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Reader's Digest
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**INSIDE:
 ASIAN
 OF THE
 YEAR
 2008**



UPGRADE

YOURSELF!

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**UPGRADE
 YOURSELF!**

**NEW WAYS TO
 MAKE A BUNDLE**

BY MARS W. MOSQUEDA JR.

THESE DAYS, there are an amazing number of ways to earn extra money - we're talking big bucks. You could be an eBay assistant, do some mystery shopping, give parties or twist balloons. Here are some examples:

Sell for others

SELLING YOUR OWN stuff on eBay could give you additional cash but selling other people's stuff is where the real money is. This eBay service is still not popular across Asia but Americans and Europeans have already earned huge money selling their neighbours', friends' and relatives' items online. Rather than finding wholesale items to sell on eBay, help others sell their stuff and take a cut! Christopher Spencer, author of "The eBay Entrepreneur" and an instructor with the company's training programme, had a job as a celebrity manager when he started selling on eBay as a hobby in

1998. By 2001, he had opened a store where people could drop off their items. Now he's a full-timer and forecasts he will handle at least \$500,000 to \$750,000 in sales this year.

Spencer's company charges a fee of 38 per cent per sale. Assistants set their own rates, which can vary from five per cent for selling a vehicle to as much as 50 per cent for selling low-priced merchandise like houseware. To find out what others in your city are getting, go to ebay.com/tahub.

You don't have to start big. You do have to network and promote yourself. Try selling your own items first (you'll need a camera to photograph them). Write detailed descriptions and add a little razzle-dazzle.

Spencer says a person working at home could eventually list 25 or more items a day, generating \$2000 or more in monthly income, depending on how much time is invested. The key, he believes, is the ability to find high-



quality products to sell, whether it's Gucci handbags or farm equipment.

Lend assistance

IF YOU'VE GOT word processing, book-keeping, transcription, public relations or website design skills, you may want to try life as a virtual assistant. That broad title refers to people who render various outsourcing services to business owners and professionals like doctors and lawyers, usually in the field of administrative support and other related services, says 36-year-old Filipino virtual assistant Jonathan Gabriel of Distant Support Virtual Assistants (distant-support.com). "The virtual assistant industry is very young and a lot of business owners still do not know that they can outsource some of their work online," says

Gabriel. "Is there a lot of work waiting for VAs? The answer would be a definitive yes."

Though some work might require daytime hours, much of it can be done at night or on the weekend. Hourly rates range from \$35 for basic transcribing to up to \$100 for Web design. Depending on how many clients or projects they handle, VAs can earn anywhere from \$50 to \$5000 a month, says Gabriel.

Online forums and websites can be good places to gather how-to information from experienced assistants. Gabriel suggests the Virtual Assistance Chamber of Commerce Forum (virtualassistantnetworking.com/forum) and Virtual Assistant Networking Association Forum (mediamage.com/cvaforum).

ILLUSTRATION HARRY CAMPBELL