

10 Bullet Point Options for Bootstrapping Your Small Business or Consumer Product Opportunity

By [Geoff Ficke](#)



Almost every small or micro-business, entrepreneur or inventor faces a harsh financial reality when starting out. They have little or no access to venture capital, financing or grant money. The funding source that is realistically available to them is family, friends and their own ability to bootstrap their business.

Bootstrapping a business is not glamorous, but it is the most useful, and practical method to grow a new business or product that is available to any driven entrepreneur. This is the technique I utilized to start my first business many years ago. If the strategy is successfully executed it can quickly lead to doors opening to investors and funding options.

Every Consumer Product Development and Marketing Consulting firm reviews hundreds of new business and product concepts every year. Only a tiny fraction has full funding out of the gate. The vast majority spend a great deal of time and energy seeking investment tranches which will never develop. I am always amazed that they do not bootstrap their ideas in order to gain early sales traction.

The following are 10 Bullet Point Option tips that can be utilized to Bootstrap a new business or self-employment opportunity. They can be adapted and customized to fit a vast array of circumstances, consumer products and services.

- 1. Turn your hobby or passion into a business. If you love to bake, or sew, for instance, customize products for local church events, fund raisers, special events (retirements, jubilees, weddings, etc.).
- 2. Bring the product or service to the client/consumer. People are busy. Offer convenience and a quality product or service delivered to the client's place of work or home. A man with a pick-up truck, a tool box and a ladder is a potential successful small businessman.
- 3. Support each successful step forward with free, local Publicity. Use a PR template and circulate the releases to local media, weekly papers, social groups and churches. This is FREE!
- 4. Use local fairs, home shows, festivals and civic events to sell and showcase your products. A woman we worked with started in this manner selling her line of organic Bath, Body Care and Aromatherapy products. Within 30 months her line was carried by a regional department store.
- 5. Mall kiosks are an amazing, affordable vehicle to expose and leverage sales of your Consumer Product or Business Service. We have seen clients start by offering a line of Gift items on one cart, expand to more and then jump into traditional retail distribution.
- 6. Personalize products: In a world of impersonal mass production, people enjoy goods or services that offer intimacy, uniqueness. A past client built a wonderful income by creating personalized Baby and Infant items like bags, blankets, sleepers, etc.
- 7. Sample, sample, sample! If your product is good, and you believe in the item and yourself, demonstrate and sample relentlessly. A couple we consulted for were passionate about their Gourmet Sauces and Marinades. They built their business by attending every art and foodie event possible and constantly sampling their products while generating sales with value packs and on-site sale coupons.
- 8. Pre-sell. This is a technique we use every year to launch under-funded clients. Build prototypes or production quality samples, fully

packaged and take orders before you build expensive inventory. Big box retailers have the ability to buy on the local level and love to do so, if you offer a well-conceived prototype for them to review.

- 9. Make yourself the "authority" on the space you want to enter. Properly managed social media, publicity, small print advertorials and compelling web-sites are only a few tools available to create stronger bona-fides.
- 10. Network, Network, Network! Every person you know or meet is a potential client for a good or service you might be able to produce. Brand yourself and your product and professionally let others know about your business, and ask about theirs.

Businesses have been Bootstrapped in Cosmetics, Fragrance, Toys, Oral Care, Fashion, Jewelry, Juvenile Products, Hardware, Gifts, Foods and Drinks, Sporting Goods, Pet Products and many more categories. A number of these businesses were able to gain sales traction and leverage into traditional retail distribution. Consider this technique as the realistic and practical way to be the tortoise and win success slowly.

by: Geoff Ficke

Geoff Ficke has been a serial entrepreneur for almost 50 years. As a small boy, earning his spending money doing odd jobs in the neighborhood, he learned the value of selling himself, offering service and value for money.

After putting himself through the University of Kentucky (B.A. Broadcast Journalism, 1969) and serving in the United States Marine Corp, Mr. Ficke commenced a career in the cosmetic industry. After rising to National Sales Manager for Vidal Sassoon Hair Care at age 28, he then launched a number of ventures, including Rubigo Cosmetics, Parfums Pierre Wulff Paris, Le Bain Couture and Fashion Fragrance.

Geoff Ficke and his consulting firm, Duquesa Marketing, (<http://www.duquesamarketing.com>) has assisted businesses large and small, domestic and international, entrepreneurs, inventors and students

in new product development, capital formation, licensing, marketing, sales and business plans and successful implementation of his customized strategies. He is a Senior Fellow at the Page Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, Business School, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

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