

Wanna be a big shot?

Doing something unexpected can land you a dream job. Check out these quirky, totally doable tips from successful FOS's (friends of SELF) on how to live large. **By Amanda Woerner**



Rosie Pope did a 180 to master a tough market.

Nail maven Adair Ilyinsky profits from pretty polishes.

Be willing to scrap your plan

“I launched my high-end clothing store in 2008, just in time for the recession. Soon, we hit bottom. Instead of quitting, I cut costs and sold the same styles for less. We turned a profit, and now we’re expanding!”
—Rosie Pope, founder of Rosie Pope Maternity, star of Bravo’s *Pregnant in Heels*

Use ignorance to your advantage

“My partner and I knew zilch about the nail-salon business before we opened our own. So we hired a celebrity manicurist to teach us and constantly asked for feedback from customers and employees. You get into trouble when you stop listening.” —Adair Ilyinsky, cofounder, Tenover ten nail salon



Spanx’s Sara Blakely put her butt on the line.

Risk some major blushing

“Sometimes, you’ve got to be shameless. When I launched Spanx in 2000, I used my own backside as a model. When I met with buyers from Neiman Marcus, I demonstrated our body shaper on my own derriere while wearing white pants. They ordered 3,000 pairs on the spot.” —Sara Blakely, founder, Spanx



Amy Jo Martin thinks outside the cubicle.

Play hooky from the office

“Since founding my social-media company, I’ve learned that my best ideas come when I’m out experiencing life. I’ll work on my new book while getting a pedicure, or I’ll take a conference call at the top of a mountain. Escape your desk!” —Amy Jo Martin, CEO and founder, Digital Royalty

Give it a rest, and envision success

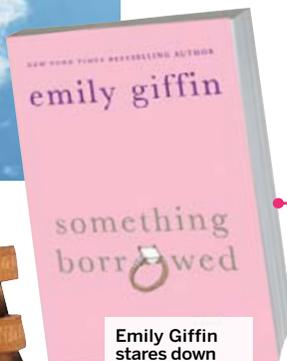
“I was recovering from a knee injury before the 2006 Olympics, so I couldn’t train much. Instead, I practiced visualization and imagined a perfect run. It totally changed the way I thought and felt. I went on to get the gold medal.” —Hannah Teter, Olympic gold and silver medalist, snowboarding half pipe



Hannah Teter used her head to grab the gold.

Scare yourself every day

“There are times I look at my computer and think, What if I never finish another novel? But I conquer the panic, word by word, and my faith always returns. You have to believe in yourself and work through your fears.”
—Emily Giffin, best-selling novelist. Her latest, *Where We Belong*, hits shelves in July.



Emily Giffin stares down the blank page.

Turn a guilty pleasure into a gig

“My Gilt Groupe cofounder and I used to sneak out of work for sample sales. Eventually, we thought, Why not just start a website for this? We were our own target customers, so we based business decisions on what we loved.” —Alexis Maybank, cofounder and chief strategy officer, Gilt Groupe



Alexis Maybank cashed in on her love of a bargain.

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