

MANAGING THE HOME ENTERPRISE

More people than ever run a home-based business, and there's more help to do it profitably.

MANAGING a home-based business successfully revolves around recognizing that there are tradeoffs. Trading off an opportunity to be home with children for working odd hours to get jobs done. Trading off low overhead for the "accepted" business image that an office outside the home can provide. Trading off low risk for possibly slower growth. And the list goes on.

But while there are tradeoffs, there are more and more men and women trading places in a look-alike office module for a one-of-a-kind home office. In an earlier issue of *In Business*, as part of a special report on "Making It On Your Own . . . At Home," we offered these tricks from home biz pros:

Contain The Monster: Avoid the slow takeover of your house by the beguiling enterprise that starts in a spare room, then creeps onto the dining room table, then a bedroom, etc.

("Our living room is decorated in 'Early Office' with a lovely filing cabinet and word processor as accent pieces," jokes one company president we interviewed.

Set Up Boundaries: Actually, boundaries are needed to function effectively and to establish physical and time-related distinctions. Have a separate room, or at least a part of the room that is strictly for business. Set working hours. Use psychological tricks—Coralee Kern who founded the National Association for the Cottage Industry still takes her purse from her bedroom and puts it underneath her desk when she starts her workday.

Use The Phone Wisely: The telephone is key for the home enterprise, and in a new book, *Marketing for the Home-Based Business*, author Jeffrey Davidson gives these suggestions:

Answer the call by the second or third ring, and answer "with a smile." Your attitude and temperament come through loud and clear over the phone lines. Particularly as a home-based marketer, your goal when you answer the phone is to present a voice that projects enthusiasm, success and quiet confidence.

"Ask questions," Davidson urges. "Other things being equal, the longer a caller stays on the line with you, the higher the probability that he will do business with you."

If you move, do as much as you can to avoid the fate that happens to too many—when the caller gets a message that the number has been disconnected. One idea is to retain the origi-

nal phone number, pay the minimum monthly fee, and direct the phone company to present a prerecorded message that directs callers to your new phone number. Then periodically call your old number to check.

How can you do telemarketing effectively when you have just one phone line. Simple, says Davidson: "Reserve some part of the week, preferably a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday morning, and mow down eight to 10 calls at a sitting, using a headset and two-way recording device. Since you will be tying up your only line, and since prospects who are not in when you call and wish to get back to you may not be able to get through, tell all parties you will be available for return calls that afternoon, preferably between 1:30 and 3:30."

The continued increase in the numbers of people who work at home has also increased the availability of tools for more efficiently running the business. It has also increased the acceptance of professionalism available in the individuals who need to use up so little energy in commuting. □

(Home business management reports will be a regular part of future In Business issues. If you have specific questions or topics about home enterprise you'd like covered in this series, Write Home Business Editor, In Business, Box 323, Emmaus, PA 18049.)