ahem) for the famous Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne Jones.

Once the family discovered that this young slip of a girl was taking her clothes off for this bohemian artist, she was quickly summoned back to the home country.

Another relative from the same period was engaged to a surgeon, but ended up running away with his butler!

Yes, the butler did it! ;-)

This scandal brought so much shame on the family that they upped sticks and emigrated to New York!

OK, all very interesting, but what's this got to do with making money?

Well, the real reason my father has delved into our history is I'm encouraging him to start a family research business. I've been investigating this area for some time and was surprised to learn that despite the huge interest in family trees, the number of people who are actually offering family research services is tiny.

What dark secrets are hidden in your family's past?

We've all wondered where we come from at some time or another. Alas, tracing your family tree can be very daunting and time-consuming . . . at least to the uninitiated. Most of us are put off by the very thought of having to go down the records office or trawl the obscure corners of the Internet.

And yet the huge fascination with tracing our family tree remains. Type in ancestry into google and you get more than 17 million results. When the 1901 census went online last year, the demand was so big it crashed the servers for days. Recent TV schedules have included ancestry-related programmes such as 'Who Do You Think You Are?' and 'Empire's Children'. Even Friends Reunited has an ancestry related spin-off with 'genesreunited'!

But what you don't see very often are services designed to help ordinary people to track their family trees. Well, all that is about to change! You see, I've done some digging and discovered that you could be filling this massive gap in the market could make up to £30,000 a year from home.

This is a great little business if you are looking for a change of direction, a different lifestyle or retired/stay-at-home mum looking for an extra income or a new hobby.

You can be your own boss, set your own working hours and actually enjoy getting up in the morning to go to 'work'. All you need is a computer with Internet access plus a printer and

away you go!

And the good news is you don't have to spend days and weeks trailing around cemetery offices, records offices or public libraries; the Internet has made it viable as a low-cost, part-time, home-based business.

I've covered this before in the hard copy WRMM newsletter and the more I investigated this business the more its potential excites me. And I thought today's eletter would be a great chance to give you a detailed look at what the business involves to see if you agree!

OK, so let's get the start up costs out of the way first. Apart from your PC with printer and Internet connection you're going to need:

- Subscriptions to ancestry websites - around £150 per year (you could easily recoup this from your first job!). I'll name a few later.

- Ancestry software - you can pick up the professionally recommended Root Magic Basic software as a download for about £18 and that's all you'll need.

- Membership of The Society of Genealogists - this is optional, though it will add some credibility to your business by becoming a member - £45 per year.

- Advertising: expect to spend around £15 per month on Google Adwords and £20 - £30 for a typical local ad (this alone could bring in a few weeks work). The great thing is once you are established a lot of business comes from referrals (i.e.: free advertising!)

- Other sundry ongoing costs include A4 Paper, inkjet cartridges, general stationery including presentation folders etc.

By my reckoning you get away with £300 max to start and then around £50 per month ongoing costs for advertising. And when you realise you could be making £600+ a week from just 2 customers that's a great return on investment! Even if you ran this part-time in the evenings or weekends you could easily be making an extra £200 - £300 per week.

Now I should point out that I have not conjured up these figures from thin air. In fact I have tracked down someone who has spent almost 25 years researching family histories and run his own successful family research business for the past 3 years. He runs his own ancestry service and makes around £30,000 a year. So all the numbers I quote and details of tracing are based real world.

Right, let's get cracking and figure out the first step of this business:

1. Finding clients for your service

One of the good things about this project is that you can start marketing it from day one - and get things moving before you've even set up the business fully. You can advertise effectively initially by:

- Having some business cards or A5 flyers printed and placing them in local shop windows and other businesses that accept this kind of advertising. Many even do it for free to attract customers to their own businesses.
- Local publications are another cheap source of ads. Free weeklies, local advertising pamphlets, parish magazines etc. etc.
- Google Adwords. A short advertisement with Google can be very effective and will attract people looking for this service from right across the world.

And here's the best thing . . .

Once your business is 'up and running', it will actually generate its own leads through the power of referrals. This is the kind of product that people are sure to discuss with friends and colleagues and if you can offer some kind of incentive to recommend your service then you could have all the work you'll ever need simply from these referrals.

Don't be put off by the idea of having to sell. After all, you're offering a service that your

clients already want and have probably started some of the research. Because you are actually a specialist in what you do (or soon will be!) you will be able to do it faster, better and cheaper.

What do you charge?

My contact recommends you charge on a fixed fee basis. You can also specify how far to go back in time with the tree. Some people may only want you to go back 4 generations, while others will want you to go back as far as possible. For example:

- 4 generations - £85 - £95 (it will take about half a day to put together)

- 7 generations - £250 - £265 (one and a half days)

- 10 generations - £380 - £400 (this is a good 3 days work)

How much could you make?

I won't quote exact figures as so much depends on how much marketing you do, what sort of clients you find and how much work you do. But based on the above figures and working at a normal, steady pace full time it is quite feasible to complete a 7 AND a 10 generation tree in one week. This would provide a basic income of £600+ per week or £31,000 per annum. (I always allow for minimum two weeks holiday in these projections!)

Of course, you don't have to run this business full time - you could easily just do it evenings and weekend and still make a very nice sideline income.

So how do you construct a Family Tree?

I can't go into detail here, but anyone with a bit of common sense and comfortable searching the Internet should have no problems. There are plenty of resources out there that will give you the steps

First off, get your hands on some decent genealogy software. This is essential but only costs around £18. The best on the market is Roots Magic and can be easily found online. It will help you to record the information in a concise, logical way whilst also being able see at a glance the relationships that exist between all the members of the 'tree'.

The software is also essential for generating reports: once you're satisfied that the tree is complete and falls within the remit specified by the client, you then use the software to print the information and present it in a professional manner. After all, no one who is spending several hundred pounds on a product of any kind would expect it to look anything less than a thoroughly professional job!

Here's a quick step by step on how to research:

Stage 1 - First steps

Firstly make sure you collate as much information as possible from the client, starting with the 'subject' of the tree. This may be themselves, their children, their parents or a spouse.

Stage 2 - The Censuses

Now you have information going back and linking to individuals and families in the 1901 census, it should be fairly straightforward from here on.

This is how you build the tree, step-by-step and generation-by-generation.

You would then move on to the 1891 census and then 1881 (censuses were taken every 10 years from 1801 - however only the ones from 1841 onwards contain any names) each time noting the addresses occupations, birth dates

and children of our subject's ancestors and slowly constructing a tapestry of the background to the life of each person and generation in the tree.

Stage 3 - Pre 1841

If you need to go back beyond the start of the census information, you need to turn to the Parish Register information. Compulsory registration of birth, marriages and death and the issue of certificates commenced in September 1837 but prior to that date, the only formal record of birth was the baptismal register at churches. Some birth-dates were recorded, but this was not mandatory. Hence, most of the time, only the date of baptism will be recorded. Similarly, there was no official recording of death dates prior to 1837, only burial dates in the burial registers. Parish registry was made compulsory by Henry VIII in 1538 but was not strictly adhered to until the late 1500s.

Of course, the amount of information available does diminish with distance in time, but there is still plenty of data even if only dates and places, to make your handiwork an important family 'treasure' for generations to come, for your clients.

Stage 4 - Presentation of results

Embedded within your genealogy software is a facility to enable the production of various reports. The most important ones are:

1. Pedigree Chart: It is obviously not possible to include a full, printed relationship chart using a printer that is only capable of printing on A4 size paper, so this is the next-best way of showing the relationships through the generations. Each sheet is indexed by no. and denotes the continuation page no. for each family line. (I would strongly recommend that you get the client to purchase the full chart in order to see the full tree 'at a glance'.)
2. Narrative Report: This is, as the title suggests, a narrative depiction of the tree split by generation and using the standardised 'ahnentahfel' numbering

system. Yes I know it looks like gobbledegook, but it is apparently the standard reference system.

3. Family Group Sheet: A series of sheets grouped by nuclear family, commencing with the subject's own family, his/her siblings' families, parent's families and so on through the generations.

4. Finally, the Wallchart. This is the most difficult bit to produce 'in-house'. In fact if you don't have a printer that is capable of printing on this scale paper then you will have to outsource this item. There are several good genealogy printers available - just check the Internet for details. All you do is email the 'gedcom' file produced by the program to the printer of your choice, stating the title required, colours, format etc, pay online and they will dispatch the chart back to you normally within 2 or 3 working days. The cost of a chart containing say 400 people would be about £35-£40 and you can apply any mark-up you choose to this. I would suggest £10-£15 is not unreasonable and this cost can be added to the cost of the overall 'package'. You will also need to add postage and other expenses to the final invoice.

So there you have it, a great little business that has huge proven demand and income potential, low start up costs and is above all fun, intellectually stimulating and fulfilling.

Sound good to you? Seriously, the more I look into this, the more I realise it's a market that is completely underexploited and ripe for enterprising people like you to get involved in.

Seriously, this is the perfect home business for stay-at-home Mums, part-time entrepreneurs and retirees - you don't need any prior business experience, nor any specialist skills... there are no qualifications needed and no exams to pass... you can get started straight away!

I've listed some resources at the end of this email to get you started. Alas, there's no single

'business in a box' type programme available to help you get started.

Well, there isn't until 8th December, when I'm publishing the first of its kind available anywhere!

You see, I've hooked up with my family researcher contact and have persuaded him to spill the beans on EXACTLY how to set up and run this business from home.

Look out for more details then . . .

OK, I'm at the World Money Show in London tomorrow to check out all the latest trading software, systems, strategies and tipsters. I will let you know if there are any promising forex or spread betting. I'll let you know if I come across anything interesting . . .

Regards

Nick

PS: Here are those family research links I promised:

Websites

<http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

Useful family history site.

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

Useful directory of genealogy websites around the world.

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

Free site

<http://www.familyrecords.gov.uk/>

The official source of family information on births, marriages, deaths, census returns, divorce records, wills and religious records.

<http://www.familyrelatives.com/>

Birth, marriage and death indexes - chargeable service.

<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/>

General Records Office - Birth marriage and

