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SELF-HELP

I Can Earn It! The Make Money "How To" for Teens and Tweens
Bev and Rachel Wood
Gabi Martin, illustrator
BookSurge
978-1-4392-3436-5
Four Stars (out of Five)

Since there seems to be no end to the various things teenagers simply must have, from makeup and clothing to expensive electronics, learning to earn one's own money is an essential life skill. Bev and Rachel Wood, a mother–daughter writing team, have taken on the task of teaching this lesson in their extremely helpful and well-written handbook, I Can Earn It!

Structured simply and effectively, I Can Earn It consists of twelve chapters that offer ideas and encouragement for enterprising teens and preteens. Each chapter also includes motivational quotes from successful people like Thomas Edison and Henry David Thoreau, brief comments and tips from teenage coauthor Rachel Wood, and sidebars that define words that may be unfamiliar to new entrepreneurs.

I Can Earn It takes a comprehensive look at what a teenager can and should do in order to run a successful business. The authors advise readers to consider their own special talents and skills when choosing their business. "Your business and how you operate it is a reflection of you," they write. "Look inside yourself and decide, do I have what it takes to be in business for myself?" Short lists and exercises are provided to help readers hone in on the best money-making enterprises for them.

There are chapters on evaluating potential markets, organizing and advertising the business, and the importance of remembering that customers must be appreciated and respected. Tools are provided to assist readers in covering all bases efficiently. These tools include checklists for determining necessary items, invoice examples, suggestions for organizing tools and paperwork, and a list of ideas to get more business. One chapter, titled "Putting It All Together," provides readers with a form for a simplified business plan, space to design logos and business cards, and blank pages to practice drawing up flyers and sample invoices. The authors have also launched a Web site to supplement the ideas presented in the book.

The tone of I Can Earn It is easy and friendly, and topics are approached in such a way

that young readers won’t feel overwhelmed or inundated with detail. Work ethics and responsibility are stressed in a manner that informs and encourages without lecturing, and the information and ideas given are concise and relevant.

The visual layout is appealing, with drawings, photographs, and graphics of notebook pages that add interest. However, the authors might consider enhancing the unrelieved black, gray, and white color scheme in future print runs; color draws the eye and would likely help young readers engage with the text long enough to benefit from its excellent suggestions. I Can Earn It is a fun, informative, and valuable resource for enterprising teens and tweens.

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