

## Be Your Own Boss

I'm sure you know that the dot com bubble burst several years ago and with that disappeared profits from many folks retirement funds. It's a new year however and many companies in Silicon Valley are beginning to expand and hire new talent. This past Christmas holiday online sales saw an increase of 25% over the 2002 holiday season. More people then ever before are shopping on line because of the more convenient store hours and the allure of cheaper prices.

Many people want to live the American dream, be there own boss, make there own hours. Many of those people also have obligations that restrict the amount of risk they can take to explore that dream. They probably have a family with a house payment and no savings to invest into a new business. Well the American dream is now a little more accessible with help from some folks in Silicon Valley. The answer may be E-Commerce. I'm not talking about hiring expensive programmers to write code and contracting advertisers to promote your site. I'm talking about an all in one turnkey solution that can provide you with online hosting, web page creation, a shopping cart, and promotion all for less then \$50/ month.

Suddenly the American dream is within the budget of the average person. This article will introduce you to a couple of e-commerce sites that can launch and build your business; your job will be to find a series of products to sell. StoreSense, [www.neoverve.com](http://www.neoverve.com), won PC magazines' editor's choice award in the April 20, 2004 issue because of its robust customer and product management. Using this service you could actually have your catalog online with impressive looking catalog pages in less then an hour. StoreSense also offers an upgrade path so that your web site can grow as your business grows.

PC Magazine gave honorable mention to Yahoo! Merchant Starter. Yahoo! Offers extras such as an integrated search engine and hit counters. It is also an easy to use service that allows sophisticated customization using Perl Code and integration with MySQL database. This service does charge a 1.5% transaction fee, however Yahoo! does not limit the number of products you can sell using their baseline service like many of the other e-commerce sites do.

Even though many of the e-commerce sites boast the fact that you can have your web site operational in a matter of minutes it's best to put some thought and planning on some old fashioned paper before you dive in head first. Keep your new web site simple. People will just go elsewhere if they can't find what they are looking for quickly. Be sure to include lots of information about your products. Also add pages that allow your customers to find out about you and a contact page so that they feel like they can easily talk with you if they have a problem with their order.

With enough planning, perseverance, and creativity you may find that your part time e-commerce business is making more money then your regular full time job. If you have a computer problem or question you need help with contact Thomas or Roger at the Computer Depot or e-mail me at [computerdepotonline@att.net](mailto:computerdepotonline@att.net).