

# The Jobs Front

## “Homepreneurship” Takes Off In A Bad Economy

(NAPSA)—If there’s an upside to this recession, it’s that it’s apparently unleashed the entrepreneur in a lot of us. Wait, make that the “homepreneur” in us.

That’s the latest shorthand used to describe small-business owners running “viable enterprises” from their homes. Today that definition easily fits about half of all small businesses in the U.S.—everyone from freelance writers to caterers to online retailers—as compared to just 38 percent as recently as 1997, according to a new study by Emergent Research. Most of that increase has to do with technology having made it simpler to start and run a business from a corner of your bedroom or garage.

So if you think there’s a homepreneur lurking inside you, here are some tips from the experts to make the transition more lucrative:

**If you build it right, they will come.** Today, a small business can’t reach its full potential without having some kind of a presence on the Web. So your first priority is to either create a site yourself, at little or no cost, using standard templates—Websites-builder-review.com lets you compare the different services—or pay a pro to design a fancier one for you. And when it comes to choosing a domain name, Web expert Murtuza Abbas says to consider this: “If you want to optimize for search engine traffic, then add high-traffic keywords to your name.”

**To tweet or not to tweet.** Done right, as MarketWatch.com columnist Jennifer Openshaw notes, Twitter can help establish you as “a thought leader in your space and even drive customers to your business.” Done wrong—and this goes for all social networking



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tools and blogs—you run the risk of alienating existing and potential customers. To avoid lost opportunity, an accountant, say, can use search.twitter.com to type in a relevant term like “home office deduction” and start monitoring the conversation. Then when someone poses a question, he’ll be alerted and can reply with his expert answer.

**Web 2.0.** Web applications are a great way for homepreneurs to keep their focus where Pitney Bowes’ Director of Customer Strategy Christine Martin says it should be: “retaining and growing their customer base.” GetSatisfaction.com, for example, provides an online forum where customers can quickly get answers to their questions. And if you’re looking to convert browsers into buyers, click-to-call widgets offered by KarmaCom.com put you directly in touch with those looking for a callback.

One last thing: Even during the Great Depression, fortunes were made by entrepreneurs like Iowa physicians Ralph Falk and Donald Baxter, who seized an opportunity to bring intravenous medical treatments to the masses. Today, Baxter International is a multibillion-dollar company.