

**ELISABETH ARCHAMBAULT**

AGE 50

SITE [BuckWorks.com](http://BuckWorks.com)

INDUSTRY Retail Merchandise

Elisabeth Archambault's first online business flopped. She was going to sell craft patterns on line. "I was never quite able to pull that together, mostly because of the complexities and costs of credit card servicing," she said. "But it was while doing the research and development for that that I discovered affiliate marketing."

That was about three years ago, when Archambault was busy working part-time as a technical writing instructor at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Manitoba. She had already



helped the college put some of its courses onto the Internet and, with what she learned from building her ill-fated patterns business, she quickly found herself selling products for other companies.

Today, her flagship site, [BuckWorks.com](http://BuckWorks.com), is a virtual mall, offering everything from auto parts to prom dresses. Her menswear section alone offers quality goods from more than two dozen merchants — mostly well-known name brands. Her writing background helped her create down-home prose, like advice from a good friend. If she can't vouch for a product, she says so. Then, when she offers a recommendation, you almost can't wait to click and buy.

The former teacher has many lessons for newcomers:

- "Start with something that interests you, because you're going to have quite

a learning curve. With myself, I have a much easier time selling clothes than auto parts because that's where my interest lies — although there are buckets of money to be made selling auto parts."

- Learn to calculate the return on your investment, including the time you invested in your site. "If you spend an hour doing this or that, there is an opportunity cost. You need to have some idea of what the returns are going to be."
- "You have to learn how to make your own pages ... I don't think it would ever be cost effective to hire someone else to make them for you. You have to learn the basics of HTML."

She said her revenue "goes up and down like a yo-yo," a phenomenon known to virtually all retailers. Shopping is seasonal and Archambault estimated her revenue can range from \$3,000 in a bad month to the low-five figures in a good month. It's enough.

"Quite frankly, I could not afford to go back to teaching. And I'm having more fun with more freedom," explained Archambault, whose income

has allowed her 53-year-old husband to quit his job and return to college.

"My business is sponsoring my husband's midlife crisis. I'm a chief breadwinner," she boasted. "I'm not the bread-baker any more."

**ULRICH ROTH**

AGE 49

SITE [Last-Minute-Reisen-Weltweit.de](http://Last-Minute-Reisen-Weltweit.de)

INDUSTRY Travel

Affiliates can live anywhere, and Ulrich Roth has chosen an idyllic setting — the Canary Islands — as home for himself, his son and his travel service, which focuses on travel packages, flights, rental cars, cruises and vacation homes.

"I work at home in a very beautiful area on the west side of La Palma," said Roth, a native of Germany. "My house, with a



view of the mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, is surrounded by a big blooming garden."

Although Roth just entered the world of affiliate marketing at the start of 2002, he reported sales of \$150,000 in his first year, with monthly revenues ranging from \$10,000 to over \$20,000 at peak season. He estimates sales are up 20 to 25 percent this year.

When he isn't working on his site, Roth finds time for walking in the natural paradise around his home and traveling.

For Roth, the key to his success is concentrating on a niche he knows.

"I focused on the German-speaking market. I have no experience with the French, Spanish, Italian or English markets. Every country has its own specific peculiarity," he said. "I design and program my own sites. For graphics, I sometimes employ a freelancer."

His advice to newbies is to read Ken Evoy's popular book, *Make Your Site Sell*. "It's the best help for people to develop a basic comprehension for this business," he said.

Beyond that, his advice is simple and straightforward: "Affiliate marketing is a job like others. To be successful, you have to work seriously and steadily. To put some banners on the site is not enough. The most important thing to becoming successful is to focus on one theme or business. If you are in a leading position, you can expand."

Roth noted that his 20-year-old son, Dominique, is also working successfully in affiliate marketing for the travel industry, earning \$1,000 to \$3,000 a month. "Now, I'm teaching and consulting him, telling the secrets," said the proud papa. ■

TOM MURPHY, editor in chief of *Revenue*, has been writing about business and technology for more than 25 years. He's also the author of *Web Rules: How the Internet Is Changing the Way Consumers Make Choices*.