

## 7 Steps To A Professional Work At Home Business

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In the age of the internet we see many work at home businesses pop up. The sad truth is some look like a homemade mess. Running a successful and professional home business isn't impossible, but it does take logic, time, determination, and a business mind. So what can be done to make a home business appear more professional? Follow the 7 steps of success used by leaders in the home business arena.

1. Treat A Business Like A Business.
  - ❑ Take business seriously
  - ❑ Don't be afraid of hard work
  - ❑ Have a business plan
  - ❑ Budget your time, money & resources
  - ❑ Have business hours
  - ❑ Post contact information on the website
  - ❑ Have a separate phone line
  - ❑ Be compliant with the law – get tax licenses etc.
  - ❑ Posses professional marketing materials
  - ❑ Advertise the business
  - ❑ Network
  - ❑ Develop strategic alliances with other home business owners
  - ❑ Develop partnerships
  - ❑ Cross promote
  - ❑ Find a mentor
2. Professional Business Cards
  - ❑ Absolutely NO free business cards with logos of the printer on the back
  - ❑ Business cards should show business name/logo, email and phone at a minimum
  - ❑ Include a coupon or incentive for customer
3. Exclusive Business Domain Name
  - ❑ Spend the extra 5.00 a month and 8.95 a year for hosting and a good domain name (ex. [www.me.theotherplace.com](http://www.me.theotherplace.com) instead of just [www.me.com](http://www.me.com))
4. Professional Email Address
  - ❑ Have a professional email address
  - ❑ Try to have it at the domain (ex. [me@me.com](mailto:me@me.com))
  - ❑ Avoid yahoo, hotmail and other freebie accounts
5. Clean Up, Clean Up
  - ❑ Have a professional looking website
  - ❑ Combine links and “fun” things on a separate page
  - ❑ Don't clutter the site with useless information make sure it's related
  - ❑ Eliminate extra spaces to ensure the home page is not 3 miles long
  - ❑ Research Search Engine Optimization and find out how to get the website's placement optimized for success
  - ❑ Use colors pleasing to the eye

- ❑ Make visitors return to the site by offering them tools and other extras that keep them coming back for more
  - ❑ Offer something free
  - ❑ Don't overdo the graphics
  - ❑ Have an impartial party take a look at the site and offer honest advice
  - ❑ Tailor the site to its audience
  - ❑ Be concise and to the point
  - ❑ Build a site map
  - ❑ Offer contact information
  - ❑ Tell your story, after all you are a work at home business owner so use this as an opportunity to make the site more personal while still remaining professional--this is your advantage over the big guys
  - ❑ Use professional graphics not clipart
  - ❑ UPDATE YOUR SITE REGULARLY
6. Customer Service
- ❑ Ship items in a timely manner
  - ❑ Keep customers abreast of the status of their order
  - ❑ Have a working customer service email
  - ❑ Have a working customer service phone number
  - ❑ Listen to the customer
  - ❑ Give customers something extra
  - ❑ Thank the customer
7. Show Stability
- ❑ Prove to the customers you're not going anywhere
  - ❑ Don't give up
  - ❑ Don't open, close, and reopen your site continuously
  - ❑ When on vacation find someone to cover the site or conduct business remotely
  - ❑ ADVERTISE – it shows stability and the repetition creates branding
  - ❑ Stick to your guns

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Tara Crooks, or "Household 6" in the Crooks' family, is best known for her ability to motivate and empower others. Tara's journey with the military began in 1998 when she and her husband PCS'd to their first duty station, Ft Hood. She and her husband, Kevin (US ARMY), have two beautiful little girls, Wrena and Chloe. Their family, including two dogs and a cat, is all snuggled in their cozy home in Fort Sill, Okla. Tara is the host of Army Wife Talk Radio and cofounder of the popular website [www.ArmyWifeNetwork.com](http://www.ArmyWifeNetwork.com).

Army Wife Network is interactive empowerment for Army wives. Featuring Army Wife Talk Radio the original internet talk radio program for military wives, "Field Problems" a self-syndicated question and answer column for military families, "Field Exercises" live interactive events for military spouses, message boards, Loving A Soldier blog, columns, live chat, social media, and so much more.