

Chapter V

Adjunct Businesses

Woodworker

The very first business we should entertain is that of woodworking. The advantages of this craft are immediately evident but those, along with some that are less evident, will be enumerated here.

Woodworking is a skill that can be enjoyed and employed at a variety of skill levels, even with the rank beginner being able to produce lasting products of great utility that are, therefore, eminently salable. As a boy, I begin woodworking in Junior High school... Middle school today, and even then, produced some pieces that remained in service in my family long into my adult years.

Something as simple as a rectangular cutting board, made from a single piece of wood, the very first project I attempted those many, many years ago performed this task admirably and was still in use even after I had left home, joined the Navy and had a family of my own.



It was a simple hardwood board of approximately 6" x 9"...

Substantially smaller than a sheet of notebook paper... That had it's edges beveled about a quarter of an inch on all four sides. It was then sanded and finished appropriately for the intended purpose... It was designed for utility, not outright

beauty, and to begin teaching the rudiments of the use of shop tools. The fact that I had found a particularly attractively grained and figured piece of wood to begin with raised the value of the object from mildly utilitarian to somewhat artistic... a fact that served the object well for its entire life.

Equipment Needed

A factor that makes this option attainable on our low, no-loan budget is the fact that a person can begin with \$100 worth of tools. Everything in this endeavor can be done simply with hand tools! We must remember, power has only been available to us to run these types of tools for approximately 2% of our civilized history... Prior, if it were done, It must be done without such, for electrical motors

simply did not exist!



During the later years of the great depression, through World War II, and into the early postwar era, my father

was a carpenter... And a very good one... But, by 1954, it was virtually impossible to work commercially without power tools. It was not until that late that electric powered equipment began to come in the marketplace in sufficient numbers at an affordable price... Not very long ago in our entire sojourn on earth... And one could never deny the

works of art created of wood by the artisans of earlier centuries!

Now, that said... Our work, having achieved the level of value it has, no one could afford to buy that which we produced if we charged what our time is worth for these special works of art. There are exceptions of course... I know those who make beautiful fully handcrafted rocking chairs with no power tools of any great concern, and produce virtual works of art that are sold for \$2000-\$2500 each!

All of this aside... I would, in today's atmosphere, consider my shop well equipped if I had a table saw, a miter saw, a jointer, a planer, a lathe, a drill press and the bandsaw... Oh and perhaps a scroll saw. By employing used equipment instead of brand new, it is possible to equip our shop with all these tools for much less than \$2000. Add another \$500 for the hand tools we need and we are up and running in our own shop for under \$2500!



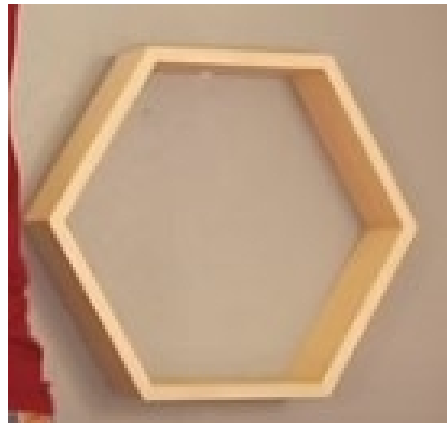
We can begin with our simple projects to learn our tools and to gain some skill and confidence and using them. When we have mastered a degree of proficiency with the simpler projects, we can begin to branch out into the more complex... And then, there is nothing wrong with, when our inventory is adequate, attempting something beyond that which we have ever done!

What Do We Build

Now that we have our tools, what shall we make? This chapter's illustrations are easily made items, requiring little in the way of power tools, that are, at once, utilitarian and attractive. My recommendation is to search the Internet for further ideas. A major source of inspiration is the YouTube website and the woodworkers channels. Many of these channels will be far too advanced for us when starting out, but that doesn't mean our used craftsman ten inch table saw that we had to remove the rust from before we could use it won't cut is truly as their Super Deluxe Highfalutin, eight speed, twelve gear Do-All... And do it for a purchase price of \$129 versus their price of \$12,000.

A prime example here is April Wilkerson's channel... April is a superb woodworker with all the latest equipment in a huge, new shop in the hill country of Texas. Most of what she does, I marvel at, perhaps, even envy a bit... But would not begin to attempt on my own, but so much I can adapt to

what IS within my range of equipment and capabilities to produce a like/kind article. An example is the adjacent photo of a hexagonal shelf she designed for her bathroom... When I saw how simply this was done, my jaw dropped... A very



attractive accessory, that would sell for \$80-\$100 constructed in an hour and finished in a half hour means a fair wage for us, and unique product for a customer that will last a lifetime or more.... All while allowing a tree, one of natures

more perfect creations, a second lifetime of service and utility.

Who's Going to Buy It?

In all situations, marketing is the key. If we cannot sell our products, why would we go to the effort of producing them? After all, if we get nothing for all the doing we have done to make the object, how is that better than getting nothing for doing nothing? It seems to me the end result is the same, only the input has changed!

When I was in my single-digit years, times were hard and money was in short supply. Couple that with the truth that in those days, back in the middle of the last century, parents were allowed to be mean to their kids and say things like "No!" And, "If you want it, you will have to earn the money to buy it!"



This often meant indenturing myself to local farmers to harvest their prunes or pull their weeds. It should be noted here that pulling the weeds around my own house did not count for the monetary gain... This was classified as "chores," and was expected... Even required to be done on at least a semi regular basis.

I soon learned, crawling around cobbled adobe clay to extract a few miserable prunes in order to fill a few

miserable boxes with a going rate of two bits a box on my best days yielded me about \$1.50 or maybe \$2.00 if the earth smiled and every prune was ripe at the same time and fell to the ground at the first shake of the tree! At the cost of bruised knees, torn pants and the runs from having eaten a sizable share of my picking.

Pulling weeds fared one only slightly better because it was seldom one could earn more than that same two dollars for a full day of toil under a hot summer sun... well one did avoid the backside blues since



no one, other than goats, would eat dried old weeds, one did not have the dubious advantage of shade... Weeds did not grow in the shade, so we were doomed to labor in the direct rays of 100°+ July or August sun for \$2.00. At least, prunes were mid September, with some shade for part of the day at a minimum.

And this still left nine months at the mercy of those who controlled the purse strings! There were no miserable prunes nor equally miserable weeds during this long interval. During this time, cajoling a nickel for a candy bar was about the best we could do... If we managed the eight cents for a bottle of pop, we were in hog heaven! It was a rare and heady day that this happened.

I knew this had to change... To know as much of economics in the real world as a college professor while at the age of seven years was not to be wasted. It appeared to me, even at

this early age, that those who sold things to others were never seen in the prune orchard! The cash register of the grocery store always had money in it! I had seen it. I assumed it was the same at the five and dime store and at Monkey Wards, but I never saw the cash register there as the clerk on the floor totaled your order, put her slip (the paper one she wrote on) and your money into this little tube gizmo and pulled the handle, shooting the slip and money to someplace on the upper level to someone who made your change and pulled her own handle and, woosh, here came your receipt and your change zooming back down to you on the lower floor, now chatting amiably with the clerk who had waited on you there. I never saw it, but I assumed they had tons of two dollarses up there!

That change came when, at Christmas that year, I received a brand new radio flyer wagon... To be completely fair, it was a gift to both my brother and I, together, as were most such items... I was always grateful for the two years difference in our ages and the substantial



difference in size between us, for that precluded our receiving that most hated of "gifts" in tandem... Underwear! As terrible as it was for Aunt Millicent to think underwear would be a sought after, or even acceptable, gift, to have it arrive as a joint gift would have certainly been that proverbial straw that broke the camels back... But I digress...

We were now equipped with transportation... Of a sort... All we needed was a product... Then came spring...

I don't know what the genesis of this was... It pre-dated my sojourn on earth, most likely... But there was an area around the brooder house that came up to a field of daffodils. When they were in full bloom, it was most spectacular, but this was prior to that... The plants were just emerging... At most, they were four to six inches in height.

Then the idea came... If I thought so much of these, what would others think? To find out, I filled my wagon with the emerging flora and, going house to house... farm to farm, I asked people if they had a use for these... And sold out! Next day I repeated this act... And sold out again... By the time the weekend was over we were RICH, my younger brother and I. Why, we must've had \$12... Or maybe even \$15...

Next came mustard greens... I didn't like them but I knew others did, and since our farm was literally covered with them in the early spring, again we picked until our wagon was full and away we went... And again we sold out.

Cherries, plums, apricots apples and grapes... NO prunes! If it grew and we could access it, and that was never a problem as fruit grew ripened and fell on the ground and rotted everywhere! And, this is key... No one said we couldn't do it! No one told us it was impossible... No one said you can't make any money doing that..." And we knew no better, being only about seven and five years old, so we just did it.

The one that our parents did look askance at us over was when we thought to do mistletoe... The oaks that grew in such a great profusion in our area of northern California sported huge bundles of the parasitic growth, mistletoe... And we got the idea to repeat our success with this new crop.

We thought we might get some resistance from the parents when we mentioned climbing these great trees to harvest our merchandise, so, being ever sympathetic to our



parents advancing age and nervous conditions, we arrived at a solution that fit all well and saved hours of harangue... We simply didn't mention it! We went about our task without bothering them and harvested our greenery and marketed enough of it to provide us with sufficient funds to buy Christmas gifts for the entire family... at least that's what I did... I do remember purchasing many things and making it from both of us... They seemed thrilled and it saved us a lot of money... Only one thing had to be re-purchased... We had purchased a box of Sees Chocolates for our mother and, unfortunately, the first box did not survive the gift wrapping session so had to be replaced.

It was only after this market venture was complete that we told our parents how we had come about harvesting our raw product... Even at that young age I had well learned the concept of how much easier it is to ask forgiveness after the project is fait accompli than it is to ask permission and you don't have to answer a bunch of dumb, mostly irrelevant

questions. Actually, I still practice this *modus operandi* even today... Saves so much time in the long run.



Although we may have taken a bit more time than some might think prudent to spend on the introduction to a subject, the fact remains it's all about how we market our product... Market it correctly and we will be as rich as my brother and I were back in the waning

years of the Truman Administration... Miss this and we may as well remain doing nothing for nothing rather than doing something for nothing...

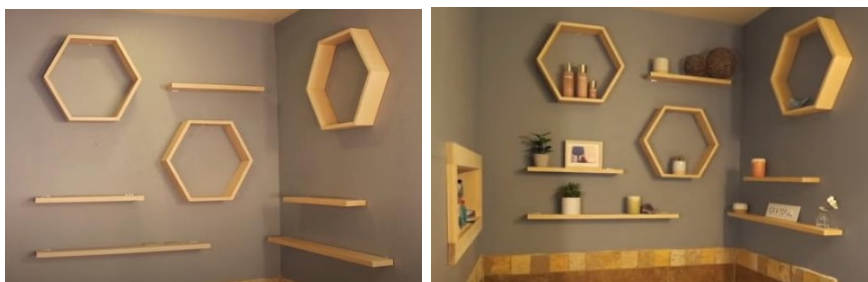
Today, the largest sales companies do their marketing online,. Amazon... eBay... Walmart... even my local QFC market and Safeway stores market online. There's only one reason they do this, it works! Does this mean we need the web presence of an Amazon or similar? No not at all... First, we are not going to be shipping across the world, nor are we going to be selling someone else's products. What we are going to be selling is our own widgets of our own manufacture.

Today, websites are easy and very inexpensive. Places like GoDaddy.com and others can set us up with everything we need for not a lot of money. My own website, www.thomcantrall.com (catchy name, Huh?) has a market aspect with my books being on prominent display there. Also featured there are other aspects of my research,. There

is a page that features essays I have written and published, presented without charge to the reader. There are links to my YouTube channel, Thom Cantrall channel, and the videos I have published there.

All of this is there, and I am set up on an auto pay system such that I have to look at it once a year, tax time, because every cent that goes into it is entirely tax-deductible! In essence then the government pays for my website! Sweet deal huh?

If I were doing this for our woodworking business, for example, my first page would show my products I had to offer with a price for each. I would make sure the dimensions are clearly displayed. A very important point... Make sure the photo used shows our product fully in use... Stage it in a setting... Not an object sitting on a cluttered workbench nor even as a bare shelf. Help your customer see how you envision it being enjoyed.



Look at the two photos above and see how that on the right presents the product much more vividly and interestingly than that on the left and the only difference is how the shelves are dressed.

Do we wish to include a “how to” page with a “project of the month” being featured? This should include complete instructions for the project. It should include a cut list of

every piece used in the fabrication of it... Suggest different finishes appropriate and even the species of wood that are appropriate and any special instructions pertaining to it.



Every page, except, perhaps the first, should have a way to contact us directly... I'd encourage this contact. It might be thought this page would be contradictory to our purpose... but, in fact, this giving of a bit of ourselves will repay benefits far beyond what we could ever imagine...

We need business cards... And we need to be professional, eye-catching and remember-able! These are our lifeline to our customers, make them something of value!

For instance put a line on the back of the card for the customer to put his name and email address... Then tell him, "Give this to a friend or family member who is interested and tell him to show the card when they visit, (either in person or virtually online) and you will receive 10% off the next item you order! And we've just made our card valuable and turned a customer into a prospector... And there is no advertising more effective nor more valuable and that what one person tells another!

Do we have a farmers market in our area? Is there a flea market, perhaps? If so, attend. It's so easy to take some of our products with us and a photo display of others... Even if you have none in stock presently. Of course we never admit

that... “Oh, a beautiful choice, let me make you one of those custom for you! Do you have a particular finish you like?”

When is the last time Amazon offered to do that for a customer? Now, not only is he getting something obviously he likes, but it will be custom-made for him... Even down to how it is finished. Is it possible our price just dropped a few places in degree of importance now that he has “commissioned” a custom piece for his home?

The town where I live closes the main street on Sundays during the summer and vendors of all kinds bring their wares and goods to sell to the crowds who come there to buy craft made “bargains”... Often bargains that or a mere two times what the items could be purchased for at Walmart... If one chooses to patronize Walmart. But, there is much to be said for the ambience of the venue and the fact it does not have “Made in China” stamped on it!

Are there others? Yes, of course there are... If we use our mind and are willing to experiment. Not all will be gold mines, but I’d venture to say our industry will gain friends with every effort we make. In this vein, what would keep us from “borrowing” a vacant lot in the proper area of town and simply erecting a simple sun shade and displaying our wares?



and finally... NEVER forget your prior customers! At a minimum you should have the email address on file with the item purchased and a follow up query will often lead to a follow up order! There is nothing in business so satisfying as a satisfied customer! Let's make sure ours are the most satisfied!

Hand Crafts

We will not spend a long time on the subject... Not because it is not important or does not have great potential for profit, but just because most of the salient points as relate to our business and our homestead we're covered prior. The main points to be made are the marketing of our products and that is very similar to what was stated in the last section of the chapter. Every potential market described there applies here as well.

Most of the products we've seen manufactured and marketed at this level, if you purchase at Walmart or Target or any other such store will have "Made in China" prominently displayed. It is important to understand that there are a

percentage of Americans, particularly those born before 1980, who do not remember China and her relationship with her citizens with any degree of fondness. To these people, this author included, the sight of tanks rolling into Tianamin



Square to quell her own citizens is etched permanently into our minds and we have no desire to enrich those who do such things. Therefore, if we offer these people an alternative, even if the price is a bit higher and there is no such stigma attached to it, it was an easy sale.

Just as our wood products were made of real wood and not a particleboard with a printed plastic wrap covering it to make it look like wood, our craft items are made from real resources most of it recycled, thereby affording us the real products, made locally by people who live there. These are not inconsiderable features.

Ceramics



So many of the knick-knacks and little things of beauty we find in our homes are ceramic in origin. One of the first manufactories our species ever discovered involved the transmutation of mud to stone through the application of heat... Very intense heat... In the

beginning, most of these objects were religious in nature, thought to have provenance with one form of deity or another. Many of these figures have been unearthed in investigation of sites believed to be as old as 25,000 years.



It was later in our history

that people figured out this same process could be used to create things that were utile as well as artistic in nature. From there, we got waterproof vessels and vases for flowers. There were plates to eat from and decorations for our homes.

Today the selection is myriad... From utensils to figurines from vases to pitchers... And their appearance is only limited by the laws of nature... Gravity being the principle among these, and the imagination of the creator. Our products can be pre-formed from the semi liquid mud, or formed by a rotating surface. The thin piece can be finished in virtually anyway pleasing to the artist creating the work... And all of these, well-made and pleasingly finished, are very salable at prices that are astounding, considering the cost of the materials involved in creating the end product.



One major change to occur in recent years is the advent of home centered ceramic studios, where the client can come in and, for a fee, create, using the host's machines, of clays purchased from the host and dried in the host's kiln, decorated using the host glazes and special paints... Then again, re-fired, again in the host's kiln... To create a treasure the guest has created with their own hands, to be long treasured...

For many years I had one such... A pink, fat, ceramic pig with a slot for coins in his back and a removable plug in his belly to remove the plunder so collected at proper times... His claim to fame... And what made him so unique and so dear to me was that one of his ears had been broken when he took a nose dive from his place of residence to the floor during a particularly memorable earthquake many years ago! That broken ear lent him a certain air of jauntiness no mere glaze or paint could ever do.

Blankets and Quilts

Quilting bees used to be a regular thing where women would gather for a day of pleasant chatter, gossip and the manufacture of some absolutely beautiful works of art in the form of covers for the bed.

These were especially important when someone was getting married and beginning a home of their own or a new baby arrived. These homes were graced with the gift of a very special blanket or quilt as well as, very often, pillows, shawls and furniture drapes all from the same source.



Today... Much of this tradition has disappeared... To our great loss. But the market still exists for well-made, uniquely beautiful quilts and will bring an especially pleasing price if we do it right.

I think making a living of this product alone would be difficult at best, but I am always ready to be proven wrong,. Certainly, Having a supply of these on hand to display on our website or on our table with other products at the community bazaar would do no harm would it?

Baked Goods



Everyone has a specialty item they cook so well. Perhaps it's something as simple as a pound cake or raised bread. Do we make an especially delectable chocolate chip cookie or is our lemon meringue pie something to die for. Whatever our specialty, be it baked or a pickled sauerkraut, there is a market for it.

Before we embark on this one, however, we need to check with the local, county and state health department because the legal requirements may, indeed, preclude us from selling our goods from an uninspected kitchen... These regulations vary greatly from one spot to the next, but it's the rarest of circumstances that does not require some kind of license to do this as it is seldom any government ever leaves a chance to tax us go untapped! It should be noted these permits are not needed for us to bake our goods or pickle our kraut to give away... Only in order to sell it... Hence, it has nothing to do with public health or we would be halted from giving it away as well, but we are not. Therefore, the permit is only to serve the government



agencies notice that we are, in fact, in business, therefore to watch for tax forms, etc.

Will discuss this later in more depth in another chapter. For now, just understand there are hoops to be jumped through and officials to be placated.

Welding Services

As alluded to earlier, here is another business with major business ramifications. There are welders who maintain a complete staff of competent craftsman and operate a veritable fleet of trucks equipped with the latest and best welders with the capability to weld on anything from aluminum cans to submarine hulls... (a very special procedure!) This is not our goal... Our goal is simply to make our homestead pay!

To that end, we have purchased a Lincoln portable mig welder that we can use either with argon gas, or without, and is capable of running on either 110V or 220V AC electricity. In almost all cases, the 220V option will yield a far better result. Since



we have these options, and we know the time will come that we will be called out to weld a broken implement that

cannot be moved until the weld is complete, hence, there is no available power for us to plug into, therefore, we have also purchased a portable generator of sufficient output to power our welder.

Of course, we needed our leathers, shields and about a ton of chain, chain falls, clamps and other accessories to put us in the hunt... In total we have now have about \$700 invested in our gear, including the gas can and the funnel for the generator.

What should we do while we wait for our first customer? We've been to the sale barn in every community around us, driving our 1984 Ford F250 pickup with "Welding Services - No Job Too Small... Some Too Big" emblazoned on the side... We have given our business card to everyone we could get to stand still long enough to take one.



Why not do what we did as woodworkers and manufacture some decorative metal work pieces? A set of custom andirons for the fireplace would bring \$100, easily, and a Sasquatch cut out of metal at least \$75. Let's use our imagination here and come up with some really cool items people will want, then let's do with them as we did with the woodworking items.

Market them... And this can be done without health inspectors hounding us.

A word of caution here that applies to all the businesses discussed, but especially to this one... Our work and our equipment is worth our hire! Do not let our customers talk us down in price! Stand our ground... We are doing a job... Providing a service... One they needed done, obviously. Therefore it is worth our price to do it! And don't forget to include our mileage fee in that bill! Gas and insurance are expensive items and while our truck is a 1984 model, the brakes and the tires on it are brand new and need to be replaced regularly.

All of the businesses discussed here have one thing in common... They require our time and our effort... A great deal of our effort! And, they all have the potential to be 100% stand alone businesses that we can start up and operate with only a few hundred dollars minimum and maybe up to a few thousand dollars... Something totally unheard of in today's world.

Our Business Outgrew Us

The last subject I wish to discuss in this line is, what do we do when our business gets too big for us or our family to operate? What do we do when we need more help than we have available to us?

Conventional wisdom (the government and the unions) would tell us to hire somebody to help, but what happens when we do that? Remember back to our discussion on employees and how expensive they are? Remember all that

reporting and taxes? But the worst part is even beyond this... They don't always come to work!

When I started up my logging business, I did so with two others and myself... We worked hard and we went home tired... It was a good mix... Both were friends... both knew that if any of the three of us didn't come to work, it made it immeasurably difficult on the two who did... So, no one missed except in the most extreme situations. There were days when one of us was too sick to be in the woods, so we



put him on the truck for the day. He could turn the heater up and stay pretty warm while driving the logs into town.

One day, Kenny got a call from his old boss needing him back and offered him a huge wage to do it. When he came to me about it, I sent him on with my blessing... It was a wonderful opportunity

for him and I would not begin to think of denying him that.

... And I had to hire two men to replace him... And still they could not match him... Plus one or the other of them was gone at least a day out of every week... or so it seemed... it was so difficult to deal with them.

At long last, I got an idea... What if, instead of an employee, I formed a partnership... Not a 50-50 partnership but a, say, 70-30 partnership... I knew how much my equipment was valued... And their “buy-in” was a percentage of that figure. The buy-in didn’t have to be immediate but I could deduct it from their revenues... And they were paid a percentage of the net for the month.

Of course, since they were now partners, I had no need for deducting payroll taxes, Social Security, employment security or state industrial insurance... They were now responsible for all of that on their own... Of course they were receiving more income from the business than they ever had, but had to pay their own income tax and Social Security... If they wanted industrial insurance, they could buy it for themselves... It was not a company responsibility.

If we remember back to the discussion of the fees and reporting required for employees... That is all gone now and they got those monies as part of their ownership package... The number one biggest thing I got was a devoted crew! No longer did I have to worry who was not showing up today... It was their business and they didn’t miss... It was a very ill man who called in... And while it did happen, it was rare! Further, in the partnership contract it stipulated that 1/30th of the monthly amount due was withheld for every day missed for any reason.

The system worked and we kept adjusting until we had the numbers fair and equitable... And if someone left, we bought out their partnership for whatever their buy-in had



been, but we had a year to do so. Also, a partnership could be sold or transferred with 3/4 approval of the remaining partners.

I know it sounds complicated, but that's why we had an accountant. She knew all the strings to pull and all the buttons to push to make this happen.

There, in the short version is how we create and operate an adjunct business to our homestead... Even how to keep that business going and growing even when we no longer have a need of it to get our homestead on steady feet! Now, onto the next adjunct... With a real possibility for superb profits...