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Military Spouse Entrepreneur Guide

7th Edition
2023

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Brought to you by the Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs™ (AMSE™)

Building and Managing Product Businesses as a Military Spouse

- 
- > **Dominating the Market:**
5 Powerful Strategies for Small Product-Based Businesses
 - > **Stand Out in a Sea of Businesses:** Tips for Creating a Strong Brand Identity

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A Note from AMSE™'s Founder

Hello fellow milspouse, milspouse supporter, veteran or champion,

Seeing how the Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs™ (AMSE™) has grown since its inception in July 2019 is incredible. As we celebrate our fourth birthday, it amazes me to witness the significant impact AMSE™ has had on the military spouse community. Working alongside Stars and Stripes to produce the Military Spouse Entrepreneur Guide (MSEG), we have made a real difference.

This MSEG is our seventh issue, signifying four years of consistently releasing two issues per year. In this latest edition, we've focused our content on product-based businesses. As a product-based business, unique challenges arise, and in this guide, we share invaluable tips, tricks, and tools to overcome them.

Being a product-based business while constantly moving as a military spouse can be particularly challenging, but we've compiled insights from spouses who have experienced these issues firsthand. They generously share their successful strategies, confidently helping others navigate this journey.

In collaboration, we have crafted this comprehensive guide, filled with resources and strategies that will lead you to success. It is a compilation of insights from individuals in situations like yours—dedicated spouses who have navigated similar challenges and are eager to divulge the secret recipe for thriving as a small business owner in today's ever-changing landscape. Many of these individuals have invested years of effort, conducted thorough research, and embraced the unknown to conquer obstacles so that they can bypass those hurdles. Each one of them serves as a mentor,

equipped with vast experiences and a genuine desire to witness your triumphs, just as AMSE™ envisions for you.

I assure you that within this MSEG, you'll discover valuable solutions to tackle challenges and ignite your creativity. Personally, as I went through these resources, I found myself inspired, jotting down notes even as a multi-venture entrepreneur in my fourth year of building AMSE™. The learning journey never stops, and it translates to continuous growth at every stage. I always keep in mind that I am part of this incredible community, just like you, building and growing together. Though we may be at different stages, we share the same journey.

Whenever I see the final version of this guide, I am amazed by the immense talent within our milspouse community, and I genuinely treasure their contributions. At AMSE™, our sincere hope is that you'll gain valuable insights, perspective, and motivation to pursue your dream business, regardless of the challenges posed by the military. Just like AMSE™, a community of milspouse entrepreneurs defying odds, breaking barriers, and shattering myths on a global scale, we are here to support you as you embrace your journey. You are #morethanamilspouse.

-Moni Jefferson
Founder and CEO of AMSE™



Moni Jefferson, Founder & CEO of AMSE™
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

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Nina Blohm, Owner of Blohm, LLC
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

By Jananya Harrington, Owner J.Harrington
Reading time: 4 min, 14 sec

Finding a way to finance your product-based business can be challenging!

You finally have an idea that you not only feel passionate about, but has the potential to turn your family's finances around. You scrimp and scrape, but no matter how hard you try to cut corners and save, it doesn't begin to cover your plans.

But there's hope!

There are ways to fund your business apart from using your finances or getting traditional loans. These will give you the capital to start and may be easier.

Let's get started!

1.Crowdfunding

In its infancy, crowdfunding was used for things like saving the whales, raising money for the sick, and other charities, but it has become a popular way for entrepreneurs to get their start. Sites like Kickstarter, Indiegogo, RocketHub, Fundable, and Fundly have all garnered a reputation for seed funding gold. The best part? Sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo allow you to reward donors with first dibs on your products. Nothing like exclusivity to stir up buzz on your product.

2.Friends and Family

This option isn't for everyone, but for those of you who have friends that love your product, this may not be such a bad idea. Your cheerleaders and mentors who have followed your dream from seed to blossom may be dying to support you somehow; why not a donation? Tread carefully, though, as borrowing from friends and family is always tricky; just have a clear plan to return their investment and stick to it.

3.Pre-Sales

Do you have a product that has been proven to work? Can your friends and customers testify to this? Then a pre-sale may be the thing for you, and it's exactly what it sounds like. You pitch your product to your audience with the promise of exclusive bonus and offers, and use those funds to start your production. This is a fantastic

Don't Go for Broke: 5 Ways to Finance Your Product-Based Business

way to use up all your inventory. Just make sure you have enough time to fill your orders promptly so customers aren't kept waiting.

4.Angel Investors

Angel investors or private investors can be more than willing to give you money for your business, in exchange for a stake in your vision, which means you have someone else wanting to make decisions with you and you have a bit less creative control. But if you are willing to compromise to get your product out there, you'll need to get your business plan printed and your pitch deck on point. You can find your angel on Linkedin or through online services like Angel Capital Association.

5.Startup Incubators

Having a startup is not easy, but what if you could stack the odds in your favor by joining a group? According to the PappaJohn Entrepreneurial Center, 90% of startups that began in incubators are succeeding three years later, and 87% are still out there five years later! The applications are competitive, but if you are lucky enough, you and your business are off to a beautiful start.

Factors to Consider

It is always a good idea to do your research.

Study your market extensively to clearly understand the type of capital it takes to establish your business: raw materials, serving items, packaging materials, and postage if you plan on mailing orders.

Invest only what you can afford to lose, minimize your spending without compromising quality, and don't quit your day job until you are turning a profit.

Words of Wisdom

After speaking with successful military spouse entrepreneurs, there are a few resounding words of wisdom:

On funding: "Use savings and profits from initial sales to fund your business. Especially the latter- it can take effort to dip into an already tight budget. Use what you make to make more of what you love."

On portability: "Consider the portability of your business. We all move often, so it's important to consider state restrictions and regulations on hand-made products. Do your research and ensure you can accommodate those changes with each move."

On love: "Perfect your craft and keep the love for what you do."

Go All Out

Being a military spouse is hard. We give so much of ourselves to follow our service members, often leaving careers behind or failing to start them.

It is no wonder, then, that entrepreneurship was made for us. We get to build and make businesses from our passions, on our terms and take them wherever we go.

Funding can be a stumbling block, but don't let the thought alone fault your progress.Take one or more of the options we've given you and go. Go all out. Because when it comes to carving out financial independence from this crazy beautiful life we lead—there is no other way to get it done.

Don't look back; you got this.

AMSE™ Action: Log into www.AMSEmembers.com and watch the masterclass replay on crowdfunding.

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Stand Out in a Sea of Businesses:

Tips for Creating a Strong Brand Identity

By Amy L. Hawthorne, Founder &
Creative Designer for The Ever Co.

Reading time: 3 min, 20 sec

Your brand plan and business plan should work together seamlessly. While a business serves as your method to provide your audience with a product, your brand reflects how you want the world to see what you offer. It is what makes your company unique and distinguishable. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on these key steps to ensure your company shines in a sea of 21st century entrepreneurial geniuses.

Step 1: Know your Audience

Product-based businesses must know who they want to serve and why they want to serve them. In knowing this, you will identify the tone of your brand.

- Is it a younger generation or older?
- Is it a group of educators or medical personnel?
- Is it for stay-at-home parents or the corporate world?

Knowing your audience will help you decipher how to cater to that audience to ensure they want to buy your product. Speaking in their tone builds trust and shared understanding. A customer's branding experience may make or break their business with that company.

Step 2: Know Your Competition

No matter how well you know your audience, you will blend in if you aren't identifiable from your competition. Find ways to stand out:

- Marketing strategy and language.

- Color schemes.
- Quality of your imagery or your website platform.
- The way you interact with your customers.

See what is and isn't working for your competitors, and then see how you can serve your community better. Market share analysis will help you better understand your industry and competitors.

Step 3: Develop a Brand Personality

A brand should have a personality.

Is it light-hearted and witty, or is it serious and deep? Is it colorful and cheerful, or is it neutral and moody? Pick five colors that inspire you. You can even create a mood board with images and fonts you love. Pinterest is an excellent tool for this.

All of these make up your brand personality. Incorporate this personality across all social media pages and websites to maintain consistency. You can even take it further and incorporate those same colors and styles into your home decor and fashion. This keeps your brand unified across all marketing channels.

Step 4: Write your Brand Story

Everyone loves a good story about how a business began. Did you know that a website's "about" page is the most visited page? Customers want to know YOU and your story—your elevator pitch. They don't just want to buy a product and spend their money. They want to know who they're supporting and why.

So incorporate your "why" into your brand.



Shannon Gonzalez, Owner of Tout Sweet Macarons
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

- What inspired the company?
- What values are most important to your company?
- Who are the faces behind the brand?

Your "triple bottom line" is a sustainability framework focusing on a business's impact on profit, people, and the planet. These performance measurements are critical for many brand stories. Whatever it is that serves as your "why," incorporate it into an account that gives customers no choice but to support you.

Step 5: Invest for Success

There are mixed schools of thought on this. Investing early in a nice camera for quality content, a professional website for your product, a logo you love, and marketing/content apps like Planoly (which helps visualize your content grid on social platforms), is worth the expense. When customers see a product or page that appears professional, they trust that product and company more.

Step 6: Seek Inspiration, Authentically

Seek inspiration; this is not confused with "copy a brand you love." If you have trouble figuring out what colors, fonts, and vibes inspire you, seek it out on

Instagram or Pinterest.

- Find feeds that speak to you.
- Analyze the brands that you love.
- What is it that you love about them?
 - Is it the colors?
 - The simplicity?
 - The tone?

Above all else, be original and authentic. This is what makes your brand uniquely you.

If you are thinking—what if I don't have an eye for aesthetics or a creative bone in my body? This is a valid concern when figuring out your brand. Sure, you can hire someone, BUT challenge yourself to make this process as authentic and original as possible. The more you fall in love with your brand, the more moving it will be to share it with the world. We all have something below the surface that makes our stories unique. Dive deep in your soul when discovering your brand identity.

This is how your brand will stand out in a sea of businesses. For your soul, after all, gives your brand its heartbeat.

AMSE™ Action: Log in to www.AMSEmembers.com and download branding essentials under business blueprints.

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS



Tiffany Haywood, Owner of Tiffany Haywood, LLC
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

Authenticity Aligned: Crafting a Product to Fulfill Your Mission and Drive Social Impact

By Sykora Zabel-Karr,
Owner of Mindfully Well, LLC
Reading time: 2 min, 55 sec

Military spouse entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful force for driving positive change. By aligning a product with a value system that is tied to a personal mission, entrepreneurs open the potential to make a significant impact in the world. Authenticity is the cornerstone of this venture and becomes crucial in

cultivating a thriving and purpose-driven business. Let's explore some strategies to navigate this intersection, empowering you to create a product(s) that embodies transformation through authenticity and positive change.

1. Understand Your Values and Passions

Embark on the process of self-discovery to lay the groundwork for your intentions. Take time to delve deep within yourself to uncover the essence of who you truly are. Be willing to ask yourself questions that unlock your innermost desires and priorities. This introspection will guide your focus and clarify your core as you discover the sincere motivations behind your business.

2. Identify Your Mission

Continue this process of self-discovery to bridge the connection between who you are as an individual and the profound "why" behind your entrepreneurial endeavors. This will provide you with a clear sense of direction and align your energy with meaningful efforts to ensure that every action you take is direct and concise. Moreover, you will then be able to communicate the nature of your business effectively.

3. Reflect on the Impact

Tune into the positive changes you aspire to make. Let this reflection serve as a powerful representation of what you hope to accomplish and the significance of your mission in inspiring you and your business. Utilize this opportunity of support to

fuel your commitment to a cause that fulfills you.

4. Integrate Product with the Purpose

Begin to break down the specifics of how you will infuse your product(s) with a meaningful mission by familiarizing yourself with your target audience and their needs. Conduct thorough research, implement effective marketing strategies, and consistently evaluate your progress to ensure your business resonates more. Be transparent and tell your true story, as this can connect deeper with your potential clientele. Let's take the example of a holistic wellness brand focusing on the family unit's mental well-being. Initially, the brand can offer various products designed to promote mental health. To support the local military community, the brand can collaborate with businesses owned by veterans or military families/spouses, incorporating their unique creations into their product line. Additionally, by taking a step further and partnering with other community businesses, the brand can establish an initiative to donate essential items to mental health nonprofits. This comprehensive approach seamlessly integrates their product with a purpose-driven approach, creating a compelling narrative that attracts conscious consumers and fosters a greater sense of connection and loyalty.

5. Establish Authenticity

Nurture a sense of integrity by holding yourself accountable to your values and personal mission. Embrace the

unique qualities that make your business distinct, which sets you apart and promotes a lasting impression. Honor the times of learning and growth and recognize that the path is not a destination but an ongoing process. Using the example in strategy 4, the brand establishes authenticity by showcasing its determination to address the diverse needs of its target audience, its dedication to inclusivity and empowerment, and its commitment to giving back to others.

Start your authentic product development with self-discovery through mindfulness practices. Set aside a dedicated time and quiet/comfortable space away from distractions and external pressures. Ask yourself probing questions about your values, passions, and strengths, such as: What principles guide my decisions and actions, what brings me the most joy, and what areas I feel confident and competent in? Consider journaling to document your thoughts, feelings, and insights along the way. Identify any limiting beliefs or self-imposed barriers that may be holding you back. Acknowledge and move through these with a positive mindset. Seek feedback from others who can provide valuable perspectives, guidance, and support. By taking part in self-discovery, you nurture prioritizing overall well-being for yourself and your business, which will set you up to create a thriving business founded on what is real-the products make a difference.

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

Operation Market Mastery: Your Strategic Guide to Customer Targeting and Competitor Analysis



Amy Lawson, Owner of Thrive Nutrition
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

By Lenna Zitter,
Owner of Magellanic Digital

Reading time: 2 minutes, 35 seconds

You're no stranger to strategy and adaptation as a military spouse entrepreneur. These skills are equally crucial in business, mainly when conducting market research. This essential mission helps pinpoint your target market and scrutinize your competition, giving you a 360-degree view of the market landscape.

Pinpointing Your Target Market:

Your target market is the distinct group of people who will benefit most from your product or service. They share specific characteristics like age, income, profession, or geographical location. With your unique perspective as a military spouse, your target audience might be more diverse, bound by shared experiences and needs.

Understand Your Offering:

The first step in identifying your target market is to understand your product or service. What problem does it address? Who would value this solution the most? This understanding will be the foundation of your target market identification.

Craft Customer Personas:

Develop comprehensive profiles of your ideal customers, encapsulating details like demographics, behavioral patterns, motivations, and goals. Consider your military community's unique challenges and circumstances and how your offering can alleviate them.

Deploy Surveys and Interviews:

Connect with potential customers within your community. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups can offer profound insights. Use your military network and military spouse-focused platforms to gather this invaluable data.

Scrutinizing Your Competition:

Knowing your competitors is as vital as knowing your customers. A thorough competitive analysis can reveal your standing in the market and spotlight opportunities for growth and differentiation.

Identify Your Competitors:

Begin by determining your direct and indirect competitors. Direct competitors provide similar products or services, while indirect competitors offer alternative solutions to the same problem.

Assess Their Strategy and Performance:

Inspect their marketing strategies, pricing, and customer reviews. What are they excelling at? Where are they lacking? These insights can help you discover gaps in the market that you can exploit.

Examine Their Customer Base:

Who are their customers? Are there overlooked segments? This can disclose untapped sections of the market for your business.

Stay Updated: Remember that competitive analysis isn't a one-and-done task. The business landscape constantly shifts, and staying informed about changes in your competitors' strategies can offer you a competitive advantage.

As a military spouse entrepreneur, conducting market research might seem like a formidable task, but it is an essential mission to undertake. The knowledge you gain will equip you to create a product or service that resonates with your audience and distinguishes itself in the competitive arena. It's all about strategic

planning, effective execution, and achieving your business objectives. On to your big entrepreneurial adventure!

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS



Alexis Mills-Harlow, Owner of Mindfully Military
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

Beyond the Transaction: How Product-Based Businesses Inspire Positive Change in the World

By Cindy Leslie,
Owner of BeYoutifully Uncommon
Reading time: 3 min, 30 sec

As product-based entrepreneurs, we aim to create something people need or want and inspire them with our vision and mission. We want our products to be more than just physical things. We want them to be a representation of a larger purpose and passion.

Check out how product-based businesses can inspire others in a meaningful way.

- 1. Telling your story:** This is one of the best things you can use as a business owner. It is your unique story that allows people to connect with you as well as with products. Share your triumphs, struggles, and experiences. By demonstrating how your product has helped you or others, you can build trust and encourage people to pursue their goals.
- 2. Building an online community:** Anywhere in the world, you can assess a larger audience. It can help boost your revenue. Your network is your net worth. By building a community around your product, you help customers feel like they belong and give them a place to connect with others with similar interests and

beliefs. You can support the community by providing helpful information or educational tools.

- 3. Giving back to the community:** This could be through hosting giveaways or making charitable donations. Even partnering with other organizations that align with your brand values. Contributing to something larger than yourself will inspire customers to make a positive impact. You can offer more than a transactional experience as your business is product-based. Understanding how one is inspired and guided is the first step in learning how to inspire others. Your why and the reason you started your business are special. It develops your brand and tells your story. You can inspire others with your drive, determination, passion, and creativity.
- 4. Environmental responsibility:** Consumers are becoming more conscious of their environmental impact in today's world. As a product-based entrepreneur, you can inspire others by incorporating eco-friendly practices into your business. Use sustainable materials, reduce waste, and support environmental conservation initiatives. By showcasing your commitment to the planet, you encourage your customers to be more environmentally responsible too.
- 5. Collaborations and partnerships:** Collaborate with like-minded

businesses, influencers, or artists sharing your vision and mission. Collaborations can spark creativity and introduce your products to new audiences. Partnering with other brands can also show your customers that you're not solely focused on competition but on collective growth and making a difference together.

- 6. Personalized customer experience:** Go the extra mile to personalize the shopping experience for your customers. Engage with them on social media, respond to their inquiries promptly, and address their feedback. A personalized and attentive approach makes customers feel valued and connected to your brand, inspiring them to become loyal advocates.
- 7. Empowering customer stories:** Encourage customers to share their experiences with your products. Feature these stories on your website or social media platforms to create a sense of authenticity and trust. When others see real-life examples of how your products have made a difference, they're more likely to be inspired to try them too.

stories, and offering educational content, you can make a meaningful and lasting impact on our customers and the world. Your products become not just objects, but catalysts for positive change and inspiration.

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS



Dominating the Market: 5 Powerful Strategies for Small Product-Based Businesses

By Wendy Hively, CEO & Founder of Charliemadison Originals

Reading time: 3 min, 15 sec

The marketing landscape has changed drastically in the last ten years. With the skyrocketing costs of paid marketing that contrasts with tiny marketing budgets, small business owners are learning to get creative with their marketing strategies.

The key to marketing is to consistently have a toolbox of strategies you rely on and a willingness to try something new. Stay curious and test new ideas, but don't get attached to the outcomes. If something doesn't work, move on. Adding one of these five powerful marketing strategies to your toolbox will help you boost sales, attract new customers, and turn existing customers into raving fans.

1. Social Media

Consider social media the gateway to your brand—it gives your followers a

peek inside your business and boosts your “know, like, trust” factor. Social media can often be unpredictable and frustrating, but here are some tips for using it to your advantage.

- **Create a monthly plan and schedule posts in advance.** This helps you strategize upcoming sales, new products, or collaborations and builds excitement for your audience.
- **Sprinkle in evergreen posts that showcase what makes your business unique,** for example, your story, mission, behind-the-scenes, or how your products help your customers.
- **Collaborate with other businesses** on giveaways, shoutout posts, or gift guides to increase your brand exposure, grow your audience, and build community.

2. Newsletter List

A newsletter list is a business non-negotiable and should always be your

#1 marketing tool. If social media disappears or you get locked out of your account, the email addresses on your list are like gold and allow you to communicate directly with your customers. Try these tips for starting and growing your newsletter list:

- **Offer a freebie or discount to entice customers to share their email.** Discounts are a controversial topic but if you create an amazing brand experience, first-time customers will return after that initial discount.
- **Consistency is key.** Start with a once-a-month email, then increase to twice until you're at 1-2 per week if that makes sense for your business.
- **Create a monthly plan of newsletter topics so you aren't reinventing the wheel each month.** Use an online design tool like Canva to create graphics templates to drop into your newsletter program for easy, professional-looking emails.

3. Facebook Group

Adding a Facebook Group for your business is one of the best free marketing tools. Your group members become your biggest supporters and raving fans. Treat them like VIPs, spoil them with extra perks, and share things they won't see elsewhere. Try these easy-to-implement strategies to get your group started:

- **Invite your friends and family.** Ask friends (or employees) to be group admins to share responsibility for approving requests to join and comment.
- **Create perks just for your group members.** This could be monthly giveaways, early access to new products, special events, or exclusive coupon codes.
- **Get your members involved**—ask questions, create polls, encourage posting, and host Facebook Lives.

4. Loyalty Program

A loyalty program gives customers extra perks for shopping, social media shares, referrals, and reviews.

They benefit with discounts, and you're rewarded with repeat purchases, satisfied customers, and social proof. You can set up a loyalty program through a paid app on the back end of your shop platform. Try these tips to get the most out of a rewards program:

- **Let your customers' words build brand trust.** Displaying customer reviews on your website gives social proof and establishes trust. You can even re-purpose reviews as social media and newsletter posts.
- **Offer double points days** for your VIPs or newsletter list to incentivize purchases.
- **Promote your program** through social media and newsletters to encourage customers to join.

5. SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO may seem like something other than marketing—in fact, most people would consider this a back-end website project. SEO can be confusing and time-consuming; however, investing time, money, or both is worth it.

SEO relies on keywords throughout your online shop and incoming and outgoing links to other websites to help search engines like Google match what people are searching for with your products. SEO doesn't provide instant gratification, so it's easy to put off. However, choosing to DIY basic SEO projects or hiring a professional to help will generate years of free marketing every time someone searches for the types of products you sell.

Whether new to implementing marketing strategies or looking for something to spice up your marketing toolkit, use these ideas to spark your creativity. Take what resonates with you and leave the rest. It's always up to you to do what makes sense for your small business.

AMSE™ Action: Check out www.AMSEmembers.com and grab the Social Curator discount to market on social media.

BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

Beyond the Box: The Strategic Power of Packaging

By Kat Yamamoto-Calvo,
Owner of Kat Calvo Digital

Reading time: 5 min, 5 sec

In today's competitive marketplace, businesses must go beyond the functionality of their products to create memorable experiences for customers. Packaging is often an overlooked aspect that can significantly contribute to your marketing strategy. Effective packaging design captivates consumers, generates excitement, and leaves a lasting impression.

Let's explore Japan for a moment. Japanese packaging design is a testament to the country's meticulousness and emphasis on detailed planning. Aesthetics, functionality, and user experience intertwine to create packaging that's as delightful as practical. Every element, from the choice of material and colors to the typography and imagery, is carefully considered and serves a purpose. Layers of packaging invite the user on a journey of discovery, often building anticipation toward the product within. Furthermore, there's a strong emphasis on sustainability, with many packages designed for reusability or with eco-friendly materials.

Here's how packaging becomes an essential marketing strategy that enhances the unboxing experience, fosters customer satisfaction, and drives brand loyalty.

Captivating First Impressions

Packaging is the first point of contact between a product and a consumer. A visually appealing package catches the eye and entices the customer to explore further. An elegantly designed box or an aesthetically pleasing label immediately communicates a sense of quality and attention to detail. This positive first impression sets the stage for the entire unboxing experience and creates anticipation for what lies inside. By investing in exceptional packaging, businesses can effectively differentiate their products from competitors and create a strong initial connection with customers.

Creating an Emotional Connection

Unboxing a product can evoke various emotions, and packaging plays a vital

role. Thoughtfully designed packaging can tap into consumers' desires and aspirations, aligning with their lifestyles and values. It can spark joy, excitement, and curiosity, enhancing the emotional connection between the customer and the brand. Unboxing becomes an experience that transcends the mere act of opening a package, transforming it into a moment of delight and anticipation. This emotional bond forged through packaging helps to create loyal customers who associate positive feelings with the brand and its products.

Enhancing the Unboxing Ritual

Unboxing a well-packaged product is akin to unwrapping a gift. The process becomes a ritual, engaging the customer in a multisensory experience. Packaging can incorporate various elements to heighten this experience, such as satisfying tactile sensations, crisp sound effects, or pleasant aromas. Well-designed inserts, such as thank-you cards, personalized notes, or samples, add an extra touch of care and thoughtfulness. By curating an engaging unboxing ritual, businesses leave a lasting impression and create share-worthy moments that customers are eager to document and share on social media, amplifying brand awareness and reach.

Memorable Unboxing as Brand Advocacy

An exceptional unboxing experience has the potential to turn customers into brand advocates. When customers are thrilled with their unboxing experience, they are more likely to share their positive experiences with others. Social media platforms are flooded with unboxing videos and images, and customers eagerly narrate their journey, sharing their joy and appreciation for the brand. These authentic testimonials act as powerful endorsements, attracting new customers and organically expanding the brand's reach. By investing in the unboxing experience, businesses can leverage their customers' enthusiasm and turn them into brand ambassadors, fostering a strong and loyal customer base.

So, how do you achieve all this without breaking the bank? Here are three easy, low-cost packaging ideas I have used myself and also recommended to my clients:

1. Recycled Material Packaging:

Using recycled materials is a cost-effective and environmentally friendly option. This could be anything from newspapers, magazines, old maps, or discarded books for wrapping or cushioning products. For added protection, you can use old bubble wrap or shredded paper.

2. DIY Stamped Paper:

This is a unique way to create personalized packaging. Purchase plain brown craft paper and create your own stamps using a potato or a sponge cut into your desired shape. You can use this to print your logo or other designs onto the paper. This can also extend to your branding with custom-made tags or labels.


3. Reusable Cloth Bags:

Inspired by the Japanese 'Furoshiki', you can package products in beautiful, reusable cloth bags. These bags can be purchased inexpensively in bulk or made from fabric scraps. Your customers will appreciate the dual-purpose packaging that can be used for storage or as a shopping bag, adding value to their purchase. Remember, the key to low-cost packaging is creativity, repurposing, and considering the dual usage of the packaging material.

Wrapping it all up

Packaging design is a crucial element in shaping the customer experience. By investing in well-crafted packaging that captures attention, creates emotional connections, enhances the unboxing ritual, and generates brand advocacy, businesses can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and foster brand loyalty. The unboxing experience should not be underestimated as it offers a unique opportunity for businesses to engage with customers on a deeper level and create a lasting impression beyond the product itself. In this competitive landscape, packaging can be a powerful tool that sets businesses apart and leaves a lasting impact on consumers. Remember, great products deserve great packaging!


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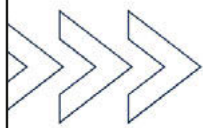
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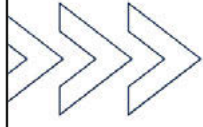


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3K+

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

Top Fintech Tools for Product-Based Businesses



Pearl Alimo, Author of *Maya Moves to a New Country*
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

By Shea Keats, CEO of Breakaway Bookkeeping & Advising

Reading time: 5 min, 5 sec

Chances are you started your business because you're passionate about your product, not because you love the accounting side of it all. However, you must accurately understand your company's financial health to run a successful business and remain compliant with state and federal tax laws. Thankfully, there are hundreds—possibly thousands—of financial technology tools to help you manage your company's books. There are so many options that it can be hard to know where to begin. To

help get you started, we've compiled a list of tech stack MVPs (and one bonus suggestion) we think are game-changers for any small business.

Cloud Accounting Platforms

If you don't already have one, we highly recommend a cloud accounting platform as the starting point for managing your company's financial activities and records. We always recommend this type of online (not desktop, and certainly not your spreadsheet) software because it provides greater flexibility when accessing your documents and makes it easier to add an offsite accountant or bookkeeper to your team if you ever need extra help.

Two of our favorites are [Xero](#) and [QuickBooks Online](#). Both provide a centralized platform for performing various accounting functions and accessing financial data. Xero is one of our favorites. We especially like Xero for small to medium-sized businesses because of its outstanding customer service and affordable price point. Its ease of use and thoughtful rollouts and improvements means less frustration for new users. QBO is also a trusted choice in the industry, and most accountants are familiar with it.

You can probably spend hours—if not days—of your life comparing these two platforms. This can be a great time to lean into a bookkeeper or advisor. Many small business owners will be served well by either of the big players in the industry, and we recommend both, based on the client's unique needs. A professional can help you make the right choice for you, both in the short term and in the future.

reports, visualizations, and analysis of key performance indicators, profitability analysis, and cash flow analysis. Fathom is best utilized when also working with an accountant who can help interpret and manage the data.

60-Minute CFO

This last recommendation is not software at all, but we've seen it revolutionize the way business owners view and manage their finances. After all, the increased organization, efficiency, and insights you'll glean from the fintech tools we've mentioned don't matter much until you know what to do with them. [60 Minute CFO](#) is a methodology for understanding your business through a book and/or an in-depth companion course that helps business owners "learn what your numbers are telling you and see your business' financials like a story unfolding in front of you." Many of our advisors have taken this course, and we found it particularly useful for product-based businesses. For example, you'll learn to look at KPIs other than profit and loss to ensure your cash flow is healthy and your business is growing. These KPIs will also help you anticipate problems and speak confidently with anyone supporting you and your business, whether your CPA or a potential investor.

When to Call for Support

While these are some of our industry-wide favorites, it's important to note that the right solutions will vary based on each company's size, industry, and specific needs. This can be a great place to bring in outside help. A fractional solution, such as a Breakaway advisor, can come alongside you to determine which specific tech stack will be most beneficial, assist with setup and act as a trusted partner to help you reach your business goals. Visit [BreakawayBA.com](#) for more information.

Payroll & HR

Unless you're a solopreneur, most product-based businesses will eventually have employees to manage. In that case, software for payroll and HR will be essential and make your life much easier! Two we often recommend are [Gusto](#) and [Rippling](#). Both offer robust payroll capabilities, including automated payroll, direct deposits, tax calculations and filings, employee self-service, and support for various pay types and schedules. Gusto has reasonably priced plans. It's great for small businesses looking for flexible HR tools that can grow with their business. Rippling is a good choice for remote or tech-heavy companies. It also features an easy-to-use dashboard and a quick onboarding process.

Reporting & Forecasting

[Fathom](#) is a business intelligence tool that integrates with Xero, Quickbooks, and other major cloud accounting players. It is known for its visually stunning, simple-to-understand business dashboard that lets you see the health of your business at a glance. It offers automated management reporting, custom

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

Maximizing Efficiency with VA and OBM Support in Your Product Business

By Naomi Suguitan,
Owner of Virtual Changers
Reading time: 2 min, 45 sec

Are you overwhelmed by the tasks involved in running your company? There is a solution that can help lighten your load and bring order to the chaos—virtual assistants and online business managers.

VA vs. OBM

Virtual Assistants (VAs) and Online Business Managers (OBMs) are two critical players in remote work, offering invaluable support to product-based businesses.

A VA is a virtual assistant who remotely provides administrative, technical, or creative assistance. Their typical tasks include email management, scheduling appointments, social media management, customer service support, and more. VAs excel at multitasking and help take day-to-day operations off your plate.

An OBM takes things a step further. They handle administrative tasks but also oversee the overall operations of your business. OBMs have extensive experience in project management and business strategy. They can take on team management, process improvement, financial analysis, and even marketing strategy implementation.

How can VAs and OBMs help run your business?

Virtual Assistants (VAs) and Online Business Managers (OBMs) offer invaluable support to product-based businesses, helping them run more efficiently and effectively. Here are some ways you can leverage their expertise:

- Administrative tasks
- Customer service
- Social media management
- Project coordination
- Inventory management
- Market research
- Email marketing campaigns
- Financial record-keeping

By outsourcing these tasks to virtual assistants and online business managers, you can streamline your operations, increase productivity, and focus on growing your product.

Which One Do I Need—a VA or an OBM?

VAs and OBMs can lighten the workload of running a business. But how do you know which one your business needs?

A VA is ideal for handling administrative tasks, such as customer service inquiries, managing emails, social media scheduling, and data entry. They are skilled at handling repetitive tasks that consume your precious time.

An OBM, however, is like having a project manager for your business. They excel at overseeing operations, managing teams, coordinating projects, and ensuring everything runs smoothly from start to finish. An OBM takes on more strategic roles within your business.

So how do you decide? Start by assessing your needs and goals. If you are drowning in day-to-day operations, a VA might be the perfect fit for streamlining those tasks.

However, if you're ready to take your business to the next level but lack the skills or time to manage projects effectively, an OBM could be just what you need to bring order and efficiency.

Ultimately, the decision boils down to understanding where your pain points lie and determining which role will best support the growth of your product-based business.

Steps to Finding the VA or OBM Perfect for Your Business

Now that you understand the valuable roles that VAs and OBMs play in helping run your product-based business, it's time to find the right fit for your specific needs:

1. **Define your requirements and expectations.** What tasks do you need assistance with? Are there any particular skills or experience required? Consider creating a detailed job description outlining



Amy Clark, Owner of Amy Clark Creative
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

these aspects to attract candidates who meet your criteria.

2. **Explore various platforms where you can connect with VAs and OBMs.** An excellent venue for finding a VA is Freedom Makers Virtual Services—a VA agency whose VAs are all military-affiliated. You can find qualified OBMs through the International Association of Online Business Managers—the only certified OBM program in the world.
3. **Once you've identified a few potential candidates,** take the time to interview them. Ask about their previous experience working with product-based businesses similar to yours. Inquire about their preferred communication methods and availability during peak times. Pay attention to their technical skills and personality fit within your team dynamic.
4. **Consider starting small before committing to long-term contracts.** Begin by assigning smaller projects or tasks as a trial period before expanding responsibilities further if satisfied with their performance.

Remember that finding the perfect VA or OBM may take time and effort, but the benefits to your business are well worth it.

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

The Military Spouse Entrepreneurship Act Will Strengthen America's Military Readiness

By: John Dearie,
Founder and President of the Center
for American Entrepreneurship

Reading time: 5 min, 6 sec

On June 14, Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) [introduced](#) legislation that will significantly enhance U.S. military readiness. The [Military Spouse Entrepreneurship Act](#) addresses the unique economic challenges and needs of military spouses—92 percent of whom are women—who have been taken for granted and overlooked for too long. The legislation will dramatically improve military spouse satisfaction and, therefore, active service member retention—and retention, more than ever, is critical to military readiness.

According to a 2022 U.S. Chamber of Commerce [report](#), military spouses face an unemployment rate of 22%, making them one of the highest unemployed demographics in the nation.

Military spouses make an incalculable contribution to the nation by bearing a unique and heavy burden. According to the Department of Defense, each year a third of all military personnel change duty stations, meaning that most military families endure a move every two to four years.

On the one hand, the nomadic aspect of military life has its appeal—another part of the country or world to explore, new friends to meet, exciting new experiences and opportunities. But frequent moves also mean interrupted relationships, social uncertainty or isolation, kids pulled out of schools and away from friends, anxiety and re-adjustment.

Perhaps most problematic, change of duty stations makes holding a job or pursuing a career that matches the education and qualifications of military spouses difficult or even impossible. The result is staggering unemployment and underemployment. [Surveys of military](#)

[families](#) reveal that nearly a quarter of military spouses are unemployed and as many as 60 percent experience underemployment—more than seven times the national average.

The ramifications of high military spouse unemployment are severe. Most obviously, under—or unemployment threatens financial security.

More fundamentally, under—and unemployment—particularly over long periods—can lead to feelings of unfulfillment, frustration, and resentment among military spouses unable to pursue their own professional goals. Career-related unhappiness, in turn, undermines spouses' satisfaction with the military lifestyle despite profound pride in serving the nation and participating in the military's mission.

Family finances and the military spouse experience—and their impact on military marriages and families—often determine whether a service member stays in or leaves the military. This is especially true when spouses and service members reach mid-career.

And, ultimately, retention determines military readiness. New service members can always be trained, but training cannot re-supply experience and professional maturity among military ranks. This reality is especially urgent given the increasing technological sophistication of modern warfare and the associated education, skill, and experience requirements of military personnel. At a time when the military is seeking to [raise retention rates](#) to make up for recruiting shortfalls, the relationship between spousal satisfaction and retention is especially critical. To retain its most skilled and seasoned service members, the nation's armed forces must find ways to ensure that military spouses can enjoy meaningful careers.

Fortunately, a powerful solution exists, a pathway that offers economic empowerment, financial remuneration, and on

terms consistent with the unique needs of military spouses—entrepreneurship.

Launching a business offers a unique professional experience that can be pursued without interruption from anywhere in the world. In addition to potential financial success, entrepreneurship provides a pathway to personal and professional fulfillment, the chance to pursue a long-time interest or idea, to create, to build something new from scratch, to become one's own boss and potentially an employer of others. In its inherent flexibility and self-autonomy, entrepreneurship is tailor-made for military spouses.

But entrepreneurship is also risky and fraught with challenges. Research has shown that a third of all startups fail by their second anniversary, half by their fifth. And to have the best chance of survival, entrepreneurs need help. They need to learn basic business skills, accounting, licensing and regulatory requirements, how to think through and perfect a product or service idea, how to identify and successfully pursue potential customers, how to secure the capital they need, and how to navigate the tax code.

The Senators' bill does three important things:

1. **First**, it recognizes military spouses as a distinct group with unique challenges and needs. Too often in the past, military spouses have been lumped in by policymakers with their active-duty spouses or with veterans—they are neither.
2. **Second**, the bill directs the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a program to assist military spouses in establishing, operating, and growing small businesses. The program would include business skill training, mentoring opportunities, and other support.
3. **Third**, the bill directs the Administrator to conduct a survey

at select military installations to identify barriers to forming, operating, and growing small business experienced by military spouses, and to submit an analysis of the survey findings to the House and Senate Small Business Committees within 180 days.

The bill has received the support of the Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs™ (AMSE™), and the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council.

"Entrepreneurship is the driving force of economic growth and job creation in America, and also a gateway to economic opportunity and financial security for military spouses," said John Dearie, president of the Center for American Entrepreneurship (CAE). "And yet military spouse entrepreneurs face unique barriers and challenges that can lead to frustration and resentment which, ultimately, can undermine military retention and readiness. The Enhancing Military Spouse Entrepreneurship Act provides access to support and resources that military spouse entrepreneurs need and deserve. CAE thanks Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) for their leadership on behalf of military spouse entrepreneurs and looks forward to working with their Senate and House colleagues to see the bill swiftly enacted into law."

"Military spouses make a unique contribution to the nation and entrepreneurship is a powerful pathway to their economic and personal empowerment," said Monika Jefferson, founder and chief executive officer of AMSE™. "The Enhancing Military Spouse Entrepreneurship Act will dramatically improve the lives of military spouse entrepreneurs, improve the economic security of military families, and, therefore, contribute importantly to enhancing America's military readiness. On behalf of military spouses serving around the world, we thank Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) for their leadership and support."

Special Thank You to our Corporate Partners who continue to believe in our mission.



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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS



Annette Lewis, Owner of A Wild Ride Called Life
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

Workshop Power: Elevating Your Product- Based Business through Interactive Experiences

By **Tori McElwain**,
Owner of The Quilt Patch by Tori
Reading time: 2 min, 55 sec

If you want to boost your brand and create unforgettable customer experiences, it's time to explore the world of workshops. A workshop is a scalable service that can deliver beautiful benefits to a product-based business. It can help position your business as an industry leader and showcase your expertise and commitment to customer success. Let's explore more advantages of upselling your product to a workshop and how to do it. Unlock the full potential of workshops by following a basic framework that covers workshop types, content formatting, and delivery methods to get your ideas flowing.

Explore Workshop Types

To start, it's essential to identify the workshop type that best compliments your product and resonates with your target audience. Consider various options, such as instructional sessions on different ways to use a product, techniques for maximizing its potential, caring for the product, exploring further uses, or hosting events centered around the product.

Select a workshop type that not only showcases the unique features and benefits of your product but also addresses the specific needs and interests of your customers. If a customer purchases a custom bag, consider a how-to style workshop or a workshop on how the bag was made and how to care for the unique item.

By tailoring the workshop to their desires and challenges, you'll create a compelling and relevant experience that strengthens the connection between customers and your product.

An event-style workshop can build a community around your brand; it could look like a four week around the town event where your customers get a custom product (a custom tumbler comes to mind!), and share pictures of different places that product could be used while the business provides a community space and tips on how to use and care for their tumbler—image the genuine marketing taking place!

Create Engaging Content

The success of a workshop lies in its ability to provide valuable and engaging content. Break down the knowledge and skills related to your product into manageable modules or topics that can be effectively conveyed during the workshop.

Consider incorporating interactive elements such as live demonstrations, hands-on activities, group discussions, and Q&A sessions to keep participants captivated. Strive for a balanced approach that combines in-depth product knowledge with practical, hands-on and social learning opportunities.

Encourage participants to explore, experiment, and apply what they learn during the workshop, enabling them to derive immediate value and see the tangible benefits of the upsell. Remember, the more interactive and participatory the workshop, the more memorable and impactful it will be for your customers.

Choose the Format

When determining the format or hosting option for your workshop, consider the preferences of your target audience and the resources available to you. Digital platforms offer tremendous flexibility, allowing you to conduct virtual workshops that reach a broader audience regardless of where they are. Virtual workshops provide convenience and accessibility while offering features like chat functionality, breakout rooms, and multimedia integration.

Alternatively, you may opt for in-person workshops at your business premises, rented spaces, or partner venues, providing a more intimate and tangible experience. Think of a wine tasting; it usually comes with a tour!

Carefully weigh factors such as cost, technology requirements, participant accessibility, and how involved your customers must be to get the most value out of the experience. By aligning the format with your audience's preferences and your resources, you can create a seamless and engaging workshop experience.

Designing an Impactful Workshop

When delivering the workshop, aim to create an immersive and impactful experience that leaves a lasting impression on your participants.

1. **Start by setting clear goals for your customers and organizing the workshop logically and coherently for smooth information flow.** Enhance understanding and engagement using

multimedia content like images, videos, sounds, and moving graphics.

2. **Get everyone involved through interactive activities, group exercises, and real-life applications of the new knowledge.** Foster an inclusive and collaborative environment where participants can ask questions, share insights, and learn from one another. Facilitate conversations that help build connections among participants, forming a community around your brand.
3. **Finally, conclude the workshop by offering additional resources, support materials, or exclusive products to reinforce the upsell opportunity and maintain momentum.**

Going above and beyond in your workshop experience leaves participants feeling empowered, knowledgeable, and excited about your product's value to their lives.

By incorporating workshops into your product-based business, you can position yourself as an industry leader, showcase your expertise, and create a strong connection between your customers and your products. Start exploring workshop types that resonate with your audience, curate engaging content, choose the right format, and deliver impactful workshops that leave a lasting impression.

AMSE™ Action: Log into www.AMSEmembers.com and RSVP for a masterclass to learn more.

BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS



Stephanie Curnow,
Owner of 27 West Boutique
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

By Alexandra Panaretos,
CSAP, SSAP, Cybersecurity Consultant
and Social Engineer
Reading time: 2 min, 35 sec

In today’s technology-driven world, protecting your business from cyber threats is no longer an option but a necessity. As a small business owner, you may not be a target for cybercriminals. Still, the truth is no business is immune. Recent studies show over 40% of cyberattacks target small businesses. With that in mind, let’s explore some practical cybersecurity tips to safeguard your business and data.

Protect Your Sensitive Data

Data breaches and hacking harm small businesses. To safeguard sensitive information, follow these essential steps:

- **Use secure payment processing systems that encrypt customer data.** It shows your commitment to protecting their financial information.
- **Keep your software up to date, including operating systems and applications.** A staggering 60% of small businesses that suffer a cyberattack are out of business within six months.
- **Consider using a password manager to create solid and original passwords for all accounts.** Weak or reused passwords make it easier for hackers to gain unauthorized access.
- **Limit access to sensitive information within your organization.** Implement role-based access controls to ensure only authorized employees can access critical data.

Secure Your Online Presence

Your online presence is a window into your business, but it can also leave you vulnerable to cyber threats. Here’s how to bolster your defenses:

- **Choose a reputable web hosting provider with robust security features.** It’s like getting a reliable security guard for your virtual storefront.
- **Regularly update your website’s software, plugins, and themes.** Outdated software is an invitation for hackers.
- **Implement a web application firewall (WAF) to detect and block malicious traffic.** It acts as a shield, preventing cybercriminals from exploiting vulnerabilities.
- **Enable HTTPS and SSL certificates to encrypt data transmitted between your website and users.** Secure connections ensure sensitive information remains protected during online transactions.

Practice Safe Social Media Usage

Social media platforms offer tremendous business opportunities but also present risks. Protect your business on social media with these precautions:

- **Be mindful of your information sharing, both personally and professionally.** Cybercriminals can exploit personal details to launch targeted attacks.
- **Review and adjust your privacy settings to control who can access your information.** Your privacy is your right, and it’s crucial to safeguard it.

- **Avoid clicking on suspicious links or sharing personal information through direct messages or public posts.** Cybercriminals often use social engineering techniques to deceive users.
- **Educate yourself and your team about common social media scams.** You can protect your business and customers from such schemes by staying informed.

Secure Email Practices

Email remains one of the primary communication methods for businesses. Safeguard your inbox with these best practices:

- **Exercise caution when opening email attachments or clicking on links from unknown senders.** Phishing attacks continue to be prevalent.
- **Verify the authenticity of email requests for sensitive information or financial transactions before acting.** Hackers often impersonate trusted individuals or organizations.
- **Utilize spam filters and keep your antivirus software up to date.** These tools act as a defense against malicious emails and attachments.
- **Consider email encryption to protect sensitive communications.** It ensures that only the intended recipients can access the information.

Data Backups and Recovery

Data loss can destroy small businesses. Protect your valuable information with these crucial steps:

- **Regularly back up your critical business data to an external hard drive or secure cloud storage.** A study revealed that businesses with backups recover faster from cyberattacks.
- **Test your backups to ensure integrity and accessibility.** Ensure that your backups are reliable and up to date.
- **Store backups in multiple locations, including an encrypted version or an external hard drive that you disconnect from the network.** Doing so mitigates the risk of data loss due to physical disasters or cyber incidents.
- **Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan outlining the steps to restore operations in case of a cybersecurity incident.** Preparedness is critical to minimizing downtime and recovering swiftly.

Protecting your business and data from cyber threats should be your top priority. By implementing these practical cybersecurity tips, you can significantly reduce the risk of cyberattacks. Cyber threats are ever-evolving, so staying informed and adapting your security measures is crucial. Investing in cybersecurity safeguards your business, builds trust with your customers, and ensures long-term success.

AMSE™ Action: Log into www.AMSEmembers.com to learn more about protecting your business.

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS



Krystalore Crews, CEO of Crews Beyond Limits Consulting, LLC
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

The Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs™ is proud to support over 15,000 spouses around the world and the opportunity to highlight their accomplishments. After several rounds of hard deliberations, we chose Krystalore Crews. Her story and determination are exactly what we aim to highlight and

Meet the first winner of the AMSE™ Military Spouse Entrepreneur Award

is an example of pushing through the adversary and making a way even when things get hard. We hope that story encourages and motivates other military spouses to keep going.

About you and your business?

Crews Beyond Limits is my passion project and a movement that I launched to empower women—particularly military spouses and veterans—to embrace their power, find their voice, and live their best lives with my online coaching business that is revolutionizing the way individuals approach fitness, mindset, and personal growth.

Why did you choose to submit for the MSEA?

Annette’s nomination holds a special place in my heart because she has been there with us since the beginning, witnessing the growth and success of our programs. Her endorsement truly showcases the love, support, and sisterhood that we have fostered.

I decided to accept the Military Spouse Entrepreneur of the Year Award because it represents the collective achievements, growth, and connections we have cultivated through Crews Beyond Limits. I am honored and humbled to have this opportunity to showcase the power of our sisterhood and the difference we are making in the lives of military families all over the world.

What does this mean to you and how does it feel to be the first winner?

As the first winner in the world of entrepreneurship, these words carry a magnitude of emotions that are difficult to put into words. The journey I have undertaken to reach this milestone has been anything but easy. Moving four times in the last six years due to my husband’s PCS moves and constantly building my online business amidst the chaos, loneliness often accompanied me along this path of mine.

I am humbled and honored to be the first winner. This milestone symbolizes not only

personal success but also the resilience of the human spirit. May it ignite a spark within others, urging them to embrace their unique paths, overcome obstacles, and emerge as champions of their own stories. Together, let us transform lives, create connections, and empower one another to go beyond the limits.

What do you plan on doing with the award and benefits?

The AMSE military spouse entrepreneur award and its benefits will be instrumental in helping us expand our reach and impact. It is an honor to be recognized for our dedication to military families, and I am committed to making the most of this opportunity.

The journey ahead is exciting, and I am filled with gratitude for the support and recognition that comes with the AMSE military spouse entrepreneur award. Together, with the strength and resilience of our community, we will continue to push boundaries and make a lasting difference in the lives of military families.

MilSpouses in the City

We are joining forces with the Nolcha Shows during New York Fashion Week (NYFW) for the fourth year to celebrate spouses at NYFW. A handful of members from the Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs™ (AMSE™) are selected to attend this year’s events. This year the military spouses will attend and view over 12 fashion shows at Mercedes-Benz Manhattan.

Military spouses are the backbone of our military. Their quiet sacrifices should not go unacknowledged—having to uproot their lives to support their military family members and deal with the constant stress of deployments and temporary duty assignments (TDYs). These circumstances often mean moving every 2 – 3 years, leaving family and friends behind, which makes it difficult to establish careers and communities. This special NYFW event will highlight military spouses, their sacrifices, and their perseverance.

Continuing our tradition, the Nolcha Shows will honor military spouses with a VIP makeover. This makeover experience consists of hairstyling led by ECRU New York Creative Director Lisa Lobosco and a “glam make-up session” by Michelle Webb of AOFM. VIP access for military spouses will also include backstage access and front row seats. An all-electric Mercedes-Benz fleet has been graciously provided by Mercedes-Benz Manhattan for the spouse’s transportation.

The spouses sit front and center to enjoy the show and their special gifts. For the organizers and sponsors, hosting military spouses is about giving back to and celebrating military spouses. This partnership means a lot to AMSE™. It gives spouses the opportunity to have fun in the midst of moves, TDYs, deployments, and the day-to-day stressors of military life. It’s a unique priceless experience that they will remember forever.



Photos Courtesy of AMSE™

BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

National Military Families Association Interview

with Raleigh Duttweiler,
Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives

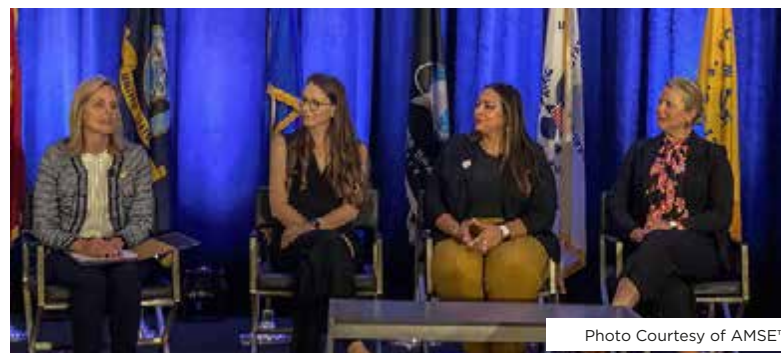


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Alliances forged with The National Military Families Association (NMFA) resonate with the community's spirit of camaraderie, loyalty, and support; creating a positive cycle of mutual aid that strengthens the entire ecosystem and the community we both serve.

Q: Tell us about the organization you work for and what your role in the organization is.

A: The National Military Family Association is the leading organization dedicated to serving the families who stand behind the uniform. We offer scholarships for military spouses, camps for military kids, programs for military teens, and retreats for families reconnecting through the normal transitions of military life.

I get to work with amazing leaders who are committed to making life better for military families.

Q: What type of opportunities do you offer for military spouse small business owners?

A: NMFA's Military Spouse Scholarship program, and what's so unique about this scholarship is it supports far more than traditional education. We use it to support licensure and certification and also small business and startup costs. If you're a military spouse with a good idea and need some seed money to get it started or investment to take it to the next level, we want to help. Our scholarship has a year-round application cycle, so whenever you need it is exactly the right time to apply.

Q: Tell us about your partnership with AMSE™.

A: AMSE™ is a longtime friend of NMFA—and we've been fortunate enough to partner with them over the last year and a half to better serve military spouse entrepreneurs together. In partnership with

GoDaddy, NMFA was able to offer its military spouse scholarship winners with small businesses access to GoDaddy's Empower program. NMFA reached out to AMSE™ to see if we could expand the program beyond our footprint to include members of AMSE™, and we were thrilled to also give away AMSE™ memberships or membership renewals to certain program participants.

Moni is a dear friend of NMFA's and is exemplary of what's best in our military family community: military spouses seeing a need, finding a solution, and building community along the way. We've been privileged to have her speak on behalf of the entrepreneur community at our State of the Military Family and look forward to expanding her voice and that of military spouse small business owners going forward.

Q: How can organizations get involved in your mission?

A: You can get involved with our mission by elevating the voices of military families around you, and that starts with elevating your own voice. At NMFA we always talk about being your own best advocate. NMFA was started by a group of military spouses committed to doing better by their widowed friends at the height of the Vietnam War. You can get involved with our mission by doing that too—and if you want details on how to get involved with the issues NMFA has identified and is working to fix, follow us on social, visit our website, and join us in programs.

Q: What's next for NMFA?

A: Right now, we're really focusing our work on supporting military family well-being... physical well-being, mental well-being, and financial well-being. I look forward to seeing how we refine that focus in advocacy, programs, and research, and how we respond in real-time to the needs military families are having on the ground.

Meet Naomi

- Military Spouse
- Business Owner
- Community Planner

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BUILDING YOUR PRODUCT-BASED BUSINESS

Streamlining Order Management:

How an Online Store Boosts Productivity



By Kella Price,
Owner of Healthy Fit
Reading time: 5 min, 5 sec

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, businesses constantly seek ways to streamline operations, maximize efficiency, and enhance customer experiences. As a military spouse-owned business, one powerful tool that has revolutionized the way companies do business is the online store. An online store allows businesses to reach a wider audience. It offers numerous automation features that can transform how they manage orders, personalize customer experiences, conduct marketing campaigns, and make data-driven decisions manageable anywhere you live.

actions, such as abandoned carts or completed purchases. These targeted campaigns nurture customers throughout their journey, from the initial interest in a product to making a repeat purchase. Marketing automation saves time and effort and ensures that customers receive tailored and timely communications, fostering stronger relationships and encouraging brand loyalty.

Analytics and Reporting

Data is at the heart of smart decision-making in any business. Online stores provide valuable insights through their analytics and reporting features. Business owners can monitor crucial metrics such as sales performance, customer behavior, and conversion rates. Armed with this data, businesses can make informed decisions to optimize marketing strategies, refine product offerings, and enhance overall customer experiences. Data-driven decisions lead to greater efficiency, reduced wastage, and improved ROI on marketing investments.

Streamlining Order Management

One of the significant advantages of an online store is its ability to simplify the order management process. Customers can effortlessly browse through a catalog of products, select their desired items, and complete their purchase with just a few clicks. Businesses can track orders in real-time, efficiently manage their inventory, and streamline the fulfillment process through automation tools. Automating these essential aspects frees valuable time and resources, enabling businesses to focus on growth and expansion.

Personalization and Upselling

Understanding customer preferences is crucial in today's highly competitive market. An online store serves as a treasure trove of customer data, allowing businesses to gather insights into their shopping behaviors and preferences. By leveraging this data, your business can personalize customer experiences by recommending relevant products based on browsing and purchasing history. Personalization enhances customer satisfaction and presents upselling opportunities, increasing the average order value and boosting revenue.

Marketing Automation

Integrating an online store with marketing automation platforms can take a business's marketing efforts to the next level. Automated email campaigns can be triggered based on specific customer

Embracing Freemium Models and Online Stores

Another strategy that can be seamlessly integrated with an online store is the freemium model. Offering a free version of a product or service attracts a broader audience and serves as an excellent lead generation tool. Once customers are engaged with the free version and experience its value, businesses can upsell premium features or services through the online store. When combined with online store automation, the freemium model creates a robust sales funnel, attracting potential customers, nurturing leads, and converting them into loyal paying customers.

An online store is not merely a digital marketplace for products; it is a powerful tool for automating processes and transforming businesses' operations. By streamlining order management, personalizing customer experiences, automating marketing efforts, and making data-driven decisions, businesses can unlock the potential for increased revenue growth, improved customer engagement, and long-term success. Embracing these strategies and leveraging the full potential of an online store, businesses can thrive in the ever-evolving digital economy.

AMSE™ Action: Log in to www.AMSEmembers.com and download the pirate funnel business blueprint under marketing.

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SCAN ME

PARTNER FEATURE

Don't Wait Until Insurance Becomes a Requirement for Military Spouse-Owned Businesses

By **Moni Jefferson**,
Owner of the Association of Military
Spouse Entrepreneurs™
Reading time: 4 mins

In the realm of entrepreneurship, military spouses have emerged as a resilient and resourceful group, defying the challenges posed by frequent relocations and the demands of military life. These individuals have forged their paths, establishing businesses that not only support their families but also contribute to their local economies. However, an impending issue threatens to hinder their progress: the lack of insurance coverage for military spouse-owned businesses.

Insurance has long been a crucial safety net for businesses, protecting them from unforeseen disasters, liabilities, and legal troubles. As military spouses navigate the intricate landscape of entrepreneurship, securing proper insurance coverage might not be at the forefront of their minds, especially when they are already juggling the intricacies of managing a business alongside the demands of a military lifestyle.

However, the absence of mandatory insurance coverage could have far-reaching consequences. Businesses without insurance may face financial ruin in the event of accidents, property damage, or legal claims. Even a seemingly minor incident could lead to massive financial setbacks, potentially forcing these businesses to shut down. This outcome not only affects the entrepreneurs but also ripples through the local economy, leading to lost jobs and diminished community vibrancy.

The solution lies in proactive measures. Instead of waiting until insurance becomes a requirement, military spouse-owned businesses should take the initiative to protect themselves and their investments. This means engaging with

insurance providers to identify coverage options tailored to their unique needs. While there might be initial costs associated with obtaining insurance, the long-term benefits far outweigh the potential losses incurred from being uninsured.

In the recent roundtable discussion, numerous spouses highlighted cost as a significant factor influencing their decision not to invest in insurance. Nevertheless, an excellent starting point is USAA Small Business Insurance, which has introduced a budget-friendly plan offering protection for as little as 83 cents per day.

Organizations that provide assistance to military families should contemplate providing valuable resources and incentives to assist military spouse entrepreneurs in acquiring insurance coverage. Such provisions might encompass workshops, expert guidance, and potentially financial aid to alleviate the strain of insurance expenses. USAA, for instance, is dedicated to extending support in various forms, recognizing the elevated rate of uninsured military spouse-owned businesses. In response, they have developed a comprehensive suite of products tailored to aiding even the smallest entrepreneurs in obtaining the necessary coverage.

In the ever-evolving landscape of business, adaptability is key. Military spouses have demonstrated time and again that they possess the resilience and determination needed to overcome obstacles. By addressing the insurance gap proactively, they can fortify their businesses, ensuring they continue to thrive even in the face of adversity. Don't wait until insurance becomes a mandate; let us act now to secure the future of military spouse-owned businesses and the communities they empower.

AMSE™ Action: Get a USAA Small Business Quote www.usaa.com/smallbusinessinsurance.



Colleen Marchi, Owner of
Magical Order of Brave Knights
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

A photograph of a group of women at an AMSE event. They are all smiling and raising their hands in a celebratory gesture. Some are wearing AMSE t-shirts. The background is a white wall with a pattern of black dots.

Join a Chapter today!

AMSE Community Chapters are free in-person member-led events for milspouse entrepreneurs.

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A square QR code with the AMSE logo in the center.

A button with a smartphone icon and the text "Join a Chapter!".



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THANK YOU



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Courtesy of Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs™

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the partnership with organizations like Stars and Stripes, which enables us to fulfill our mission of creating a positive economic impact for our nation’s military spouses. With the previous issue’s publication, we have reached an impressive number of over 545K military spouses. Whether they are established business owners needing strategic pivots or aspiring entrepreneurs seeking motivation to kickstart their ventures, this guide serves as a valuable resource to accomplish their goals together.

Knowing we have dedicated partners and sponsors with a deep commitment to the military spouse community brings immense joy. The distribution of this seventh issue of the Military Spouse Entrepreneur Guide will reach military installations worldwide, placing the inspiration and vital information needed to launch businesses and implement successful strategies in the hands of spouses; all while fostering a strong global support network. I am confident that these guides will continue to positively impact our nation’s military spouses and small business owners.

A sincere appreciation is extended to the Stars and Stripes team for their steadfast support in our collaborative efforts to craft meaningful content for military spouses. Moreover, our remarkable AMSE™ team deserves immense credit—though small in size, we are a powerful collective fueled by our common dedication to the military spouse community. Our commitment to generating content and disseminating knowledge that nurtures their entrepreneurial drive remains unyielding. Your unwavering backing is truly beyond measure.

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for access to our
Online Directory
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Showcasing
our awesome
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Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

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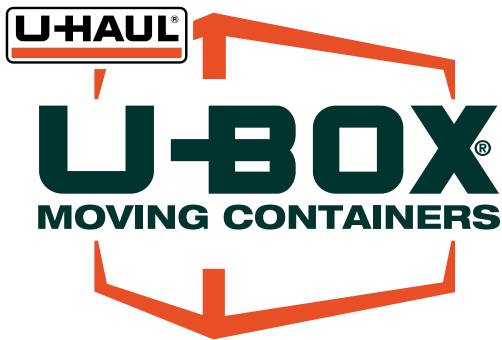
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Open Season is November 13 – midnight ET, December 11, 2023

You Can't Start or Grow Your Business Without Help



Kara Varner Founder of Varner Media
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

We wanted to give you a list of some of the best tools and resources to utilize in building or growing your business.

NAMING YOUR BUSINESS

Before ever selecting a name for your business, you need to make sure of a few things:

- 1. Legally Register** - Make sure another business is not utilizing that name. Check www.opencorporates.com. There, you can make sure another business has not legally registered that name. Check for variations as well. This will prevent future legal issues.
- 2. Domain** - Check that your domain is available. Use www.godaddy.com and see if your website name is available. Other choices can be to add “the” at the beginning, or select a “.co” or “.net” if your domain is taken.
- 3. Social Platforms** - Check your social platforms; start with Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Is your company name available? Are there businesses that are similar? Make sure the ending is your business name: example www.facebook.com/mybusinessname.

LEGAL

Legal is important for a number of reasons. You will need to set up an LLC, and have basic agreements looked over (NDA, Partnership Agreements, Contracts, Invoices etc). Here are a few great places to get you started:

- 1. Beginner** - DIY (Never recommended if possible to do your own legal)
- 2. Intermediate** - Legalzoom
- 3. Advanced** - Attorney

IRS

You will need a business tax identification number. This will be needed for just about everything in business including setting up your business checking accounts. Be sure to register your new business with the IRS at www.irs.gov.

BUSINESS LICENSES/PERMITS

Every business is unique to its city, county and state. Be sure to check if you need to have a special permit or license to operate where you are located. For example, some cities require a business permit for a nominal fee. Other businesses (like food-based services) may require health and handling permits. Do your research or check with your local chapters below to get information.

- 1. SCORE**
- 2. SBDC**
- 3. SBA**

WEBSITE

Every business *must* have a website. I know it seems scary and intimidating,

but a business without a website is like a restaurant without a menu. Even if it is a single landing page, you must get at least that up. Give it a shot on the sites below (some are VERY plug and play, trust us)! If not, set aside a tiny budget for at least that landing page.

- 1. Beginner** - Wix
- 2. Intermediate** - Squarespace
- 3. Advanced** - Wordpress or custom built

EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing is crucial to business success. You must have a way to collect, store, and contact your email addresses and customers/clients information. On your website or landing page, make sure you are always collecting emails. It is the best way to directly communicate with your audience and is the most valuable resource you will have!

- 1. Beginner** - Mailchimp
- 2. Intermediate** - Aweber
- 3. Advanced** - ConvertKit

CRM

What is CRM? Customer relationship management is a tool to manage your company's interactions with your customers and potential customers. It helps you to stay connected, streamline

your processes, maintain leads, and make sure no communication falls through the cracks. Here are a few good CRM platforms to try:

- 1. Beginner** - Fresh Sales
- 2. Intermediate** - Zoho
- 3. Advanced** - Hubspot

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

So after you set up your social media pages, how are you supposed to

possibly spend hours a day posting your social media content? You don't—you automate it! Automation with social media tools allow you to put all of your graphics and content in one platform, batch schedule it out for the month, and let it go. Pop in here and there and simply engage with your audience, answer inbox messages and respond to shares.

- 1. Beginner** - Planoly or Buffer
- 2. Intermediate** - Hootsuite or Smarterqueue
- 3. Advanced** - Agorapulse or Social Studio

GRAPHIC DESIGN

In business, graphic design is essential. You need graphics for your website, social media channels, flyers, logos, pitch decks, and sales materials. But with new tools, it's never been

easier to have access to easy ways to DIY or get someone amazing to help you.

- 1. **Beginner** - Canva
- 2. **Intermediate** - Outsource (Hire AMSE member-Check the AMSE Slack)
- 3. **Advanced** - Adobe

COMMUNICATION

As you grow and start to communicate with clients, customers, partners (and eventually your employees), communication tools are CRUCIAL to growing and operating efficiently. Here are a few of our favorites.

- 1. **Beginner** - Zoom
- 2. **Intermediate** - Slack
- 3. **Advanced** - Marco Polo

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Staying organized and on top of your to-do list is imperative to not only your mental sanity, but to your efficiency as a business owner. Project management software should be the backbone of your business. So toss that pen and paper (seriously right now), move those checklists digital, and start adding team members, clients and teams so you can easily manage projects on a scalable level.

- 1. **Beginner** - Trello
- 2. **Intermediate** - Monday.com
- 3. **Advanced** - Asana

VIDEOS

With new easy-to-use tools, you can now make videos for your business to use for your marketing and outreach. Try one of these:

- 1. **Beginner** - Vimeo Create
- 2. **Intermediate** - Wave Video
- 3. **Advanced** - Magisto

CALENDAR LINKS

Do you know how many hours a year people can waste emailing back and forth trying to coordinate a time to meet? Having a calendar link to send someone or to list on your website for direct consultations automates your life in many ways. It's important to set you up for success. The less time you spend on menial tasks, the more time you spend on landing clients or doing the work that matters, right?

- 1. **Beginner** - Google Calendar
- 2. **Intermediate** - Acuity
- 3. **Advanced** - Calendly

ACCOUNTING

Once you have your business checking account, you can connect it electronically to your accounting software so all of your transactions are automatically downloaded. Long gone are the days of shoeboxes of receipts. Electronic transactions make life easier. Here are a few of our favorite accounting programs:

- 1. **Beginner** - Wave
- 2. **Intermediate** - Freshbooks
- 3. **Advanced** - Quickbooks

INVOICING

When you start invoicing clients, you will want a system that houses all of your invoices in one place, automatically send reminders, and auto invoices monthly. Even better if your system can collect the payment online, automatically. Here are some great places to get started:

- 1. **Beginner** - Paypal
- 2. **Intermediate** - Dubsado/17 Hats
- 3. **Advanced** - Quickbooks

CONTRACTS/PROPOSALS

Similar to contracts and proposals, you will want to automatically send them to clients electronically, allowing you and them to e-sign and house them digitally. No one prints, signs, scans and sends back. Your chances of landing a client just due to that process vastly lessens. The easier you can make your systems and processes, the easier you can land and close deals.

- 1. **Beginner** - Dubsado
- 2. **Intermediate** - 17 Hats/Honey Book
- 3. **Advanced** - Proposify

MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is foundational both in business and as a military spouse. There are several incredible organizations that provide free mentorship programs just for spouses. Get one or two and keep them close. They will help guide your way. It's always better to have someone who has "been there, done that" to help guide the way and teach you their hard lessons learned.

ACP - American Corporate Partners offers military spouses a free business mentor in almost any industry.

MSAN - Military Spouse Advocacy Network is a military spouse owned and operated nonprofit focused on peer-to-peer spouse mentoring. Because military life is hard, and not everyone knows what all those acronyms are right? Get a mentor or pay it forward (if you are a seasoned spouse) and sign up to be a mentor.

NASDAQ ENTREPRENEURIAL CENTER - Join the Mentor Makers program, a movement to inspire successful business leaders from traditional and non-traditional backgrounds to offer their time and expertise as exceptional mentors. They vouch to help you with the inspiration and the tools you need to be game-changing mentors for entrepreneurs across all industries and geographies. Apply to be a mentor OR a mentee, and find the support you need to reach your business goals.



Drew Jernigan, Drew Jernigan Art
Photo Courtesy of AMSE™

Military Spouse Owned Business Directory

The Association of Military Spouse Entrepreneurs is proud to not only elevate and empower a global community of military spouses, but we proudly support and highlight their businesses in the most extensively published directory of military spouse owned businesses.

Please utilize this directory to support these incredible business owners by buying their products, using their services, and referring them to your networks. Buying from a military spouse owned business creates a lasting financial and economic impact on our nation’s military families.



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- [The Lean Team](#)
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- [Alpenglow Business Services](#)
- [Ama to Prana](#)
- [American Sports & Entertainment, DBA: American Spirit Athletics](#)
- [Amarie Talks](#)
- [Amanosi, LLC](#)
- [Amos Fit-Run Program](#)
- [AWL Strategies](#)
- [Amanda Heider, LLC](#)
- [Addo Aesthetics](#)
- [Breaking Through Wellness, LLC](#)
- [Bee Cause Special Education Advocacy, LLC](#)
- [BRIDGES BUSINESS SERVICES, LLC](#)
- [BOLO K9, LLC](#)
- [Calming Minds LLC/ GRACE Empowerment Coaching](#)
- [Capital Practice Consulting](#)
- [Centify](#)
- [Check Six Virtual Solutions, LLC](#)
- [Clear Vision Consulting, LLC.](#)
- [Coach Brooks Business Consulting](#)
- [Coach Shanita, Inc.](#)
- [Courtney Boyer Coaching](#)
- [CreatingN2Joy Mindset Coaching](#)
- [Crozier Creative](#)
- [Defy Nutrition](#)

MILITARY SPOUSE OWNED BUSINESS DIRECTORY

[Elisely](#)
[Empowered Energy](#)
[Erika Wallgren - Professional Coach](#)
[Eurway Tours](#)
[Fab Life Now](#)
[First Command Financial Services](#)
[FitPath Coaching, LLC](#)
[Full Focus Coaching](#)
[Green I Am](#)
[GuideOn Education Consulting, LLC](#)
[Harris Financial Coaching](#)
[Healitary Spouse, LLC](#)
[Heritage Business Services](#)
[Honest Talk International, LLC](#)
[Integrative Nutrition Health Coach](#)
[Kristjana Richter](#)
[KDG Support, LLC](#)
[LH Consulting, LLC](#)
[Making Marriage Matter, LLC](#)
[Married to Navy Counseling Services](#)
[Michelle L Hughes Consulting](#)
[MilSpouse Mastermind](#)
[MilSpouse Mentor](#)
[Model for the King Life Coaching](#)
[Mother Together](#)
[Myrna Rivera Life Coaching](#)
[Meg Flanagan Education Solutions, LLC](#)
[Nia Ruth](#)
[Nobody Greater, LLC](#)
[Organizing with Intentions](#)
[PharmDNA, LLC](#)
[Pride & Grit](#)
[Purpose Driven Life Coach, LLC](#)
[R Connection Point](#)
[Renegade Creative Media Group](#)
[Right4U College Counseling](#)
[Rook Interpersonal](#)
[Rigaud Speech Pathology, LLC](#)
[Reset with Vanessa](#)
[Running Wild Collective](#)
[SageThyme Solutions](#)
[Sara Copp Coaches](#)
[Sarah Shiozawa Coaching, LLC](#)
[Sheri Miter Co.](#)
[Simply Happy Life, LLC](#)

[Soulfully Livin](#)
[Stepping Stones Coaching](#)
[Strive 4ward Coaching](#)
[Top Medical Talent](#)
[Team Hansen Education and Empowerment, LLC](#)
[Talent Stays](#)
[The Center For Confidence, LLC](#)
[The Adventure Project](#)
[The Crews Coach](#)
[The Institute for Integrative Intelligence](#)
[The Leadership Consultant, LLC.](#)
[The Tyne Group](#)
[Traci Conner Wellness Co.](#)
[UNSTUCKED!](#)
[Wright Life Coaching](#)
[Yellow Rose Paint Party](#)
[Specht & Co. Creative Studio](#)
[Liv Strategic Consulting](#)
[Amy Miller, AFC® Military Money Coach](#)
[Claire Thorn](#)
[ConveyCulture](#)
[Mil Money Coach](#)
[Jaiya Clarke](#)
[Mothers in Construction](#)
[B Carroll Events, LLC](#)
[JobMorph](#)
[KF Virtual Assistant & Jolly Holiday Yarns](#)
[Waterfall Yoga Therapy](#)
[Your VA Lab](#)
[Heather April & Co., LLC](#)
[Blue ridge](#)
[Kids Can Cope, LLC](#)
[Enilram Creative Solutions, LLC](#)
[Reset Home](#)
[CarrieRiley.co](#)
[Family in Focus](#)
[Heather Jones Coaching](#)
[LIV Strategic Consulting](#)
[Love Wedding & Events + Photo Booths](#)
[Lumela Business and Wed Solutions](#)
[Kimberly’s Life Coaching](#)
[MZA Legal](#)
[Powerhouse Planning, LLC](#)
[Operation Child Care](#)

[Barrington Leadership Group](#)
[Black Girl Business Accelerator](#)
[Jennifer Hurtig Coaching](#)
[Hypnosis Haven](#)
[Plaka + Associates](#)
[gomerland ink + non profit: Midwest](#)
[Armed Forces Families Inc.](#)
[Zenergy Health & Performance](#)

DIRECT SALES

[A. Atkinson- Arbonne](#)
[A. Bruner-Mary Kay](#)
[C. De Jesus-Youngliving](#)
[C. Kendall- Arbonne](#)
[G. Thomspon-Rodan & Fields](#)
[J. Miesbauer-Beachbody](#)
[K. Dennison-DoTerra](#)
[N. Mack-Paparazzi](#)
[Nightingale’s Pen, LLC](#)
[S. Falcocchio-Rodan & Fields](#)
[S. Fuenty-Mary Kay](#)
[S.Christy-It Works](#)
[W. Corey-Scout & Cellar](#)
[Elizabeth Mays-Juiceplus](#)
[Hearing Benefit Services](#)
[Palm Breeze Digital](#)
[Valerie A. Melendez](#)

EDUCATION

[Black Girl MATHgic](#)
[Coins and Connections](#)
[Echo-san L.C.](#)
[Flyga Twiga™ , LLC](#)
[Imagodei Academy](#)
[Journey Through Education](#)
[Js Original Leather](#)
[Literacy in Flight](#)
[Meg Flanagan Education Solutions](#)
[The Languages Corner](#)
[Tutor in Tinseltown](#)
[AMSE™](#)

EMPLOYMENT

[A Platinum Resume & A Platinum Resume Career Academy](#)

EMPLOYMENT CONT

- About Face Communications
- Instant Teams
- Nexus Search Group
- Vetech Business Services, LLC
- VirtForce, LLC
- WISE Advise + Assist Team
- with you with me

EVENT PLANNING

- Blessid Union Officiant & Events
- CAMPspace
- CK Connections
- FTM Fashion Week
- HelmsBriscoe
- LNW Enterprises
- The Agency National Harbor
- Vida Chic Weddings and Events
- WISE Advise + Assist Team
- PME, Professional Momentous Events, LLC

FINANCIAL

- Cultivated Strategy Group
- Grace and Grit Financial, LLC
- Grace Financial Coaching
- Metis Financial
- Noea Moss Financial Representative at Northwestern Mutual
- On My Own Financial
- Slay This Debt
- Real Life Finances
- Primerica Financial Services
- Caroline Y. Beasley, CPA
- Law Office of Kaitlin Smith Dean
- Mass Mutual
- Woven Golden Crafts

FITNESS

- Doll Yoga Wear
- Heart and Sole Fitness & Wellness
- Iron Will Personal Training
- Kella Price Fitness and Consulting
- KK Method
- Mel Marie Yoga

- Moore Fitness Lab
- Reebound Fitness
- Resolve Fitness Solutions
- Yoga with Emily
- American Sports & Entertainment, DBA: American Spirit Athletics
- Trauma Healing Yoga Therapy Program
- Healthy Fit / Price Consulting Group
- SSweat Space
- Massage By Carrie

FOOD

- Alamo Kitchens
- Beech St. Sweets
- Defy Nutrition, LLC
- Kids Cake Boxes
- La-Re-Mi Cupcakery
- Nelly Browns Kitchen
- Nia Ruth
- Rose Macarons
- Sarah’s Cookie Boutique
- Swatara Coffee
- Wandering Rose Coffee Co.
- The Professor’s Kitchen
- Tiff B Sweet
- American Force Coffee
- Simpleigh Southern Sweets
- Cake Artista, LLC
- TIFF B SWEET, LLC
- Gamma Rho Omicron Gardening Sorority Incorporated & ABlkGlrWithAGarden
- Sarah’s Sweets Cookie Company

GIFT/PRODUCTS

- Abby Maddy Designs// Abby Maddy & Company
- Bearerra Handmade Heirlooms and Keepsakes
- Betzy’s Designs
- Blank & Birch Design Co.
- Brave Crate
- Broken Vessel Creations
- Brushfire Blue, LLC
- Cerulea, LLC
- Fair Winds Candle Company

- Four Season Gift Shop
- Gadsby’s Garage
- Graceful Leo Designs
- Green Book Cover
- Hoagland Handmade
- Hook and String
- Hurley Handmade Crafts
- Kids Cake Boxes
- List & File
- Love and Lettering by Katie
- Magical Order of Brave Knights, LLC
- Magnolia Studios
- Merry and Grace Design Co.
- Military Printable Art
- MilSO Box
- Mrs. Gomez Sew Shop
- Northern Knots Macrame
- Otelia Marie, LLC
- Piper Mountain Christmas Trees
- Prove It Studio
- R&M Custom Designs
- Sandy Turtle Studios, LLC
- stamper of approval creations
- SteadyHandsCrochet
- Swatara Coffee Company
- sweet pea lullabies
- The Chic Avocado
- The Fiberology Lab
- Vinyl By Panch
- Westhouse
- Westview Candle
- Wilco Supply
- Wood Knots & Whimsy
- ZALT-Designs
- JA Crafting
- The Crafted Lady

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Defy Nutrition, LLC
- A’Marie Talks
- Alicia Smith Chiropractic
- Ayzza Labelle
- barre3 Okinawa
- Becoming Mom by Kaleigh

MILITARY SPOUSE OWNED BUSINESS DIRECTORY

[Compassionate Warriors](#)
[Conveying Awareness](#)
[CPRWrap](#)
[Crusaders for Change, LLC](#)
[Dana Palmer Physical Therapy](#)
[Doll Wear Yoga](#)
[Empowered Energy](#)
[EmpowerHer Consulting](#)
[Evoke Strong](#)
[fueLED Nutrition Coaching](#)
[IntuEats](#)
[Heart and Sole Fitness & Wellness](#)
[Caregivers on the Homefront](#)
[Her Ruck](#)
[Happy and Able](#)
[Thrive Fitness Therapy](#)
[Jordan Essentials](#)
[Joyfuellife, LCC](#)
[Julie Jacobs Coaching, LLC](#)
[Karim Counseling](#)
[Kristen Earp](#)
[Loving Roots Project](#)
[Mama Duty](#)
[M.E.T. Speech Therapy, LLC](#)
[MindShift With Lauren](#)
[Mrs. Therapist Mama](#)
[Mama’s Wing Woman](#)
[My Little Essentials](#)
[Old Town Psychotherapy](#)
[Pink Fortitude](#)
[Restoration Psychological Services](#)
[Sea Glass Psychological Services, Inc](#)
[Shane Rilat, Independant Agent](#)
[Strategic Whimsy](#)
[SOW & REAP Physical Therapy](#)
[The Clarity Center, LLC](#)
[THRIVE Behavioral Health & Consulting, LLC](#)
[Thrive Fitness Therapy](#)
[Thrive On, LLC](#)
[Wellness Wilderness with Elizabeth](#)
[Whole Motion Therapy and Wellness, PLLC](#)
[Willow’s Bend Therapeutic Massage](#)
[YOMEI](#)
[Jennifer Hurtig Coaching](#)

[Gaffney Massage & Holistic Therapies](#)
[Vision Serenity](#)
[Your Time Negotiator](#)
[Karim Counseling Services, PLLC](#)
[Hearts Apart Creations, LLC](#)
[InDependent, Inc](#)
[Zeroed Out Market, LLC](#)
[The Movement Doula](#)

HEALTH CARE

[CPRWrap, Inc.](#)
[Family Inceptions](#)
[HomeFactor Financial, LLC](#)
[LaPora Lindsey](#)
[V.O.I.C.E.S. Against Sexual Assault \(non-profit\)](#)
[Violet Consulting](#)
[Vet Dental Network](#)
[Breathing Room Virtual Assistants](#)
[SHI’ Management](#)

JEWELRY

[Charliemadison Originals](#)
[Charmed by the Sea](#)
[Create Creative Mindset](#)
[Jane Mae Boutique](#)
[Manda Threadz](#)
[Morgan & Co](#)
[Morse & Mantra](#)
[Otelia Marie, LLC](#)
[Shay’s Stash](#)
[Studio LeRoux Boutique](#)
[TUTTUTUZZTU By TUTTU](#)
[When Flowers Bloom](#)

KIDS

[Tiny Melon Designs](#)
[Ailana J.](#)
[Black Girl MATHgic](#)
[Bunnee, LLC](#)
[Clap for Classics!](#)
[The Functional Foundations](#)
[Impact Learning & Development](#)
[Kids’ Cake Boxes](#)

[Mother Together](#)
[MyActiveChild.com Hampton Roads](#)
[Oak Harbor Playtown, LLC](#)
[Playing Favorites Designs](#)
[Rogue Wave](#)
[Shannon Powers, CPST](#)
[Social Graces, LLC](#)
[Sweet Pea Lullabies](#)
[The Awkward Little Turtle](#)
[The Princess Performer, LLC](#)
[The Wordshop](#)
[Tiny Troops Soccer](#)
[Wild Olive Threads](#)
[Operation Child Care](#)

LEGAL

[Cranford Marshall Legal, LLC](#)
[Excerebus Logistics](#)
[Gere Consulting Associates, LLC](#)
[Insure The Heroes, Inc.](#)
[Job Morph](#)
[LNW Enterprises, LLC](#)
[The Law Office of Ashley Lansdown, PLLC](#)
[Spinks Law Firm](#)

MARKETING

[All-in-One-Social-Media](#)
[Allison Bell](#)
[American Sports and Entertainment](#)
[Amity Anne Creative, LLC](#)
[Amplify Public Relations](#)
[Amy Clark Creative](#)
[BluVising Marketing](#)
[Brandevi](#)
[Circletown Marketing](#)
[CKConnections](#)
[CommunisPR](#)
[Copy with Chrissie](#)
[Coral House Productions](#)
[Cre8ve Content Co.](#)
[Create/Captivate Digital Marketing](#)
[CreWeb Designs](#)
[Cultivate Creative Design / Brandevi](#)
[Caitlin Audrey Creative](#)

MARKETING CONT

Dawn M. Smith Written By DMS
Dekco Virtual Solutions
Dog Tags and Heels PR
Elizabeth Marie Marketing
Emphasis.LA
Fleace Freelancing
Germono Advertising Company
GomerlandINK
GotSpot, Inc.
Hauoli-Socially Inspired
Kaila Ruan, LLC
Kat Calvo Digital
KDR Communications, LLC
Kirstin Brueckmann Kruip
KMG Designs
Kollo Marketing
KTA Interactive
Lady Moxie Design
Lily & Co. Creative
Liva Creative Studio
Milspouse Creative + Entrepreneur
Lenna Price Digital Marketing
Think Social HQ
NEU Marketing Group
Nicole Alexander & Co.
Olive Fox Design, LLC
Sandra Ocasio, LLC
Sawgrass Marketing, LLC
Selena Conmackie
SimpliSocial Health Media and Simplidishe
Simply Digitec
SkyLine Canopies, LLC
Smart Hustle-Jill Quash
Southworth Design Co.
Spicy Lemon Marketing
Summit Collaborations, LLC
Syt Biz
Talking Forests
The Media Tour, LLC
The Blessed Garden
Think Social HQ
Thompsoncre8
Thriving Homefront
Venture Brand Consulting

Visions2images
Wise Advise and Assist
WPClover
HAKIMI WEB SOLUTIONS

NOPROFIT

Action Zone and Action Zone Academy
Boot Memorial
Bautista Project Inc.
Caregivers on the Homefront, Inc.
Esposas Militares Hispanas USA Armed Forces
Feya Foundation
Gamma Rho Omicron Gardening Sorority
Hero Kids Foundation
InDependent
Inspire Up
It’s A Military Life
It’s All About You
NV3 Foundation
Operation Amplify
Operation Freelance
Orphans To Royalty
Ohana Homefront Foundation
Planting Roots
Semper K9 Assistance Dogs
The Veteran’s Spouse Project
V.O.I.C.E.S. Against SA (nonprofit)
Pink Warrior Angels

PET CARE

KnS Equine Systema Farm, LLC
Old Fashion K9 LLC
POOCH RUNS
The Paws Corner, LLC

PHOTOGRAPHY

Amanda Brisco Photography, LLC
Anna Spiering Photography
AVC Photo Projects
Bee photos
Brittany Harmening Photography
Cameau Enterprises, LLC, DBA CAMPspace
Charquise Denise Design Studio, LLC
Christa Paustenbaugh Photography

Danielle Hiltner Photography
Emma B Photography
Fingers and Toes Photography
Impac Media Group
Jenelle Botts Photography
Jenny Hansen Photography
Jerelsy Photography
Joanie Zipperer Photography, LLC
Julie Igo Photography
Kelley Stinson Photography
Kia & Co
Kim Kimber Photography
Lena Lee Photography, LLC
MILSTOCK.
Mr. Brian Walsh Photography
Nanu Graphics
Nicole Lockhart Photography
Photogra-Z
Rebecca Caroline Photography
Ricker VA Assistance & J9 Studio
Romasanta Media LLC
Samantha Lynn Photography
Shelby Roberts Photography
Sherry Dornblaser Photography
VSD Photography
Alison Bell, Photographer
Augenblicke by Steffi Sessoms Photography
TRBeattie Photography

PODCASTS

A wild ride called life
Airman to Mom
Caroline Cowie Schafer, LLC
Confessions of a Military Spouse
Deeply Rooted
M-Powered
Married to Military, LLC
Mothers In Construction
Stay at Home Profit
The Intuitive Collective
The Spouse Angle
The Waiting Warrior
Trisha Fraley, LLC
Virtforce

REAL ESTATE/PCS

- [Alyssa Wray, Licensed Real Estate Agent, VA](#)
- [Candice Saenz Real Estate Strategist](#)
- [CDay Pacific Group Keller William’s Realty](#)
- [Desert Heroes](#)
- [Doleman Realty Development, LLC](#)
- [Excerebus™ Logistics, Inc.](#)
- [Jennifer Huggins, Realtor-Ambassador for Pay-It-Forward, Inc.](#)
- [List & File](#)
- [Mac Pherson House](#)
- [Mariana Bridges](#)
- [Marilyn Richesin Realtor, Keller Williams](#)
- [Mountain Peak Realty](#)
- [My Ultimate PCS](#)
- [Neka Blair LLC](#)
- [New Jersey Realtor](#)
- [NextHome Integrity First](#)
- [Scheerer Home Team LLC](#)
- [TC Service Pro LLC](#)
- [Walker Real Estate Experts](#)
- [Mandy Mitchell, Keller Williams](#)
- [Raven Wade Real Estate](#)

RELIGIOUS

- [A Faithful Step](#)
- [Against The Grain Group, LLC](#)
- [Nueva Ministries](#)
- [Planting Roots](#)
- [Rev. I, do Officiating](#)

[Violet Detre, Speaker Author Happiness Advocate](#)

TRAVEL

- [Endless Routes Travel, LLC](#)
- [Flyga Twiga™](#)
- [Greight Company, LLC.](#)
- [Incredible Memories Travel](#)
- [Jetset Destinations](#)
- [MacPherson House Bed & Breakfast](#)
- [Magical Moments Vacations](#)
- [Mommy and Me Travels](#)
- [RnR Vacations and Cruises, LLC by Dream Vacations](#)
- [Hawaii](#)
- [Earth Baby Travel](#)
- [StarDream Expeditions, LLC](#)

TECHNOLOGY/SOFTWARE

- [AABLE LLC](#)
- [Caroline Heeren Creative](#)
- [DynoSafe](#)
- [Kovinno Inc.](#)
- [MustWants](#)
- [My Ultimate PCS](#)
- [Neka Blair, LLC and House of Blair Studios](#)
- [Sawston Wealth Management, LLC](#)
- [Skill-Dev](#)
- [Spouse-ly](#)
- [Wayfarer Financial, LLC](#)

VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

- [All About Her Business](#)
- [Brittany Dantzler](#)
- [Britteney Barber](#)
- [Freedom Makers](#)
- [JLE Virtual Solutions](#)
- [Kaitlyn Cerrato Virtual Assistant](#)
- [KF Virtual Assistant](#)
- [Levantay](#)
- [Meredith Whitley](#)
- [Modified by Melissa](#)
- [Organized Q](#)
- [Skycee Virtual Solutions, LLC](#)
- [Thompson Consulting](#)
- [Your Virtual HQ](#)
- [Emily Porter](#)
- [Your Time Negotiator](#)
- [Virtual Changemakers](#)

OTHER

- [American Environmental Assessment & Solutions, Inc.](#)
- [The Agency National Harbor](#)
- [Align Financial Planning,](#)
- [The MacPherson House Bed & Breakfast and Bloom Apothecary](#)
- [Lo Bello Imports, LLC](#)
- [Setting Moods](#)



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