



Venture Mentors, LLC

Self-Employment is a Viable Option.... Really!

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What is Venture Mentors?

Venture Mentors is a unique consulting firm that specializes in helping people with disabilities successfully launch and manage profitable small businesses or micro-enterprises.

Venture Mentors provides a one-of-a-kind linkage between the business world and the vocational rehabilitation or disability services systems.



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Why Self-Employment?

In many cases, self-employment is the very best option for someone with a disability and may be a far better option than wage employment. Self-employment can:

- Give greater flexibility to the owner
- Give greater freedom
- Allows independence and autonomy
- Provide greater income
- Allow for asset building
- Accommodate some disabilities more readily than wage employment



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What Kind of Businesses?

Some of the Businesses:

- Coffee Shop
- Art - Painting
- Engraving
- Dollar Store
- Agri-business
- Horse Stable
- Collectable Trading
- Art - Sculpture
- Auto Repair
- Home Décor Sales
- Import
- Printing
- DVD Montage creation
- Photography
- Computer Repair
- Record Transcription
- Medical Billing
- Video Training
- Music Promotion
- Music Production
- Realtor



What Kind of Businesses?

Some of the Businesses:

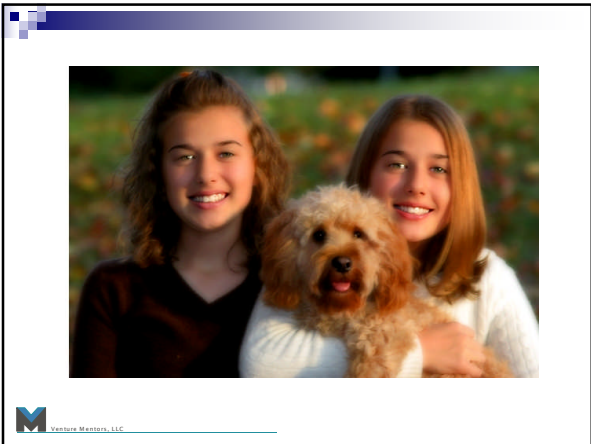
- Paving Construction
- Greeting Card Design and Sales
- Tee Shirt Design and Sales
- Massage Therapist
- Art Studio
- Wholesale Distribution
- Transportation
- Vending
- Janitorial

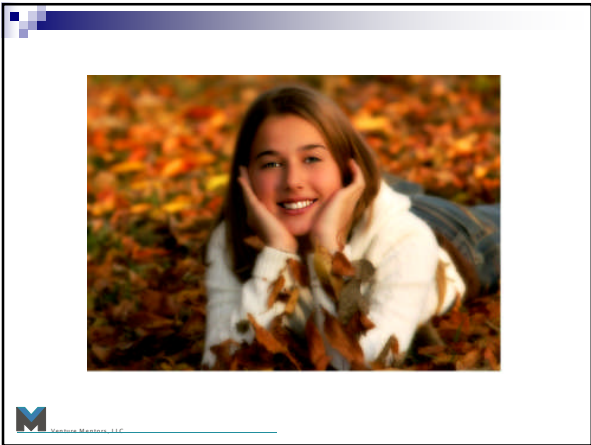


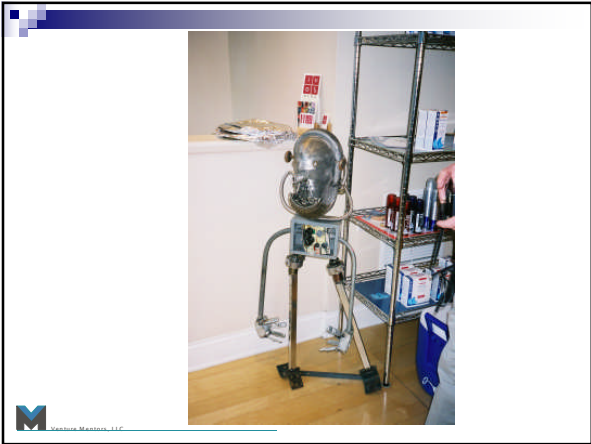
Who Owns These Businesses?

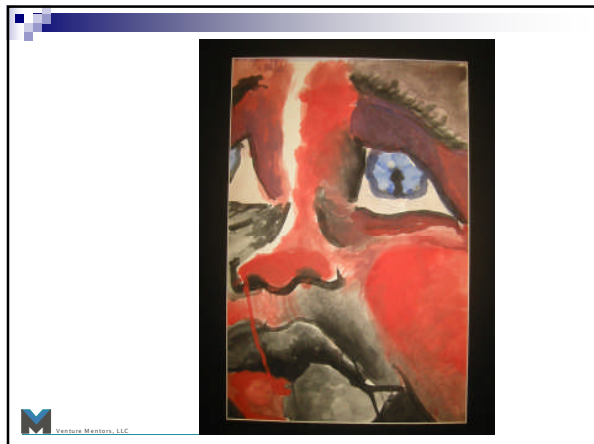
- Some people in this group – People you know
 - Jim Chesser – Memorabilia trading
 - Trent Altman – Painting
 - Kevin Webb – Horseback riding
 - Joe Carwile – Photographer
 - Jim Reed – Metal Artist
 - Melissa Amaral – Artist

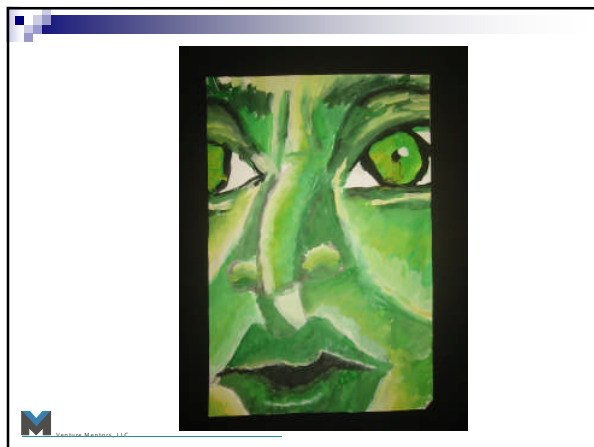













Is self-employment right for me?

It depends – are you someone who....

- Likes to work independently?
- Is willing to work hard to get the business going?
- Isn't afraid of being responsible for how the business does?
- Will take care of all the extra stuff that comes with owning a business?

How Do You Start?


- A Business Idea
- Who are the customers?
- Is anyone else doing this?
- Where will the business be?
- Do you need any help or training?
- Do you know how being in business will affect your benefits?



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How Do You Start?


- Open a case with Vocational Rehabilitation
- Get a Benefits Analysis from the Benefits Specialist
- Talk to people that are in a similar business
- Talk to people that would be your customers
- Give me a call



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What Makes a Business Successful?


- Good planning
 - Figure out the business
 - Figure out who the customer is
 - Figure out what the customer wants
- Be different
 - Different product
 - Different delivery
 - Different service



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What Makes a Business Successful?

- Don't
 - Do the same thing as everyone else
 - Start without a plan
 - Assume customers or market
 - Rely on volunteer labor or paid human service workers
 - Expect others to do it all for you
 - Make commitments or purchases until you have the plan



What Makes a Business Successful?

- Do
 - A lot of planning BEFORE you open the doors
 - Talk to people about the business
 - Get the best advice possible from people who know about business
 - Get supports in place before you start the business
 - Know what you need to get started and how much it will cost
 - Start small and grow the business over time



Won't owning a business cause me to lose my Social Security?

- No – SSI does not count a business or things owned by the business as resources
- There are special work incentives that apply just to self-employment
- It is actually easier to control countable income in self-employment than in wage employment. You can control what happens to your benefits!

More on Self-Employment and Social Security

- Some work incentives (PASS) can be used to finance business start-up
- The way your business is structured and how you keep your books matters – get help before you start!
- See a Benefits Specialist for advice before you do anything else!!!
