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The Lure of Online Jobs

Like many other workers, you have probably fantasized about working from home. You dread the commute because of the stress and the time that it takes to get yourself to and from the office. On top of that, working out there in the world requires you to deal with lots of personalities and loads of work related drama. Who hasn't listened to their co-worker's gossip about one another, or list their complaints about their lot in life? It's more than enough to wish we could get away from it all.

While there are some jobs that lend themselves to working from anywhere like being an artist, an author, or a care provider, they require a select set of skills that not all of us possess. However, you should not let that discourage you from your dream of working from home.

Some online jobs that are available do not require you to love working with children, or the elderly. Nor will you need to be the next Monet or Twain. In today's market you can find a large selection of jobs that can be done easily with the help of the Internet and a computer.

Do not fool yourself into thinking that working online will be easier than working outside the home. In terms of actual work, you will need to be completely dedicated to your success. Although you might think it is easier to stay motivated once you get rid of the annoying co-workers and the boss there can be a number of challenges that you will have to deal with when you work online by yourself.

To begin with, you will still have to commute to work each day. The commute may only be to your home office, or to the kitchen

table, but you will have to physically and mentally turn up at work.

The Biggest Challenges

Online employees have to treat their work just like any other job. Clocking in to your job, if not physically but mentally, is a necessity. An online job is not an opportunity to relax at home. In fact you may have to work harder, often with longer hours than you do at a traditional job to make the same amount of money, especially in the beginning. Once you have established your online career you will be able to easily reap the benefits of being able to work from your house, or anywhere else you choose. But, getting there takes time and effort.

In the beginning though, you will have to first find the right type of job and the right employer. Like many online job seekers you have probably heard horror stories about illegitimate online jobs. Stories about people who spend loads of cash to get started in an online job only to never get paid are rife on the Internet. Other stories mention scams galore where people do the work for an apparent respective company only to never see a dime in payment for it. You can avoid these unfortunate situations by choosing your work and your employers wisely.

Tips for Choosing Online Employment

Before you get burned you should pay close attention to the following tips. These might well save you from wasting time, and money chasing the wrong dream.

You Should NOT be Charged to Get Started

Never pay to start working for an online employer. Any legitimate online business will not require you to put up your own money in order to get started. There may be costs to you, like upgrading your computer equipment or software, but they are solely by choice and not a requirement for your online job.

Watch Out for Scams

Do not fall for scams. You are a smart person. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is. If you want to make money online you will have to work for it.

Get rich schemes are empty promises to prey on people's greed and false beliefs that there are fast ways to riches. Unless you are planning to play the lottery, then don't bank on getting rich fast. There are no secrets to getting rich tomorrow, or earning one million within the next three months. You also can't earn money by doing nothing. If you really want to make money online, work for it.

Do Background Checks

Check employer references and backgrounds. Anyone can say that they are a legitimate business, but they actually have to be a legitimate business to prove it. Research anyone that offers you work. Check their references and dig deep into their background. If you consider working for a particular person, or business, don't just go to the website. Do a web search with Google, and find out as much as possible about them before you do even one assignment.

Don't be fooled twice. Remember the old saying: "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." If you do work for someone and they fail to pay you, or they don't pay you in a timely manner then do not work for them again.

There are plenty of great online employers who will pay you on time. Wasting your energy on the scam artists on the Internet will only wear you down mentally.

Make Sure You Shine

Do the best work that you can each and every day. Working hard pays off, in any industry. The harder you work, the more it will show, and the more work you will have to do. It might seem like some jobs are less important than others, but you never know where this could lead. Even though the web seems like a big place, it is likely you will run into mutual acquaintances. If you have a good reputation it will follow you. A good reputation attracts higher pay rates.

The above steps will serve like a guiding beacon in your search for the perfect online job. Even though you hear a lot of horror stories,

finding a legitimate online job isn't as hard as it seems with the right attitude and knowledge. The trick is to find the right job with the right people. Whether you choose to work for someone else, or to go into business for yourself you will have to become quite adept at sniffing out those that are reputable from those that are not.

Customer Service Jobs

A customer service job is one of the few online jobs that requires very little in terms of special skills. All you need is a reliable computer and an Internet connection. As a service rep you can work for one of many companies that provide customer service through online contractors. The services you might provide, based on your qualifications might include; answering simple questions, registering customers, placing orders, or providing technical input on products. A wide variety of businesses employ at home and online employees. You could work for an airline, an Internet provider, a catalogue company, a successful entrepreneur, etc. The list is literally endless.

Finding a Legitimate Customer Service Job

The best place to find a decent job is on an online job market. Sites like Enlace, Guru and odes have very strict guidelines for its members. The sheer amount of available jobs on these sites is staggering, and with a bit of digging, sorting and weeding I don't see any reason why you shouldn't find work fast.

Make sure you ALWAYS use their online Escrow payment services to ensure you actually will get paid. Escrow acts as a safe

go-between for you and your employer.

Upon choosing you for their advertised job your new employer will deposit the agreed payment into Escrow. You will then be notified with an email. Once you know the funds have been placed you can start the job. Never, ever start work before you have been notified of this. Trust me. I've done this and lost hundreds of dollars in the process after the client disappeared with my good work without paying me.

Getting Started as a Service Rep

In order to get started in this line of work you will need to have a resume that you can submit online. As you would expect, getting an online job is often a case sending plenty of emails and making telephone calls to prospective employers.

It is highly likely that you will never meet your boss or your co-workers face to face. Make sure that your resume represents your interpersonal communications skills and any customer service related jobs you have held in the past. If this is a career change for you it might be beneficial to get a customer service job at a retail store in order to hone your skills. Of course, you will also want to make sure that your resume is grammatically correct since you will probably be asked to submit reports online and communicate via email. Good computer skills are a must.

Most of the companies require any applicant to be familiar with their preferred computer programs. These typically include word processing and spreadsheet applications. Remember that your job is not only going to be about dealing with customers, it will also require you to write reports about your work. As such you should familiarize yourself with commonly used computer programs. If

you are not already familiar with these programs, you can take online tutorials, or enroll in specific classes to ensure that you know how to handle anything that comes your way.

Stick with what You Know/Like

As you look through the various websites that promote online customer service jobs, focus only on jobs that interest you. If you land a position, you will spend many hours each day talking to people about the product or service your company provides. Because of that, you should make sure that you are actually interested in what you will be talking about.

For instance, if you enjoy traveling, you might want to work for an airline or a travel company. Your personal knowledge of travel and the excitement you could bring to customers is a huge boon in your favor.

If you are technically savvy you might be a good fit for an Internet service provider, or another tech company. By picking jobs within your expertise and interest your employer will require less time on your training. It will also push you to the top of the list of applicants.

If you simply enjoy talking to people and helping them, then virtually any customer service job is good for you. In fact, in order to be successful in this line of work you will need to have great interpersonal skills, a willingness to offer the necessary time with each client (so they feel well cared for), and a genuine interest in the company for whom you work. Not all customer service jobs work directly with the public, some work from a business to business point of view.

Do a Preferred Search

If you have a preference, look do a keyword search for “inside customer service” (business to business), or “outside customer service” which refers to working with the general public.

Capitalize On a Second Language Skill

One of the huge benefits of picking a customer service job is speaking another language. There are loads of bilingual customer service jobs just waiting to be filled. Keep in mind that these jobs require perfect command of the language in question. For that reason they pay handsomely too.

The key to picking any customer service job is to be enthusiastic about your product or service. If you can do that, your customers will be happy, and so will your boss.

Burning Out

One of the potential problems of working in this line of jobs is the dreaded burnout syndrome. When you speak to a large number of customers on a daily basis (and often irate ones to boot) it is easy to get burned out after some time.

If you find that the job you get is frustrating, do not give up. Find out more about the company and its products. It will help you when you are trying to help customers over the phone. If you still find yourself wishing the job away, look into other customer service jobs that might better suit your personality. If you are doing

outside customer service, switch to inside customer service and vice versa. You do not have to stick with the first job you find. Working with people can be frustrating but it can also be very rewarding. If the job becomes a hassle, despite your best intentions it's best to get out before you damage the company's reputation with angry behavior.

Data Entry Jobs

If you would rather not deal with consumers, a data entry job may be the perfect online job for you. Sadly, this is one of the jobs that have seen a lot of scams infiltrating the market.

Because of the amount of scams in the industry it has become exceedingly difficult for you, or anyone else to find a legitimate online data entry job. Luckily there are real companies out there looking for data entry specialists.

Companies save a lot of money by hiring someone who can work from home. They don't have to pay the overhead expenses to house a bunch of data entry clerks, nor do they have to spend money to upkeep a lot of computer equipment. This makes you, the at-home data entry professional an ideal fit for them.

Good Pay Rates

Don't worry; you won't have to foot the bill for these overheads by working from home. While you will have to pay for your own computer equipment, your Internet connection, and other office related stuff you choose to use you won't have to fork out a ton of money to do this line of work from home.

Data entry jobs actually pay quite well because companies can save money by not paying huge overheads. Many of these employers work with people like you entirely. They might even be a one-man operation themselves.

In addition, with a data entry job you get to work from your home. This allows for certain freedom you've always dreamed about, like going to work in your underwear.

Important Information

If you are considering data entry, you should know that there are some instances where you may be required to pay a sign-up fee. If this is the case it could be because you will be given access to sensitive data by the company. By charging you a fee they make sure you are serious about the job, and not some scam artist looking to steal their information. Trust me, this does happen.

Check Legalities

In order to make sure that you are not involved in a scam, double check with the [Better Business Bureau](#) or the [Federal Trade Commission](#). You can check whether the company is legitimate and has no pending actions against them before you hand over any money. Also, because many of these companies are located overseas, do some research on online forums to find out what others are saying before you send them any money.

Are You Suited to this Line of Work?

You must be realistic about the amount of work and time involved in making a living with data entry. Unless you are capable of entering data quickly you might not be suited to this type of job. It is also beneficial to you if you can get in the zone and avoid outside distractions while you work, so that you can get the work done.

Data entry can be tedious. You might be filling out reports, typing letters, filling in seemingly endless databases, records, or lists. You might be transcribing books or minutes from meetings. All of the information will hold little to no interest to you, which can be a good thing. If you are the kind of person that can't pack a bag, or clean the house without getting sidetracked then data entry might not be your perfect field. To do this job well you need to be completely removed from the actual data. You should really only be interested in entering the data as quickly as possible without pride, or prejudice to its content. Plus you must be able to do that error free.

An online data entry job is perfect for someone who does not desire contact with a lot of other people since you will be working alone. The perfect candidate also happens to be an excellent typist with an ability to shut out the outside world so that they can get their work done. If you are one of these people, then you are probably capable of doing the necessary research to find an online data entry job.

Online Transcription Jobs

Along the same lines as data entry are transcription jobs. The main difference between simple data entry and a transcription is the skill level needed. Transcription jobs require a bit more skill and some

training in order to do them well. Trade and vocational schools typically offer courses in medical, legal, or financial transcription.

Consider Certification

If you are interested in working online with transcription job you should consider getting certified. You will have to spend some money to take these classes, but in the long run it should be worth the investment.

When you search for online transcription jobs look for companies that request certification or experience with transcription. Those companies are more likely to be legitimate, which means you are more likely to get paid. They may also ask you to take an online transcription test, which will rate you for speed and accuracy. Professional transcription services need people who can get the job done fast. It is recommended that you master your typing skills before you apply for a transcription job.

What is Involved?

The job of a transcriptionist consists of listening to recordings of notes and meetings, and then typing them up into reports. You may be given tapes of patient notes from physicians, legal notes recorded by lawyers, or even notes made by financial planners. All of this information needs to be typed into a report so that it can be kept in the client or patient file. Each report requires a certain format. Different employers have different rules for these formats so it helps to learn these as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays.

Example Process

If you are typing up a report from a physician you will probably hear a recording that lists a series of numbers about the patient's vital signs. Next will be the reason for the visit and resulting discussion between the physician and the patient.

There will also be notes on the course of treatment, and information about the patient's prescriptions. All of this information is necessary so the doctor and nurse can quickly and easily look through a patient's file to understand their medical history - even if it's the first time. Good charts are also useful when the office needs to bill insurance companies or Medicare. If you do this job you will need to be familiar with the complexity of medical language and spelling so that all of your reports are correct and reliable.

You may be required to have some specialized equipment if you do transcriptions. The recorded data will need to play on your computer, so you will have to buy special software. In addition you will also need a good, comfortable headset to listen to the recordings. You will wear this headset for several hours each day, therefore investing in a higher end one is worth the extra cost.

Freelance Writing

Freelance writing is one of the most available online careers. If you have basic understanding of the Internet you probably realize that websites are ranked according to their content. When you do a specific keyword search those terms are linked up with websites whose keywords contain your search terms. In order to get the highest search engine rankings webmasters work hard to fill their

sites with reliable and new content. As you might expect, the job of creating all of that content is often farmed out to freelance writers.

Small Start-Up Costs

If you like to write and have some writing skills then this job could be perfect for you. The only requirements needed to get a freelance writing job are a computer and a firm grasp on the English language.

Freedom

A lot of online job portals offer freelance writing work for keen service providers. You can try online job boards like Elance or oDesk, find work on a forum, or on specific websites.

Work could be offered to you on a piece by piece basis, or on a project basis. Depending on the job t hand you could end up working for ten different employers each day (writing one article each), or land a job writing for one company, with enough income for you to work full- or part time.

Stay Organized

Regardless of how many employers you have it is imperative that you come up with a way to track all of your work and income. Because of the nature of freelance writing, good organizational skills will save you time and ensure you get paid. One of the advantages to using a reputable website to find work is that you

can confer with other writers about employers. They will be able to tell you whether or not someone pays on time, or if the pay is slow.

Any web site worth its weight will have strict rules regarding payment. Some sites allow you to be paid privately, usually through PayPal while others will process your payment through Escrow services. Either way, as long as you have tracked your pay and your work thoroughly you should have recourse options if you are not paid, or if your pay is less than was agreed upon.

Monetize Experience

If you are an expert in a particular field you can also write articles and market them yourself. There are various article marketing websites that accept submissions and then post them for others to use. These articles can link back to a particular website and provide a stream of income for you. Alternatively they can help you with branding. The importance is to get your name out to provide you with a body of work for you to reference when you are looking for jobs. While this may not pay a lot to begin with, it can eventually provide a nice and steady stream of income.

Become a Pro-Blogger

Writing articles is not the only way to make money with freelance writing. You can also write blog posts which can be somewhat easier and pay just as well. Pro-blogging is the act of being paid for blogging services. With the rise of the Internet, blogs have appeared in the market like mushroom in a rain-sodden forest.

Blog posts are often written with more authority, while still

keeping the tone informative and fun. If you have ever visited a fan site you might have noticed that they contain blogs. In a great number of cases these blogs are not written by the actual webmaster, but instead by someone they hired.

How to Prepare Yourself for the Job at Hand

If you are considering freelance writing as an online career you will need to have some writing samples available. Trust that no one who is serious about hiring you would do so on the spot without first looking at your work.

You can go ahead and write a few articles, or blog posts as samples.

It goes without saying that you need to have well written material to show to potential employers, but you also have to understand how Internet-based writing works. A lot of writers out there are not native English speakers. This could work against them, but more and more the old adage of not being an English native speaker carries less importance. What matters is the resulting work.

You have to be able to write in a clear and concise manner. Your work should be easy to read and comprehend. To get a feel for the industry you are looking to target it is recommended you spend some time online. You will find good and bad samples when you do research. This should serve in picking the better option when it comes to delivering your work.

Small Beginnings

When you first start out you will probably have to accept whatever jobs come your way, often for little pay. Once you have established yourself you can get a little bit more money for your work, and build up a steady stream of assignments. To get to this point you will have to work very hard and do a lot of writing. Make sure everything you write is of top quality, even smaller and lower paying assignments. Remind yourself that it is your reputation is on the line if you fail to deliver quality content.

The world of freelance writing is wide open and can be done with almost no start-up costs. Expect to work a lot of long hours in order to establish your business. You also have to really enjoy writing, no matter what the topic, because you will do tons of it.

Interpersonal skills are slightly less important to do this job, but they help. You will still need to interact with other people.

Virtual Assistant

The job of a virtual assistant is one of the most popular and most lucrative online jobs. A virtual assistant is really an entrepreneur who does contract work for other companies. In most cases you would be self employed, which means you will also have to market yourself to other businesses. The job is not easy and is best suited to people who have worked as administrative professionals. In the beginning you will probably have to work extremely long hours in order to get your business off the ground. It is not easy to get started, but the pay-off can be huge.

Market Your Skills

One of the first things to consider if you are looking to work as a virtual assistant is your particular set of skills. Have you worked previously in marketing or human resources? Were you a travel agent or a realtor? Do you have experience in finances or bookkeeping?

The more you can specialize your services, the greater chance there is that you can find a niche to work in, and a business that needs your services. For example, if you worked as a bookkeeper for a number of years you can market yourself as a virtual bookkeeper. This will open the doors to clients who own small businesses in need of bookkeeping services. Likewise, if you were a travel agent you may be able to provide travel related assistance to large companies. In both these cases the businesses benefit because all they have to do is pay you. They will not have to provide a benefits package or an office for you. This saves them money. Most of your work can be done via the Internet.

Don't Fancy the DIY Route?

If you want to, you can work for a virtual assistant firm. The advantage of joining a company lies in job security once you are hired. Having said this, you will generally earn more money if you go into business for yourself. Some professional organizations can help you decide what you should charge for your services and how to go about marketing your services to potential clients.

It is important that you do some research before starting out. You

must understand what the expectations laid upon you from your employer in regards to hours worked and monies earned. It is very likely that some of your clients will not be in the same time zone which means that you may have to work late at night, or very early in the morning. On the upside, this might also free other parts of the day for you. Virtual assistant jobs are great for parents with small kids looking to spend more quality time with their toddlers.

What You Need to Bring to the Table as a VA

Unlike some of the other jobs listed here, this one requires you to have good writing skills and interpersonal communication skills. If you don't have both of these abilities or if you are not comfortable communicating with strangers on a regular basis then a virtual assistant job is not for you.

Conclusion

By now you should realize that legitimate online jobs are out there; you just have to work hard to find them. It is unfortunate that the Internet has become such a playground for scammers because it makes finding quality work very difficult. However, if you keep a few things in mind and focus on a particular area of work your chances of successfully netting a good job are high. Making the transition from being in a common job to working on the Internet requires a sound mind, good planning and even better research.

How to Sack Your Boss to Find an Online Job

The first step in finding legitimate online work is to decide what it is that you want to do. Figure out which skills you already have, or which skills you could learn. Then set out to master them. Once you are sure of your skills, and the line of work you really want to do you can begin the work of finding an online employer. You might have to spend a little longer to find the perfect job by marketing your skills first.

Meanwhile keep working in your normal job. It is also important to keep a nest egg of emergency cash at hand for your planned transition. In the worst case scenario you will still be able to pay your living costs if you fail to find work within your first month.

Many online job workers start out with part time employment. This has the benefit of moving to your new life in stages while still keeping your secure income from your old job.

A Note about Finances

Another important note about online employment is that you will be paid online. As such, you should have an established PayPal account before you start looking for work. Most, if not all of your work, will be paid through PayPal or a similar online payment gateway. Keep in mind that even though you work online, you will still be legally liable to pay taxes. Please refer to your country's tax laws to find out how this can affect you financially. I'm no legal advisor. Get independent legal advice to find out where you stand.

The last thing you want is to wind up with a big tax bill at the end of the year. Get informed, plan ahead and manage your money like a pro.

You Can Do This

If you are tired of the daily grind of slogging through traffic to get to your office then an online job is just what the doctor ordered. Although it will take some time and energy to begin with, you will quickly learn the tricks of the trade. Soon enough you will earn legitimate money from the comfort of your own home. You should not be too wary of the Internet if you come armed with excellent skills and a nose for sniffing out potential scams. Your best defense is good research and common sense.