

30 SMOKIN' HOT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Entrepreneur

(HOW TO)
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WHAT YOU
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EXCELLENT ADVENTURES

Have a passion for the travel business? Consider these four niches that are quickly winning over weekend warriors.

An August 2010 study by New Mexico-based adventure tourism consulting practice Xola is full of good news for those looking to invest in an adventure tourism business:

- Trips with adventure tourism components run long (seven to eight days).
- The people taking those trips are young (average age: 35) and split evenly between male and female.
- Some 70 percent of those thrill-seekers have more education and draw a higher household income than the norm.

In other words, there are legions of weekend warriors out there looking for a bit of excitement on vacation. Consider the following opportunities through the perspective of entrepreneurs who have already found success in them.

Specialty tours. Armed with \$30,000 in startup funds and an encyclopedic knowledge of Seattle's famous Pike Place Market, Angela Shen founded Savor Seattle, a company offering food-themed specialty tours of Seattle's downtown. Coming from a background in brand management at Quaker Oats, Shen saw an opening in Seattle's food culture: "It seemed like there would be travelers, like me, who would want to learn about and eat the foods that are special to the area they're visiting," she says. She secured partnerships with Market vendors and local restaurants in a variety of ways: "Everything from a quick 30-second pitch with a handshake to PowerPoint presentations with ROI estimates." The legwork paid off: Savor Seattle has expanded to five separate tours in the space of five years, and year-over-year business grew by 51 percent in 2010. —G.C.