



Business & Economics

The Economy of You: Discover Your Inner Entrepreneur and Recession-Proof Your Life

Kimberly Palmer

Amacom Books

978-0-8144-3273-0

(January 1, 2014)

Side gigs can become just as rewarding as your main gig; Kimberly Palmer tells how.

Economic conditions have created a wholly new facet of the economy—workers that Kimberly Palmer calls “side-giggers.” Palmer, who is the senior money editor at *US News and World Report* and author of the book *Generation Earn: The Young Professional’s Guide to Spending, Investing, and Giving Back*, shares numerous fascinating stories of people who have successfully started businesses on the side (“side gigs”) while holding full-time jobs. The cases themselves are intriguing; Palmer not only profiles each individual, but she does a particularly good job of following up with them months after her first interviews to present their “continuous flexibility and willingness to adapt to both economic conditions and their own life circumstances.”

But this is far more than a book of success stories. Palmer breaks down side-gigging into logical steps. She covers why people gravitate to side gigs, how to generate ideas, ways to keep start-up costs low, how to make the best use of friends and social media, the basics of branding, developing a pitch, maintaining balance between a full-time job and a side gig, setting realistic expectations, and much more. In addition, Palmer offers a very handy “handbook” at the end of the book that includes questionnaires and forms to help anyone start a side gig, as well as a list of the top fifty side gigs.

One major reason to start a side gig, writes Palmer, is to generate additional income, but side-giggers also do it as a hedge against the possibility of losing their full-time jobs. Over the long term, side-giggers see it as more meaningful; according to the author, “they almost always pointed to signs that they were making a positive impact on the world, even in some small way.” Interestingly, new college graduates are likely to be side-giggers, no matter what full-time job they may get, while laid-off workers, particularly those in their fifties and sixties, could find that

a side gig leads to full-time self-employment.

Palmer writes with authority, includes many useful tools, and does a terrific job of both exposing the side-gig aspect of the American economy and explaining how to take advantage of it. This breezy, advice-packed book is a valuable road map for those who are looking to do their own thing on the side.

Barry Silverstein