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Why Did You Start Your Business?

20+ Entrepreneurs Explain Why They Started Their Businesses

It takes a lot of guts to start your own business. There are so many unknowns out there; no guarantee of success no matter how good your idea is. Starting a business is like taking a leap of faith; and because of the uncertainty, many budding entrepreneurs never take that chance. So what is it that drives the driven? What makes the entrepreneur step out on a limb, and take that leap? In this post we'll hear from different entrepreneurs and business owners about why they started their own business.

Why did you start your business?

It was a way to build upon my current business with Health and Fitness

In a search to expand my own martial arts and fitness business, the idea came to me for the development of the site E Fitness Hub. A little about myself, I have been practicing martial arts for 21 years and have been involved in coaching and fitness for 17 years. E Fitness Hub is an online site that provides a reliable network connecting trusted and professional health, fitness and wellness providers to consumers looking to reach their health care, wellness, sports or fitness related goals. Living a healthy life has always been important to me.

Through my work I can share that passion with others. This innovative site will allow professionals in the health and fitness industry the opportunity to advertise and share their passion with members on the site who are looking to live a healthy lifestyle. I am dedicated to building an online community where individuals looking for services can find trusted health and fitness providers and where providers can network and build their businesses.

Thanks to Thanks to Nicole Plummer | E Fitness Hub.

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I've had many jobs in my life, but my favorites have been the ones where I'm working for myself. The others... not so much. Whenever I've had a "real" boss, I always found myself thinking that I could do things better, more efficiently or for less money. Usually these ideas and suggestions were frowned upon by my supervisors. I guess no one wants to hear ideas from the new guy. It's tough to have your hard work and time rejected, especially when you only wanted to do what's best for the customer.

Eventually this breeds resentment which in turn leads to plain 'ol not-giving-a-damn. That is the worst employee you can have. I never wanted to be that employee, so I decided to put my own ideas to work and do things my way. There have been ups and downs since I started in 2002, but I wouldn't have it any other way. Today my software company, ShortStack.com, is profitable and full of great employees. Best of all, we get to do what's best for our customers. I don't have any bosses to tell me no.

Thanks to Jim Belosic | ShortStack

To combine my two loves: Fitness and Baking

After running a successful bakery in Dhaka, Bangladesh 2010-2012, I decided to start Oh Sweet Heavens! in NC in January 2014. We specialize in high protein, low carb, gluten free and paleo desserts scientifically designed to make you better, faster, stronger. I call it performance eating – strategically crafting each and every brownie, donut or truffle to give you the nutrition your body needs, both physically and mentally.

The inspiration to start my own business came from combining my two great loves: fitness/nutrition and baking. As an athlete and fitness junky with a sweet tooth, it was hard to find snacks and desserts that fit my low carb and paleo lifestyle (especially while living in a 3rd world country!). I began making my own protein brownies and cheesecake at home and quickly realized there was an un-tapped niche out there that fit perfectly with my business goals. Another driving force was circumstance: I moved from northern VA to Camp Lejeune, NC at the beginning of 2014, and was forced to quit 2 out of my 3 jobs. The local economy didn't offer much in my field of work/interest, so the most logical step was to create it myself. I'm just a one-woman shop at this time, but I love that I can work on all areas of my business and am not limited to certain tasks. I also create the lifestyle and working environment I'm looking for, regardless of where my husband gets stationed in the future.

Thanks to Jillian Lama | Oh Sweet Heavens

Because I stopped coming up with excuses why I couldn't

My name is Michelle MacDonald, I am the founder of Sweet Note Bagels, a gluten free bagel manufacturer. I started my company at 27 in 2012. I would love to share my journey to inspire others to keep pushing through to achieve their dreams. I found myself coming up with reasons why I wasn't ready to launch my business, I let others talk me out of it and fear overcame me for quite some time. I started to surround myself with entrepreneurs and other strong women and finally built the courage and confidence to believe that I could become an entrepreneur. It's not something I feel I was born with; it's a skill I've worked hard to build and develop. It starts with the belief that you will achieve your goals and desires for your company. Situations don't always turn out the way I think they will but I problem solve and formulate strategies to push through out of each obstacle that presents itself. This has helped me continue to grow and learn how to maneuver successfully in the business world. If it were not for this confidence I would be crippled by some of the obstacles I've had to overcome. My success is built on my passion and belief in myself and my business.

Thanks to Michelle MacDonald | Sweet Note Bakery

To follow the beat of my own drum

After witnessing a few key moments in the lives of some of my family members, I knew in order to be in control of my future I needed to own my own business. I had an uncle that owned his own business and was able to retire at the age of 50. On top of that he owned a house on a beautiful lake and spent his winters traveling to tropical places. On the flip side, my parents both were laid off from their jobs in their 50's. After putting in 17 and 20 years respectively, my parents were forced to start over. It showed me that in order to truly have financial freedom and be in control of my future I had to own my own business. On

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Thanks to Nicholas Brand | Men in Kilts

Because I needed to make a change

When I first started my business, I provided professional audio recording and production services to local bands and musical artists in a loft apartment in the heart of downtown London, Ontario, Canada. Studio sessions were typically held in the evening to accommodate the recording artists and could often run later than 11:00 pm. While this arrangement was okay for a bachelor, I quickly realized that this lifestyle and means of serving customers wouldn't work well once I got married. My wife and I knew that we needed to make a change and fast, especially with our first child on the way. His birth served as a catalyst for moving to a new home, changing the way we served customers and even who those customers were. Our business went from recording musicians to recording voice-overs from our own home recording studio. After a year of recording voice-overs, we saw the potential for connecting businesses with talent and made the shift to operating an online marketplace for voice talent. We found out that the business of connecting voice-over artists with ad agencies, broadcasters and others who hire them was a legacy industry that had yet to be digitized. That was the "aha!" moment. Today, Voices.com is home to over 200,000 voice actors and clients from around the world and is the industry leader

Thanks to David Ciccarelli | Voices.com

I saw an opportunity

I started Lumitech, because I saw the opportunity to build a company that would be far better equipped to win in the LED lighting space. Having spent a large part of my career in high tech, I saw LED lights as electronic devices while most of the competitors thought of them as lighting devices. Historically lighting devices have moved very slowly. Semiconductors, conversely, move at a blistering pace. By building a company focused on innovative and rapid product development I can leverage the latest technologies and always innovate faster than the competitors.

Thanks to John Kujawa | Lumitech

Because I found a niche market

In 1989, I was working at a television station in Hartford. During late night, we had reruns of Magnum PI and the other two networks had Johnny Carson and David Letterman. If we could sell those late night ads from midnight to 6 am for \$10, the sales manager was happy to get rid of them. Within two years, thanks to the introduction of 900 numbers, late night advertising on the station was now selling for \$350! I figured there must be something to these 900 numbers. So, when AT&T introduced 900 numbers to the masses in 1989, we started our business to provide business to business premium rate services. Twenty-five years later, 900 numbers are gone in the USA (but still going in Canada), the company has evolved into a mobile marketing company, but never forgets its original roots.

Thanks to Bob Bentz | ATS Mobile

I found the way to turn my hobby into profession

I have always been fascinated by the internet since the end of the 90's. Developing was a hobby at first, but then I got pretty hooked by it and decided that's what I want to do for a living. It was amazing how the "inside" of a website actually operates and I wanted to create my own piece of work! Around this time I also stumbled upon the term "open source" and fell in love with its concept of ultimate freedom. Luckily I found two guys who were just as passionate as me regarding designing, developing and the open source culture. After partaking in a web design agency, we decided that the users needed easy and simple software to create their website, online shop or blog. Microweber CMS is a time consuming, but highly entertaining job which reflects both my interests and values. A job that helped me makes a transition from hobby to profession.



Thanks to Peter | Microweber

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I wanted to work for myself

My inspiration to start a business stemmed from a burning desire to work for myself, being the first in my family to "make it", and a lifelong passion for martial arts. I felt that genuine inspiration, principles, and empowerment were lacking in companies selling women's mixed martial arts (MMA) and boxing gear. Thus, I created MMA Somnia. Our mission is to ignite inspiration in women, empowering them to push past limits and fight fearlessly.

Thanks to Solmadrid Vazquez | MMA Somnia

I wanted to help myself and others like me

Growing up I had lots of health issues which made me exhausted all of the time. After seeing numerous doctors and specialist I was diagnosed with beta thalassemia minor [Basically my red blood cells are smaller than average.] They still couldn't do much to help me regain energy. I went to a naturopath whom had me change my diet, taking specific vitamins/minerals that my body needed, and focus on drinking lots of high quality water. I regained my energy in a short time. All through college and grad school I was able to perform at a high level because of these principles but I always had an issue finding good quality bottled water. So I decided to do the research and create my own.

Thanks to Yuri Cataldo | IndigoH2O

To share my weight loss secrets and promote wellness

Having been formally trained in the ancient Bharat Natyam style of classical Indian dance, I performed internationally as a member of The Rajendra Sisters, but stopped dancing following the tragic death of my older sister and fellow dancer, Rachana. When the birth of my two sons left me overweight and seeking fitness without the lonely tedium of working out, I found myself turning on the music and dancing again – this time with my boys. As the weight shed, friends asked me to share her secret and BollyFit® was born. BollyFit® is a global wellness movement that draws together a richly diverse and inclusive community. Participants enjoy mindfulness in motion while embracing fitness, fun and illumination from within.

Thanks to Anuja Rajendra | BollyFit

My childhood dog inspired me to launch my business

After 10 years of honorable service around the world in such places as Washington, Oklahoma, California and Germany, my father discharged from the US Army. Finally settled in Birmingham, Alabama my family adopted an inquisitive Golden Retriever mix whom we named Dexter (after the popular cartoon character). Dexter hated taking baths and would even run when the word "bath" was uttered! Giving Dexter a bath was a chore that no one volunteered for. Many years later when I decided to start my own pet family, I knew that I didn't want bath time to be a dreaded event. With that goal in mind, my journey began to create a natural, therapeutic and effective in home spa experience for my four legged "son" Dada. Drawing on a decade of expertise in the cosmetics industry, I consulted with cosmetic and pet care laboratories across the country to design an aromatherapy pet care regimen special enough to spoil even the pickiest of cats, dogs and pet parents.

Thanks to Gerrard Larriett | Gerrard Larriett Aromatherapy Pet Care

I truly saw a lack of online legal document filing services that extends a helping hand to



I started CorpNet.com because I wanted to build a company that goes above and beyond just a service, one that offers one-to-one help on a daily basis for entrepreneurs looking to start, grow, or maintain a business. We launched in 2009 at the height of the recession and amongst an array of big name competitors but we have succeeded and recently celebrated a third expansion.

Thanks to Nellie Akalp | CorpNet

I Started My Business When My Mentor Fired Me

Six years ago I was fired by my now friend and mentor, Ron. He is a very wealthy and successful entrepreneur and real estate mogul. He called me into his office one afternoon (just before my 22nd birthday, by the way) and told me he was firing me. But he made me an offer. He said, "Josh, you can go home and tomorrow start looking for a new job", or, "You can come back here tomorrow morning, and I'm going to show you how to run your own business". Being 22 years old at the time, having a low aversion to risk, no obligations, and the drive to be very successful like Ron, I came back the next morning, and started my business. I had only lived in Texas for less than two years, and had no business connections. So I really had to start from the bottom. It was a rocky, rocky first three years. I really learned just why most businesses fail in the first few years – the pain can be too much for some to overcome. But I did, and six years later, I've got a good business, high profile clients, low stress, get to do what I want when I want, and have been rejuvenated as of late with the start of a new internet business with my brother. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Thanks to Josh Davis | Made in Fort Worth

I wanted to create the largest financial services marketing organization in America

I started PHP Agency, a financial services marketing organization in 32 states with over 1,000 agents, in 2009. By starting my own company, I knew that I could attract the talent that I wanted, implement my own systems, and reward and recognize my team and associates for their hard work. Making money is a great tool to enhance people's lives but having a mission that you look forward to accomplishing everyday is even greater and it only happens when you start your own business.

Thanks to Patrick Bet-David | PHP Agency

I started my current business because I wanted to live life more

One of my best friends passed away and I realized life was too short to spend making money for other people and doing nothing to better the world. I felt as though there was an efficient way to provide value to this world while still making a good living. So while I was completing my law and MBA degrees I started my business and ended up not becoming a lawyer and I truly love life way more now.

Thanks to Michael Chasin | LawKick, Inc

I wanted to be a resource to other businesses trying to get their venture off the ground

I am the Seattle-based founder of Small Food Business, a business resource for artisan food entrepreneurs. We provide information through our website about all aspects related to running a food business, including tools specifically designed and priced for food entrepreneurs like webinars/e-learning opportunities and business coaching. I like to say that "I'm what you get when you take a professional pastry chef who is burnt out working for luxury hotels and give her a spot in an MBA class." I started my first business while in business school, but quickly learned there was a lack of resources available to help me navigate the tricky



Thanks to Jennifer Lewis | Small Food Business

I never wanted to drop my baby again

I started my business, SleepBelt (a hands free skin-to-skin support system), after my then-2-week old daughter fell off of me. We were lying down, skin-to-skin, and I took advantage of the quiet moment to pick up my phone; she startled, and fell off of me. After many tears and a trip to the doctor (baby's fine!), I sought out to create a simple yet effective alternative to the complicated and cumbersome wraps, slings, carriers and skin-to-skin shirts already on the market. SleepBelt was born, and with the help of my sister Ashley Wade, we filed patents and brought it to market. It's simple, stretchy and strap free design facilitates easy transfer of baby from chest to crib, is on and off in seconds, and keeps baby in their most natural, comfortable position while their heads remain uncovered and accessible (read: kissable)... with no knots or buckles, it's comfy for mom and dad too. Since we launched 9 months ago, SleepBelt has been endorsed by lactation experts & authors sleep consultants, midwives, doulas and nurses – we've had direct product requests from multiple NICUs from renowned hospitals, and SleepBelt has been used on babies as small as 1200g. To think that this amazing journey started from something so horrific (yet common!) is amazing! We've found a niche and a need for SleepBelt... literally, by accident.

Thanks to Hayley Mullins | SleepBelt

Because there was no online marketplace to find high-end consulting talent

SkillBridge was founded with the belief that talented independent consulting professionals who are passionate about the work they do, should be able to easily connect with high impact organizations that need expert help. Neither party should have to spend an exorbitant amount of time or money to find each other. Companies and organizations want more affordable, unbundled alternatives to the 'bells and whistles' solutions offered by traditional professional services and consulting firms.

Thanks to Stephen Robert Morse | SkillBridge

We wanted to make people's important documents available digitally, and securely.

Originally, the 3 of us started SafelyFiled because of a painful personal experience encountered with the sudden death of an elderly parent. The estate could not be closed out easily because important documents and records could not be located. So we created SafelyFiled to give our families and others, a very secure place to store digital copies of those important life documents AND have a way to record where the originals of those documents are. We also needed to be able to make that information available on a need to know basis. Then, we created SafelyMD because many of us are keeping track of numerous prescription medications for our elderly parents and needed an easy way to do that and make it available to others who may need it, especially in an emergency.

Thanks to Terri J. Caldwell | Safely Filed

Can you see a common theme among these entrepreneurs? Many were facing self doubt; but instead of folding to the pressure, they believed in themselves and took the leap of faith. Some of the entrepreneurs took their adversity and turned it into opportunity.

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