



**MICHAEL KNOUSE**

**HOW TO CHOOSE**

*Your Breakthrough*

**BUSINESS MODEL**

## WHEN I STARTED MY BUSINESS, I WAS BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF MY OPTIONS AS A BUSINESS BUILDER.

I thought coaching seemed like a fun and easy business to start. I was in for a BIG surprise. Not only was it harder than I expected, there was so much competition. It seemed like everywhere I turned, there was another coach - someone that was my rival.

Fortunately, I love challenges and I love coaching. I stuck it out and I have built a coaching business that I am proud of and that has surpassed the income I was making in software sales. But the reality is that I have a really fun, and well paying, job again.

### HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

I started a business to have some freedom, not to be held captive to a schedule that requires to me show up and deliver services in order to get paid. Now don't get me wrong. I love what I do. In fact, it's 100% satisfying and I have to pinch myself on most days because of the level of gratitude I feel for my work. But let's be honest. I'm a freelancer. If I don't show up to work, then I don't get paid. And I wished that I had thought about this sooner.

That's why I've created this guide to educate you on the most common business models that I see successful, self-funded, independent business builders using.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?** Because without a clear business model in mind, you're flying blind. With a business model in mind, you have a framework to guide you and pay attention to.

In the past two years I've seen how valuable it can be to learn from proven models and frameworks. When you have a little clarity about how you can direct your business then your path is more focused and making money becomes easier (and more fun).

So I created this guide to help people go from "I'm blindly plodding along" to "I know where I'm headed and why." Because it's so important to understand these 10 business models and use them to align your desire for profits, impact and freedom.

# HERE ARE THE 10 BUSINESS MODELS:

YOU CAN ALSO LISTEN TO AN AUDIO BREAKDOWN OF THE  
10 BUSINESS MODELS AT [MICHAELKHOUSE.COM/170](https://michaelkhouse.com/170)

## 1. THE THOUGHT LEADER

(ex. Vanessa Van Edwards, Brené Brown, Seth Godin)

The Thought Leader focuses on their ideas and **research**. They are often sharing their research and ideas through traditionally published books and using those books to get on stage and spread their expertise. You can often find the Thought Leader on the public speaking circuit, on a book tour or doing corporate training events. It takes time for a thought leader to become recognized so this probably isn't the easiest path to start with. However, once you're recognized as an expert in your field, this business model can be highly lucrative.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Books, Training, Speaking	Speaking, Writing, Podcasting	Leveraged Training & Speaking, Traditionally Published Books, Requires a Big Audience

## 2. THE TEACHER

(ex. Danielle LaPorte, Ramit Sethi, Marie Forleo)

The Teacher is closely related to the Thought Leader. She researches specific topics, tactics, and strategies to help her customers solve specific problems. The Teacher often teaches material she already knows and cares about. Rather than delivering her services through freelancing or traditional books, the Teacher leverages workshops, training programs, and speaking combined with digital products like ebooks, courses, and membership sites. The Teacher is a common business model to start with as well as one that you can grow into over time. Something unique about this model is that you can have great success selling higher end solutions to a smaller audience just as easily as you can have success selling lower priced solutions to a wide audience.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Meaningful Goods, Digital Products & Programs, Membership Sites	Media, Speaking, Writing, Podcasting	Leveraged Training, Wide Audience Buying on Repeat or Small Audience Purchasing Higher End Products & Services

## 3. THE FREELANCER

(ex. John Jantsch, Brennan Dunn, Alexandra Franzen)

The freelancer uses her skills to help others build their businesses. Common freelancing skills include web design, web development, social media, photography, copywriting, and business consulting. The challenge with freelancing is that your business growth is limited by your time and it's nearly impossible to scale this model. However, some of the happiest people I know are freelancers that get really good at their craft and charge a premium for it. This model is a common one to start with because it's very easy to hang your shingle out and start offering a service you already know how to do.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Done-for-you services and products	Referral, Media, Personality-Based	Project Based, Fewer Clients at Higher Fees

## 4. THE AGENCY

(ex. North, PixelSpoke, Aeolidia)

The agency model brings a group of dedicated freelancers together under one roof to deliver projects at scale. Some agencies collect multiple types of freelancers together to deliver their services. Many freelancers are challenged with moving to an agency model because they must make the transition from ‘maker of pretty things’ to CEO and business owner. The upside is that this model provides the opportunity to have leverage and greater impact.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Done-for-you services at scale, typically higher end	Referral, Content Marketing, Sales Team	Few Clients (often B2B), Higher Fees per Project

## 5. THE CONTENT MARKETER

(ex. Being Boss, Pat Flynn, Young Architect, ProBlogger)

The Content Marketer can take many forms, including podcaster, newsletter curator, and blogger. They make money through their public content. What ties them all together is their source of revenue from affiliate marketing, advertising, donations and sponsorships. In other words, they make a substantial amount of money from their content. This model takes some time to create but once it’s up and running, you have a high degree of flexibility with how you scale your business and you can run this type of business from just about anywhere.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Subscriptions, Digital Products, Memberships, Events	Referral, Producing Content (Writing, Blogging, Podcasting, Videos), Media Driven, Social Media	Subscriptions, Memberships, Affiliate Relationships, Wide Audience Requiring Lot’s of Sales

## 6. THE COACH

(ex. Rich Litvin, Michael Bungay-Stanier, Martha Beck, Jerry Colonna)

The coach typically works with individual clients and does not do the work on behalf of their clients. The coach unlocks the potential of individuals through the tools of listening, questioning, and guiding to help their clients reach their goals. This differs from the freelancer in that the coach is focused on enhancing performance vs delivering a specific service. Just like the freelancer, this business model is relatively easy to set up but challenging to scale. This model provides a great stepping stone to some of the other models. In fact, many Teachers got their start as a coach.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
One-on-One Coaching, Group Coaching, Digital Products, Retreats	Referral, Content (Writing, Podcast, Videos), Personality-Based	Fewer Clients, Higher Fees

## 7. THE MAKER

(ex. Eso Esto, Baerlic Brewing, Hovden Farmwear)

The maker is a craftswoman/man. They probably started off making beer in their garage or making furniture in their wood shop. They now sell their wares directly to customers or wholesale them to retailers. The maker creates and sells functional products that are solving a problem or meeting a consumer demand. The challenge with this model is that it usually has significant hard costs which makes it more difficult to turn a healthy profit. However, this is an industry that is hot right now and it's never been easier to build a loyal following through the use of technology.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Physical Goods	Retail, Wholesale Distribution, Sales Team, Referral, Instagram	Market at Scale, Ecommerce, Wide Audience/Volume

## 8. THE CURATOR

(ex. Great Escape Publishing, Twist Jewelry, CreativeLive)

The curator is much like the maker. However, rather than making and selling their own goods, the curator buys and sells goods from other makers, often through storytelling and e-commerce. If this model sounds familiar, it's no surprise. One of the hottest companies around uses this model - Amazon!

Curation is one of the most interesting business models around at the moment. The idea is that consumers (and business buyers) are swamped with information. They're surrounded by different things they could buy; different models, different types. So people need some help in choosing what to buy.

As a business model, curation means collecting, say jewelry, displaying a selection (often online) and helping people to make the right decision. Doing this online means that you don't have to have a showroom of jewelry, or even buy any of the jewelry, you just have to know about jewelry and be able to write about it. Enough people will be so happy to find your recommendations that they will buy the jewelry from you or from an affiliate link on your site, so you earn a percentage of the price of the jewelry. This model is an infrastructure play that can be highly profitable but requires time to ramp up and build an audience for whatever it is that's being curated.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Digital Products, Physical Goods, Experiences, Events	Content Marketing, Affiliate Marketing, ecommerce, Social Media	Passive, Ecommerce, Wide Audience/Lots of Sales

## 9. THE SYSTEMATIC

(ex. MeetEdgar, ConvertKit, RoasterTools)

The Systematic uses their technical skills to build tools that solve niche problems. They primarily focus on solving problems through a technology + subscription model. Over the past few years there's been a big shift brought about by a growing preference on the part of both businesses and consumers to subscribe to services vs buy products. The Systematic makes it really easy for businesses and consumers to purchase and use their products by offering a relatively low monthly fee to use their technology to improve their life or business in some way. The challenge with this model is usually the startup capital and the timeline required to get a solution to market. Many Teachers and Thought Leaders are able to leverage their existing audiences by offering Systematic solutions that solve a fundamental problem within their market.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Software, Subscriptions, SaaS	PPC, Referral, Sales Team	Recurring fees

## 10. THE BRICK AND MORTAR

(ex. Amelia, Beam and Anchor, New Seasons)

The Brick and Mortar is a traditional street-side business that deals with its customers face-to-face in an office, studio or store that the business owns or rents. Consumers associate legitimacy with a brick and mortar business as a physical presence often gives a perception of trust. It is increasingly common for brick-and-mortar businesses to also have an online presence in an attempt to reap the benefits of each particular business model. This is usually the business model with the highest overhead. If you're going to start here, make sure you have a solid plan and a good cash runway to float the business for at least a year.

PRODUCT TYPES:	MARKETING:	REVENUE MODEL:
Physical Goods, Service Packages, Memberships	Storefront Sales, Referral, Content Marketing, Social Media	Retail Point-of-Purchase, Membership Fees, Ecommerce, Wide Audience/Volume



# QUESTIONS:

1. If you could immediately have a successful business in any of these categories, which business model(s) would you choose? Which one feels like the most fun and the best representation of you and your business personality?
2. Which business models are definitely not a fit for you?
3. If you could combine 2 or 3 of these business models over time, which ones would you choose?



**REMEMBER, THE CHOICE IS ALWAYS YOURS**

After reading this guide, you may realize that you want to keep your business just the way it is. And that's awesome.

But maybe you're thinking that designing or redesigning your business might be exactly what's needed - the thing that will allow you to have a bigger impact on more people while making space to write your book, start your podcast, do more speaking, or to travel.

To be able to generate enough income to get some help in your business and not have to do everything yourself.

And maybe, just maybe, it means that there's a way to **have all of those things while keeping your freedom and sanity intact.**

So if that's what you're looking for - to make a great income, work the way you like, and have the impact you want...

# WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP

Now, I can't say for sure if we'll be able to help you. After all, I don't know exactly where you're at in your business, and we can't help everyone.

But if you think this might be for you, then I'd like to invite you to book a chat with me.

## READY TO CREATE YOUR BREAKTHROUGH BUSINESS MODEL?

**IF YES, CLICK HERE TO SCHEDULE A TIME TO CHAT:  
>> LET'S CHAT <<**

If after receiving your booking we realize that we aren't the best fit for where you're at, we'll let you know and give you our best recommendation.

Otherwise, we'll use our time to help you determine if working with us is right for you. Together, we'll take a really honest look at where your business is at, what you want and need your business to do for you, and figure out the best way to make it happen.

And then at the end of the call, we'll either agree that there's a fit for us to help you... Or we'll realize there's not and we'll part ways with no further obligation.

Either way, you'll walk away with incredible clarity as to where you need to go and what's holding you back from having the kind of business that you, your family, and your clients deserve. It may just be the most impactful, most valuable conversation you have about your business this year.

## SOUND GOOD?

**IF YES, CLICK HERE TO SCHEDULE A TIME TO CHAT:  
>> LET'S CHAT <<**

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