

Of course, once business starts to roll in, you'll have to invest some of your earnings in a better website, promotional travel or a larger inventory. But the following women definitely made the first \$150 count. Here are their success stories.



Jennifer Campbell
HERITAGE MEMOIRS
RECORDING LIFE STORIES
START-UP COSTS: \$52

Three years ago, Jennifer Campbell was laid off from her position as a writer and editor for an Ontario television station. She considered applying for other corporate jobs, but a close friend's recent death caused her to reprioritize. "There's nothing like getting fired and going to a funeral to make you think about what you really want to do in life," she says. "I pictured my little gray cubicle and said, 'I just cannot go back to that world.'"

She was intrigued by the idea of writing people's personal histories. When her father, a British soldier, died in

She started small, spending \$25 on a domain name (heritagememoirs.ca) and \$20 on batteries for her tape recorder. Using a ready-made template from Microsoft FrontPage, Campbell launched a simple website that she could maintain for about \$7 a month. Shortly afterward, she ran into a former colleague. "I grandly told him that I was writing people's personal histories," she says, "even though I hadn't yet had my first client." Her bravado paid off: He later called with a lead to her first customer, a man who wanted to document his life for his children and grandchildren. So Campbell jumped in. "It was nerve racking," she says. "I used a beat-up old tape recorder held together with duct tape." Over five months she interviewed the man, who was happy that he could give his family a bound manuscript of his story before he passed away.

Meanwhile, she joined the Association of Personal Historians for \$90. When Campbell couldn't afford to go to the organization's annual conference in Denver, she applied for—and won—a scholarship it sponsored. Then



Rochelle Peachey
ILOVEYOURACCENT.COM
TRANSATLANTIC DATING WEBSITE
START-UP COSTS: \$124

When Rochelle Peachey, then a full-time mom, moved from London to Windermere, Florida, she found that acquaintances on both sides of the pond were pestering her to matchmake—internationally. "I thought, There have to be a lot of singles in the U.K. and America who want to be set up with one another," she says. So in February 2010 she started a transatlantic dating site: ILoveYourAccent.com.

Peachey registered her domain name for \$25 and found a designer via Craigslist to build the initial website for \$99. She promoted it herself ("I blogged as much as I could," she says) and joined other dating services to see how they did things. At first, she checked ILoveYourAccent.com every half hour, but when few people signed up, she feared she was wasting her time. Two months in, however, she logged on to show the site to a friend—and couldn't believe what she saw. "I had about 120 users," she says.

Membership was free in the beginning, but Peachey soon found that this business model attracted spammers. "Several customers told me, 'I'm quitting, because my inbox is bombarded by fake people,'" she says. So after three months, when she had about 1,000 members, she started to charge—\$20 a month or \$30 for three months. "People don't mind spending \$10 a month to meet someone," she says. "That's the price of a glass of wine."

Peachey now works full time on the venture. Instead of paying a publicist, she issues her own press releases every time there's a big success story (amazingly, the site is already responsible for five weddings and a pregnancy). When she decided to celebrate the launch by giving away a flight to London, she saved by using her husband's frequent-flier miles.

As soon as she started to make money, Peachey hired an experienced designer to give the website more sophistication. CONTINUED ON PAGE 69



"THIS DOESN'T feel like work to me," Campbell says about the memoir company she started for \$52.

1998, she suddenly realized she knew almost nothing about his younger years. Then her mother developed dementia, and Campbell felt she'd lost her parents' stories forever. "I thought, Maybe I can use my journalism skills to help other families avoid that loss," she says. Now she transforms hours of client interviews into polished memoirs for \$6,000 to \$15,000, or into a typed transcript or basic set of CDs for \$1,500. Once she's finished writing a manuscript, which typically runs about 275 pages, Campbell publishes the book with photographs and other memorabilia, working with either a traditional printer or a print-on-demand service such as Blurb.com.

she contacted her local paper, which ran a piece about her that reeled in two more customers. Whenever clients e-mailed to say she'd done a good job, she asked for permission to post their comments on her website as free advertising. She also gave talks at her town's genealogy society. "I just put my name out there," she says.

Now in her third year, she makes more than the \$60,000 she earned annually at her old job. She's written her own how-to guide, *Start & Run a Personal History Business*, forthcoming from Self-Counsel Press. And she never tires of hearing people's personal tales. "This doesn't feel like work to me," Campbell says. "It's just so rewarding."