

WHAT REALLY MAKES MONEY

An Independent Review of Business Opportunities & Money-Making Enterprises

How to Profit From The Post-Lockdown Weddings Boom

**Introducing a wedding-based side hustle
that you could expand to cater for a wide
range of post-lockdown customers,
from hairdressers to dentists**

When Boris Johnson revealed his roadmap to the end of lockdown in February, he announced that weddings would be permitted from 21st June (that is, if Covid cases continued to fall).

As soon as he uttered those words, the leading UK app Bridebook crashed because of the surge in traffic as 23,000 desperate couples logged in – almost at once – to get on with their stalled wedding plans.

Hamish Shephard, founder of Bridebook, told the newspaper *i* that next year he expected to see “*1,000,000 people get married and 500,000+ weddings.*” In the wake of this news, UK wedding supplies orders rose by 218% between February and March.

This means that weddings will be one of the big boom sectors for the next two years. And while these have tended to be most popular in summer, the backlog of frustrated engaged couples caused by the pandemic will mean an uptick in autumn and winter weddings, too.

To help you take advantage of this trend, I would like to share a business idea that could be perfect for a

wedding-based side hustle that you could also extend to a whole range of clients, including local bars, beauty spas, private dentists and solicitors.

It’s all about supplying décor, props and styling consultancy to make people’s wedding ceremonies and reception parties unique, interesting and atmospheric.

The Basics of the Business

A wedding décor supply business can do one of the following:

- » Create breathtaking centrepiece displays for indoor and outdoor spaces to make the event glamorous, personal and unique. These could be themed, or designed to enhance the building or surroundings in which the event takes place.
- » Offer props, furniture, fabrics, lighting, and other accessories that people can use for their wedding event.
- » Help style and organise the ‘look’ of a wedding event by consulting beforehand and then being there on the day.

You can stock and supply items like these:

- » Carnival games.
- » Board games.
- » Beer barrels.
- » Tiki Bars.
- » Pergolas.
- » Photo booth.
- » Disco balls.
- » Wall of champagne glasses/bottles.
- » Pillars.
- » Chandeliers.
- » Traditional baskets.
- » Vintage ladders and wheelbarrows.
- » Tables, chairs and sofas.
- » Bay trees.
- » Illuminated signs.
- » Vintage signs.
- » Life-size models and statues.
- » Artworks.
- » Drapes and curtains.
- » Exotic plants.
- » Vintage lamps.
- » Tin Baths.
- » Candlestick holders.

But you can also create displays using all kinds of everyday props that you collect together to create an effect – anything from old wine bottles, driftwood and baskets of fresh bread to leather suitcases and pickle jars.

Themes could include: Art Deco, 1960s/1970s, Woodland, Farmhouse, Glamourous, Glamour, Rustic, Funfair, Sport, Traditional Shop, Rock & Roll.

Two Examples of Home Based Start-Ups in This Niche

There is a company called 3 Tiers Creative 3TiersCreative.co.uk that is run from Aberdeen by three sisters. They have a simple website, which contains photos, price list, testimonials and contact details:



Another is The Little Lending Company (TheLittleLendingCompany.com) which is a home business run by a woman who founded the business after her own wedding in 2013, when she found herself with props she no longer needed.

Here's an example of one of her prop displays:



As you can see, she has used very basic, rustic materials, so this doesn't require a lot of expensive items. Really, it's about texture and atmosphere. You can make an interesting display from things that other people throw away.

This Part-Time Wedding Enterprise Would Suit:

- » Anyone who is good at crafting.
- » Anyone who likes upcycling and repairing.
- » Anyone with a good eye for interior design.
- » Anyone who has loads of 'junk' in their attic, garden and garage.
- » Anyone who has old wedding items stored away.
- » Anyone who loves hunting for bargains in flea markets, antiques shops and garage sales.
- » Anyone who has experience buying and selling on eBay, Etsy, Facebook Marketplace.

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If you tick any of these boxes, this could be a great little side hustle that usually only requires you to work at weekends, and where all the preparation can be done in bits of spare time from home during the week.

How to Source Materials

Your immediate worry might be that this takes a lot of investment to build up your stock of props. It will require a bit of money up front, but as you'll see, a lot of the materials can be sourced for free or purchased very cheaply – especially if you're prepared to polish, paint, stitch and repair.

This makes it ripe for some huge margins if you're up for seeking out materials yourself.

As lockdown lifts, you can hunt through flea markets, garage sales and house clearances to find super cheap props that you can clean up, or upcycle. Look for old ladders, bikes, barrels, baskets, suitcases and fabrics... period vintage items from the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s... picture frames, lamps and curiosities.

Don't think about the value of that piece on its own – for instance a battered old watering can someone has chucked away is seemingly worthless – but it could become part of a display that will then add high perceived value.

An example might be that you offer a 'rustic farmhouse' look that includes buckets, straw, rakes, beer barrels and that battered old watering can.

A few old fruit crates that you find for free on freecycle.com or chucked away on the street could make you £10 every time they get loaned out as part of a wedding props set, making you potentially £100+ a year for that item.

And even when you shell out £10-£50 for an item like a chair or lamp that you fix up, you can make an income from that one product over and over again, every time you lend it out. You could easily earn back what you paid for the item in just a few events – the rest being pure profit for years to come.

This could be a fantastic way to make, renew or upgrade broken old unwanted items, and make them profitable.

If you don't want to go out and look for items, you can do all your stock shopping online:

» SECOND-HAND WEDDING SALES!

Here is a great source – a website called 'Sell my wedding' (Sellmywedding.co.uk/about) where people who have been married recently can sell their props,

décor and accessories at second hand prices.

» FACEBOOK

Facebook Marketplace (Facebook.com/marketplace) is an increasingly fruitful source of extremely low priced, second-hand items – often people put their belongings on there to get rid of them quickly without going to the tip or the charity shop – and you can also negotiate a lower price than advertised.

» FREECYCLE

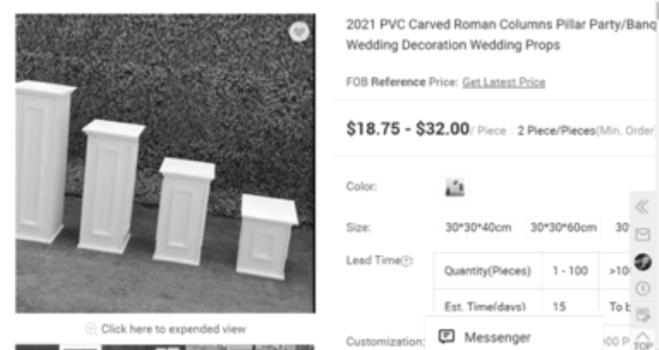
You can also hunt down items on Freecycle (Freecycle.org) Of course these will be shabby and old-looking pieces, most likely, but sometimes that's what you will need – plus a lick of paint, polish or minor repairs and it could be ready for a display.

You can also get low-priced items from overseas...

» ALIBABA WHOLESALE BARGAINS!

Chinese site Alibaba will offer you props and décor at wholesale prices (Alibaba.com/showroom/party-props-rentals.html).

For instance, right now you can get carved Roman Pillars wedding props like these:



You could buy props like this for £15 a piece and make that £15 back multiple times every year without ever selling it.

If you want to loan out more dramatic, higher-priced props, but you cannot afford the up-front cost, another option is to rent items from suppliers who might then give you a trade discount once you're established. Some websites that might help:

- » PropFactory.co.uk allows you to buy or hire.
- » Or try Hitched.co.uk/wedding-decorative-hire.

Setting Up the Business

Before you start to look for your first customers you'll need to build up some stock. But you don't need to invest in a wide range of items until you've tested the idea out.

Once you're up and running you'll find this is a self-

financing business – because you can buy more and more stock with some of the profits to increase the range of options.

What you'll need:

- » **Storage space.** If you don't have a garage, shed, attic or basement, this could be something you operate out of a cheaply-rented warehouse space or lock-up.
- » **A vehicle** (you can hire a large van for less than £40 for a day if you prefer at first until you have tested the viability of the business).
- » **A website with information and good quality images.** A basic WordPress site will do it – there are exiting themes that will give you the professional look instantly. Make sure you include: About Me, Contact Me, photos, examples, testimonials, price list, links to your social media, and weekly blog post with your latest finds and commissions.

What I recommend on top of that for your marketing is:

- » **Instagram feed with photos of your props and displays.** This social media network is ideal for visual businesses and a great way to advertise and finding new clients for free. Every time you find a new item, make something, or fix something up, post a photo on Instagram.
- » **A Facebook business page to create basic ads for your business.** You'll be able to find new clients with basic ads that you target at certain age groups and locations.
- » **Press release sent out to local newspapers and websites,** announcing a great new business that offers bespoke and unusual wedding décor and displays.

By keeping your Instagram feed regularly updated, along with blog posts on your site, you should quickly gather followers and get picked up by Google, which will give you an organic reach. Add in some Instagram and Facebook ads to target customers, then some local ads, and you shouldn't need much else in the way of marketing.

What to Charge

You can rent out individual items for a basic fee if people are willing to come and collect from you, then return after the event. But for non-local customers who cannot collect, demand a minimum spend of £250.00 for hire.

You can set a price list for each prop, but they will need to order enough to make that £250 minimum.

- » The large props should be around £30-£50.
- » The small props should be around £10-£30.
- » The large tables, bars, benches and sofas should be around £80-£100.

Offer a hire period of 72 hours with delivery (by you) before the event and two days after it. But allow that to be extended for a slightly higher fee.

Then charge £15.00 per hour's travel time for delivery.

Either let the clients create their own displays using your props, or charge more to give them design ideas and set up on the day. You can also charge £300+ on top to be in situ to arrange the décor and support them during the event.

This could mean a single wedding makes you £550+, with the petrol costs all covered. If you rent a van then that's going to be around £80 for two days hire (delivery and pickup) but it's still a good rate for one day's work and a few hours either side for delivery and collection.

You could do just 10 events per year and make £5,500+. With 20 events you could be on £11,000" - change that to "You could do just 10 events per year and make £5,500+ in turnover. With 20 events you could be on a turnover £11,000.

However, you don't have to be tied to weddings. As restrictions lift there will be a whole number of events that might need décor and props:

- » Award ceremonies.
- » Business events.
- » Retirement parties.
- » Launch events.

And if you don't want to get involved with weddings or events at all, there is an alternative version of this opportunity to try.

There are a large number of businesses opening up after lockdown who will want to redesign their premises and attract new customers.

How to Expand Your Business to a Larger Client Base

You'll have noticed that in some offices, upmarket shops, restaurants, hotels, estate agents and solicitors, there are window displays and interior artworks. They're put there to make the place look smarter, more welcoming and more relaxing – and, ultimately, encourage the customer to part with more of their

hard-earned cash.

It might surprise you to know that a lot of these places don't own these décor items themselves. They rent them from specialised rental businesses who provide and maintain the displays for a fixed monthly rental.

This means that you can lend props, displays, furniture and art to a whole array of clients.

- » Shops (upmarket ones).
- » Restaurants, smart cafes and wine bars, bistros, gastro-pubs etc.
- » Trendy bars
- » Gyms, health clubs and sports clubs.
- » Hairdressers, beauticians and spas.
- » Hotels – public areas plus all the rooms.
- » Shopping centres/malls.
- » Offices – all kinds.
- » Banks.
- » Professional practices – lawyers, accountants, surveyors and estate agents, etc.
- » Car showrooms – especially prestige ones.
- » Medical practices, especially private ones – doctors, dentists and hospitals.
- » Property developers – to furnish show homes.
- » Universities and colleges.

When you rent out long-term to businesses like these, you won't need much storage, because your products are kept for most of the time on your customers' premises not your own.

What are the Best Items to Rent?

There's a whole treasure trove of décor items you can rent out, including plants, furniture, signs, vintage pieces, fish tanks and sculptures.

Artworks are very popular with all kinds of businesses. They're also very cheap to buy and easy to handle. You can offer something to suit every customer's taste – oils, watercolours, sketches, photographs and prints – floral, still life, abstract and modern artwork, landscapes, seascapes, paintings of figures or animals, sports subjects, reproductions of Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir and more.

A great source of artwork is eBay – go to the 'Art' category for loads of offers – the 'Canvas/Giclee Prints' section has lots of good offers. You can get some really nice artworks there for about £15 maximum.

How to Approach New Clients

Find businesses that are opening up after lockdown in your local area and get in touch via email or phone. Offer a 'No Obligation Free Survey and Advice' meeting. At the free survey you can take a closer look at their premises and suggest a number of different ways in which you think props, displays and artworks could smarten up their premises.

Before you go on a survey, do your homework...

- » **Ask the owner or manager questions about why they are looking for art and decor for their premises.** What is it that they are hoping to achieve? (It might also be worth fishing for what kind of art they like on a personal level, as they're more likely to go for something that chimes with their own tastes.)
- » **Find out what sort of business they're running** – what's their brand, corporate image and ethos?
- » **Ask about what sort of customers they have, or are trying to attract.** See if they can give you a profile of the ideal customer - for instance, how much they earn, what they like to read, what sort of TV and films they watch, and what kind of cultural events they might enjoy.
- » **Ask what sort of atmosphere and mood they are looking to create** for customers and clients when they enter the building.

This will enable you to source the very best artwork for the job. And here's a great way to seal the deal and defuse any doubts or objections your prospect might still have: Make them an offer they'd feel absolutely crazy to refuse. Offer to leave the decorations with them free, for one month.

After that, if they don't feel it has delivered the promised benefits – or if they just plain don't like it – you'll come and take it away and they won't owe you a penny! (Of course it involves a slight risk they'll cancel. But, in my experience of other products and services sold this way, it dramatically boosts conversions and customers don't cancel very often.)

I recommend that you offer to change the displayed artwork every three months. Keep a written record of which artworks have been displayed with which customer, so they never have the same one twice.

It's probably a good idea to do it on a rota system, changing approximately a third of your stock every month. You won't, of course, have to buy new items every month (nor need any storage to speak of)

because artworks can simply be recycled to the next customer!

Art on the Wall Means Cash in Your Hand!

On average, you should be looking at charging a rental fee of £3 a month for a small artwork up to £20 a month for a giant one.

So let's assume you're going to be charging, say, £8 a month for a medium-sized one. That doesn't sound a lot until you realise that the artwork probably only cost you £25 to buy – and that's taking it on the high side. So after three months it's paid for and the rest (after marketing expenses, travel, etc.) is pure profit. Better still, that artwork could keep earning you money (from different customers of course) for four or five years before it's ready to be retired.

You can also charge higher if it's a display made from multiple props.

If you had 10 display pieces to rent out you'd make £80 a month – or £960 a year. But with 50 that would

be £4,800.

Remember, you're not doing much work for this business after you've put the effort into approaching clients. The items earn an income for you while sitting in another person's property.

So imagine adding this service to your wedding prop service – and you could feasibly be looking at almost £15K a year from a business that's not full-time.

Bottom Line

This is great part-time side hustle to capitalise on the coming wedding boom, and the many other big parties and celebrations that will happen after lockdown. But if you want to develop this into a bigger business there are loads of items that can be very profitably rented out to many businesses in your local area as they emerge from lockdown.

Yes, it takes creativity and effort, especially if you want to increase the margins by upcycling and repairing old items to rent out, but it's a highly rewarding and fulfilling enterprise that will never get boring.

How to Start and Run a Successful Subscription Box Business

Back in 2017, I first alerted you to a growing opportunity in subscription boxes as a home business. This is where you bundle items into a box that you post to customers on a monthly basis. It could contain anything from cakes and sweets to clothes, flowers, craft materials and homemade toiletries.

Well, the trend has skyrocketed since then. Research released in 2019 by the Subscription Trade Association (SUBTA) showed that the eCommerce subscription market had grown 17.33% in the last five years.

And that was before the global pandemic.

The lockdowns and restrictions on shopping have accelerated this growth even further. After all, a retail model where products arrived at people's doors could not have been more ideal.

According to ScaleFast.com more than half (53.3%) of subscription-based businesses saw continued good rates of take-up... almost a quarter (22.5%) saw their growth accelerate... and only 12.8% saw subscription growth slow (yet even they were still adding new customers!)

Cashback website company TopCashback reports that two in five British consumers have signed up to new subscriptions since the Covid-19 pandemic. That means 57% of us in this country have a subscription of some kind.

Michaël Maarek, Founder of AllSubscriptionBoxes.co.uk, a price comparison website, says: *"During May (2020) our website for UK subscription boxes received 173% more visitors compared to the same period in May last year. Categories that have enjoyed the highest increase in demand are kids' boxes –*

parents are looking for innovative ways to entertain children while schools are shut – and food boxes, especially recipe boxes and meal-kits.”

This business trend is not going to decelerate just because lockdown restrictions end. The world is a different place to how it was, and subscription models are undoubtedly the future.

Getting into this business on your own small scale, could be a pandemic-proof enterprise that works whatever the circumstances.

So in today's issue I want to revisit this idea, with new tweaks and fresh suggestions based on the trends that have emerged in the 4 years since I reported on it.

Make no mistake – while the market has grown, there is still room for individuals to cash in, as long as you find a niche that allows you to stand out. You don't need thousands of customers to make money, and you don't need to shell out for luxury items to put in boxes.

This works for homemade goods, upcycled goods and bundles of products that you can source from wholesaler sites and overseas importers.

Let's Take Another Look at the Basics...

In most traditional business models, you sell an item once and the customer buys once. Then you have to go back to the beginning, finding another customer and sell to them again.

Sure, you might hope to benefit from some repeat sales but nothing's guaranteed.

However, the subscription business model is different. Once you've found your customer and sold to them once, they are, in effect, buying from you month in and month out almost automatically.

So there are a lot of benefits:

- » You only have to find the customer once and make the initial sale once.
- » You benefit from regular sales, often monthly.
- » Many customers stay with you long term, building up a valuable customer base.
- » You make a residual income every month.
- » You can grow your business turnover exponentially. It not just grows but grows faster month by month.
- » It's easier to run than a conventional business. You benefit from a predictable cash flow. You can plan ahead, knowing exactly what stock you

need to order and when you need to ship it.

This business format is known by several names, such as 'subscription box business', 'business in a box', '(product) of the month club', and so on.

Boxes might be delivered weekly (or monthly, or quarterly) depending on the kind of product – for instance, a bread delivery might be weekly, a case of wine might be monthly, and art supplies might be quarterly.

Buyers can make ongoing payments by standing order, direct debit or through PayPal. Customers may also earn a discount for ordering and paying for goods, months, or even years, in advance.

So the real beauty of the business model for sellers is that revenue can continue for years, sometimes indefinitely. Orders are placed and paid for before boxes go out, so income is relatively predictable and there should be few or no cash-flow problems.

There are two main types of subscription box:

- » **A convenience box**, where recipients know what the box contains and they are simply buying for the ease of having known products delivered to their door, rather than buying on the high street and possibly paying extra. An example is Grind Coffee Pods, which delivers 30 environmentally coffee pods for Nespresso coffee machines each month in a blend of your choice (from £13.50 per month).
- » **A discovery box** where contents are designed to be a surprise. Subscribers will usually have a rough idea of what the box contains – such as products relating to food or drink, crafting or grooming – but they probably won't know the precise items they will receive. An example is ScrawlBox.uk, which provides creatives with a mystery box of premium art supplies every month for £15.

Popular categories include:

- » **Food and drink.** Including wine, beer, tea and coffee. Ideally, make your product handmade/artisan and locally produced. An example is selecting your own tea blends.
- » **Beauty and grooming.** Cosmetics and body care products are an ideal subscription product, as they're consumed regularly. Men's cosmetics are popular.
- » **Health and fitness.** For example: organic foods, health and vitamin supplements, diet foods, over-the-counter medicines, body building supplies.

- » **Clothing and fashion.** Examples: underwear, lingerie, nightwear, socks, ties and T-shirts. There are also clothing subscriptions linked to particular interests, like gaming. Also jewellery and fashion accessories.
- » **Media products.** Books and eBooks. Paper and online newsletters.
- » **Audio and video products.** Including vinyl, CD/DVDs, gaming, audio/ video downloads, software, phone apps. These can be stand-alone products, or perhaps part of a subscription website.
- » **Hobbies and interests.** You can sell information, tools and supplies, perhaps in box or kit form – everything from art, woodwork and home brewing to playing a musical instrument. Or operate a subscription site offering information, news, tutorials, courses and mentoring online.
- » **Sport.** You can subscription sell products for all sports, both participation and spectator. For example: football, tennis, golf, darts, horse riding, swimming, martial arts.

The Latest Hot Trends

To give you a snapshot of the most popular trends at the moment, here are some choice niches from *Glamour* magazine's Best Subscription Boxes of 2021.

- » **Estrid** – Pick a Scandi-cool handle then get a kit with two cartridges and a matching wall mount. After that, get new razor heads delivered however frequently you like.
- » **Bloombox Club** – Pot plant subscription service from £35 a month (including pot). BloomBoxClub.com
- » **Monthly Seed Discovery** – A seed subscription box for kids to plant their own vegetables, flowers and herbs. Monthly for £11.95.
- » **Bloom & Wild** – Flowers, straight through their letterbox ready to bloom. Choose between delivering flowers every seven, 14 or 28 days and then pick between regular or luxe boxes. From £20 per bouquet. BloomAndWild.com
- » **Unbox Your Growth** – A Mindset Subscription Box which helps you with a different life skill using cards with information and activities (from £41 per month).
- » **Birchbox** – Make-up and skincare. Each month, they'll receive five handpicked products specially selected for their skin type, hair type

and personal preferences. From £10 per month. BirchBox.co.uk

- » **Baker Boxx** – Delivers a unique bread or cake making kit each month. Each box comes with a new recipe as well as all of the ingredients and instructions! £35 for three months.
- » **Seasonal Candle Subscription Gift Box** – Scented, eco-friendly soy candles delivered once a season, plus extra goodies for the perfect night in. Four times per year for £34 per box.
- » **Gousto** – The ingredients and recipe cards for healthy zero-waste dishes. Weekly, from £4.37 per serving.
- » **Letterbox Sweets** – Get interesting treats delivered every month for three months for £24,

We know that gourmet food and wine boxes are really popular, with companies like Graze, Hello Fresh, Hotel Chocolat being established and well-known.

But as you can see, hot trends also include baking, mental health, gardening, eco-friendly products and relaxation. These are niches that you could get into.

Three Options for Starting a Box Service

- » **You can turn an existing Amazon, Etsy or eBay enterprise into a subscription box service.** If you already sell items online, you can use this as a bolt-on recurring payment side of the business to boost profits and establish a regular income.
- » **Turn your own homemade items into a box business.** Over the past few years, *What Really Makes Money* has shown you how to create businesses out of juices, home-blend teas, plants, seedlings, home-grown mushrooms, health food and street food, printed T-shirts, and a range of different craft products on Etsy. All of these could make for unique boxes that only you offer, and which help you stand out from the crowd.
- » **Source products from low-priced overseas wholesalers that you can ‘bundle’ into box-based products.** Alibaba.com offer a massive choice of items that you can get at super-low prices, especially when you buy in bulk – but I have also shown you many alternatives to Alibaba where you can shop around for your items at a price that allows you to make a good profit.

You might already have a firm idea of what kinds of products interest you, but if not, here are some ways to come up with one:

Finding Ideas for Your Subscription Business

1. Copy a proven subscription business idea (but try to differentiate it with your own unique take).

Look at products already being offered in subscription boxes and either make your boxes a variation on an already popular theme or look for a gap in the market to specialise in a product only you can provide. You are looking for products that people will buy and look forward to receiving on a regular basis. You'll also find wine, craftwork materials, make-up and beauty products, toys, socks, local history books, tea bags, coffee and many other products will work.

2. Come up with something totally new.

What might people want to buy on subscription but currently can't? Think of things you'd love to receive through the door on a regular basis, or ask your friends and family (if it's a new niche, then test it first to make sure). Of course, if you turn your own bespoke, handmade or upcycled items into a business, then you will inevitably be new and original.

3. Do something better.

What do you yourself buy on subscription, if anything? How could you do that better? Or what can you see out there that could do with a twist or an adaptation to a different audience.

To help you come up with ideas, here's an American site that's full of proven box services that you could bring to the UK.

Go to: MySubscriptionAddiction.com

If you click on the 'discover' tab at the top of the website, you'll see that they list the readers' picks of 2021 and also the editors' picks. These are clearly popular services, so this is a great place to start your research.

When you find something you like, take a look on Google to see if it's available in the UK. If it's not, then type in some key words to see if a similar kind of subscription box is available here in Britain. If it isn't, this could be a really exciting opportunity to

be the first in the UK market for something that's already proven to work in the States. However, even if there is a UK version, you could still find your own twist or angle on it that makes you unique.

Remember, competition is never a bad thing. It shows that there is strong demand and plenty of customers willing to pay. So don't give up on an idea just because someone is already doing it. Instead, think about ways to better it – whether that's through price, style, branding, delivery or the fact that you make your own products.

What Makes a Good Subscription Box Product?

You can sell anything, almost. But some things lend themselves more to subscription selling than others. For example:

- » **Anything that people buy regularly anyway.** It makes it a much easier sell.
- » **Something that is consumed, e.g. eaten or used up.** This way the customer needs to keep re-ordering.
- » **Something that offers convenience.** It's easier to have delivered than to go out and buy. Wine sells on subscription partly for this reason – it's easier than browsing thousands of bottles in a shop and then carrying cases of wine home.
- » **Something that appeals to more affluent cash-rich, time-poor consumers.** As well as having more money to spend they are more likely to appreciate the benefits of having someone else do their shopping.
- » **Something that's fun, new or novel.** People love the idea of being the first to discover exciting new ideas and new products.
- » **Something not sold in shops, or not easily found.** Not essential but an added advantage.
- » **Something that's easy to ship, i.e. compact and light.** Although it's not absolutely essential it's an advantage. This helps you keep your selling price competitive.

A good example would be jigsaws.

EXAMPLE IDEA: Monthly Puzzle Subscription

There will be people who do them regularly, who might benefit from a monthly or quarterly puzzle. It's not the sort of thing that's easy to find in regular shops, and it's something that's fun to receive in the post and very easy to package and post.

To be unique, you could make your own puzzles, using designs or photos you get from public domain sources (see the January issue of *WRMM* for a huge list of sources).

You could use a trade website like this to manufacture them for you: TradeJigsaws.
AllJigsawPuzzles.co.uk

You can provide them with an image and they'll create puzzles as long as you've a minimum order of 25. Or sign up for a trade account, select at least 24 units and you get an automatic trade discount.

So this is something that would be new, novel, unique and personalised.

Customers could choose from a theme for the jigsaws – for instance, vintage cartoons and illustrations, old maps, NASA space age, animals, nature, the seaside. Then you could surprise them each month with a new image on a new jigsaw.

A version of this business does already exist in the UK – if you go to PuzzleSubscription.com/subscriptions you'll see that this company offers puzzles for just under £15 a month.

However, you don't get any choice in the style and themes of the art on the puzzles – and that's probably the most important element for people when picking a jigsaw puzzle. So with this particular idea, you have a huge opportunity to capture a smaller but more devoted audience by focussing on a niche – you could aim it at young kids who love dinosaurs, aliens and monsters, or aim it at birdwatchers and nature lovers. Maybe have a selection of styles and niches where the customer gets to choose an option that most suits their tastes."

Of course, this is one idea, but you can see how it's possible to create a box from home using readily-available resources and platforms.

How to Set Up the Business

You can set up your own WordPress site, choosing a ready-made theme and promoting your boxes from there,

However there are 'plug and play' subscription site platforms that can make it even easier than creating your own site, even with WordPress.

Here are two ready-made platforms you can use:

» **Cratejoy.com/sell** – Cratejoy is a platform best suited for selling physical products on subscription, eg., a box-type business. With Cratejoy you can choose whether to build your

own website and use it alongside Cratejoy or build a website on Cratejoy itself. It provides everything you need to set up and run a subscription business. Even better, it is designed for non-technical people to use.

» **Subbly.co** – This is similar to Cratejoy in that it is most suited to subscription box selling of physical products. A useful feature is that you can tailor subscriptions to suit the need of different customers.

An alternative to holding your stock yourself is dropshipping. That is, as you obtain a new subscription from a customer send all their details to your supplier and have them send the order out to the customer each week/month or whatever.

Not every supplier will be able to do dropship and you can still go ahead if they can't. However, it is well worth looking at the possibilities.

Pricing

There are two important issues to consider here...

1. **What other competitors are charging.** Aim to set your subscription at about the same level.
2. **What your customers will be happy to pay...** without too much resistance. Remember, everybody likes to think they've got good value or, better still, got more than they've paid for.

If you're selling a subscription box of individual items, price your box at less than the items would cost individually. For example, a box of five crafting items worth £5 individually should be really popular with customers if priced at £14.99 a month.

Prices of around £10 to £40 a month are typical. This doesn't mean that both higher (and lower) amounts won't work though.

Profit Projection

Let's assume you are selling a subscription box at £30 a month. And let's also assume you have five products in each box. The items have a RRP of £40 in total – so you can promote this '£40 value for £30' in your marketing.

Now assume that your products cost you £8 per box at trade price, and packing and shipping costs £3. So, each subscription earns you a gross profit of £19 per month approximately.

» If, after six months, you have 100 subscribers

your monthly earning would be £1,900 – or £22,800 a year.

» If, after six months, you have 500 subscribers your monthly earning would be £9,500 or £114,000 per year.

Of course, you need to factor in running costs like website hosting, platform cost and advertising, but you can see that it doesn't take many subscribers to take a substantial profit.

Summary

Since I first showed you this idea four years ago, the market has grown and developed, with more and more people signing up for these box services every year. There is plenty of room for the home entrepreneur to come up with a unique twist in some of the smaller niches – with really huge margins if you can make or design your own products, but also good margins on bulk-bought imports from the Far East.

Check Out This Classic In-Play Football Betting System

I recently received sad news that one of our key contributors to WRMM's sister sports betting publication – *What Really Wins Money* had passed away.

Known to his many fans simply as The Patriarch, each issue for over 10 years, this veteran of sports betting would delve into his vast archive of systems and strategies collected over decades, and bring them to a new audience.

As a tribute to The Patriarch, I asked WRWM's editor – Clive Keeling – to select one of his favorite systems and share it with you.

Over to The Patriarch...

Yes, it's time for something on football, and I'm going to start with a football bet that I've never written about previously. It's the Over/Under 2.5 Goals market and it's the Under 2.5 Goals that catches my attention first.

It's easy to see why it has become such a popular bet. You are not having to forecast a game ending as a Home Win or an Away Win or a Draw – you can win with any of these results with six possible scores.

You win with 1-0, 2-0, 0-1, 0-2, 0-0 and 1-1. And it shouldn't be an impossible task to find a home team that scores few goals at home playing against an away team that is not renowned for scoring very many on its travels.

(**Editor's Note:** Under 2.5 Goals is profitable when the total goals in a game equal two or fewer. You cannot, of course, have 0.5 of a goal. This 0.5 is added to separate the bet with two goals or fewer from over 2.5 goals, which is profitable when there are three goals or more scored in total in a match.)

You can find all the necessary information at SoccerStats.com. I'd look for the last five home scores and the last five away scores for the teams involved.

Unfortunately, as I write, teams haven't played 10 matches to give us that information, but when they have, I'd be looking for a home team that had scored five goals or fewer; and an away team with a similar record. Such a pairing should give us a good chance of success.

But there is a catch. Bookmakers are more than alert to what I've just written and offer odds accordingly. These odds would be short – no chance of odds against and probably medium to short odds-on. Indeed, if you wish to save yourself the trouble of counting home goals and away goals in the last five games and do things the lazy way, you could just look at the Betfair or bookies' odds and where these are around 1.6 to 1.8 for Under 2.5 Goals you might consider such a game for a bet. There will be odds shorter than 1.6, perhaps safer bets, but not such good value.

Having got these figures, I decided to give them a

trial run as I write, and the date for this is Saturday 22nd September 2018.

Since we don't yet have form for the 10-game approach, we'll use the lazy way of taking the bookie or Betfair odds, those of 1.6 to 1.8, and these are from Betfair.

I picked the English Premier and Championship Leagues and the Scottish Premier League to find if they could supply our bets. They did, eight in total, which I thought was enough to be going on with. I rejected all odds outside my 1.6 to 1.8 limits. I have to say that the results were not spectacular, but they did produce a profit, and I suppose that's not too bad for a start. Of the eight matches, five were under 2.5 goals and as single bets, as I said, there was a profit and also as doubles. But I'd like to wait until we have form from 10 or more games before being confident about any real success with the idea.

But I do have another idea for Under 2.5 Goals that is perhaps more exciting. The bet I've written about is one you place and leave, waiting for the scores later to see what you've won. But I've been converted now to do a spot of trading and the Under 2.5 market is a good one, I believe, for that.

And, of course, you can't leave the bet but must follow it closely minute by minute. I know Clive is a master trader and I hope he won't be too hard on me, an apprentice to the trade. Trading is all about buying low and selling higher, or Backing high and Laying lower. The Under 2.5 market will do this for you automatically and make a profit – if you have a bit of nerve.

Here's my thoughts on it. Just before the kick-off, the average odds for a match on the Under 2.5 Goals market is around the 1.9 mark. You Back at that price. The game starts and after just a minute or two you will see the odds start to come down. This happens, obviously, because the longer a game goes on without a score, the more likely it is to end up with under 2.5 goals, and therefore the odds reduce.

To take it to extremes, what odds would you get five minutes from the end of a game if the score then was 0-0, or with one goal scored? Nil would be the answer. After 10 to 12 minutes, depending on how the game is going, the odds could be down to perhaps 1.6. At that point, you might consider placing a Lay bet and then cash out making a small profit. You Backed at 1.9 and layed at 1.6 so that makes your profit.

Of course, what you don't want is for a goal to be scored in these opening minutes and, thankfully, it doesn't happen too often. If you can hold your nerve for longer than the opening 10 minutes, then you will see the odds drop further, making your profit greater, but I couldn't recommend going beyond 20 to 25 minutes.

If a goal is scored, then you have two options before you. Either wait a minute or two until the odds figure settles down after the goal – clearly it will be a figure higher than the 1.9 at which you Backed – so you Lay and cash out there, suffering a smallish loss; or you do nothing but sweat it out and hope that the rest of the game produces no more than one goal, in which case you've won your original bet.

If you are new to this whole business, try out the idea using only small stakes, or even just paper trade until you get the hang of it and see if it is something you would like to continue with.

If you are a Betfair software user, you can use a simulation/virtual mode in real markets, to enhance your 'paper trading'. You would be trading the real odds, in real time.

For those trading via Betfair.com, the website provides a 'cash out' facility, where you can lock in profit with the click of a mouse.

SoccerStats.com can be extremely useful.

The key to success for this trading idea is timing. The 'time of goals' table found at the website gives you an indication of the goals scored and conceded by teams each 15 minutes. The ideal traders' scenario would be to see no goals scored or conceded in the first 15 minutes.

Congruency is what you are after here. You want a home and away team pulling together to produce a consistent pattern of Under 2.5 Goals matches.

I would also recommend a look in the 'Challenge Table'. The Challenge Table shows results by league position.

Bottom Line: If in-play football betting interests you, then I highly recommend you check out Clive Keeling's *InPlay Football Academy*:

DelayReactTrade.com/recommended