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Cash in on cyber-coaching

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FOUNDER: Leslie Speidel

COMPANIES: Marketing Coach and Small Business University (SBU)

SERVICES: Offers small business courses through teleconferences and online

LAUNCHED: 1996,1997

INITIAL CAPITAL: \$10,000 for both ventures

COMBINED ANNUAL REVENUES: \$75,000 (projected this year)

SHE WHO CAN, COACHES Having dealt with scores of entrepreneurs as 17-year advertising veteran, Leslie Speidel spotted a small business need that wasn't being met: Firms wanted counseling but couldn't afford the hefty fees consultants typically charged. So with \$6,000, Speidel launched Marketing Coach ([www,the-marketingcoach.com](http://www.the-marketingcoach.com)), offering teletraining classes to small business owners on how to market via the Web. Installed in Speidel's Raleigh, N.C., home office is a 150-line teleconference system, which students dial into for class. Each teleconference holds between 40 to 100 attendees, and tuition depends on the length of study. To date, Marketing Coach has counseled more than 1,400 entrepreneurs.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE CYBERSPACE After running Marketing Coach for three months, Speidel spied another opportunity: teaching entrepreneurship through an online university. Launched in November 1997, Small Business University's faculty includes Speidel as well as 11 other business professionals scattered across the nation. By logging on to SBU's Web site (www.sbu.com), students can take courses-ranging from one to four weeks in length-on public relations, multilevel marketing, and management. Aspiring entrepreneurs pay tuitions from \$40 to \$75 per course.

Speidel's already returned her investment for Marketing Coach as well as SBU. Despite her background in advertising, however, the North Carolina coach relies on free publicity and word of mouth to attract cyber-students.

Small-business expert JENNY C. McCuNE tracks hot start-ups from her Bozeman, Mont., home office.

