



# Three Easy Ways to Make Extra \$\$\$

**Melody Hobson Explains How These Jobs Could Bring in Additional Bank**

By **MELLODY HOBSON**

May 1, 2009 —

In these tough times everyone is looking for ways to make some extra [money](#). "GMA" financial contributor [Melody Hobson](#) explains her three favorite simple ways to bank extra bucks.

## **ChaCha**

There is this new service out there that is all the rage, [ChaCha](#). In its first year of service (2008), it already had 3.5 million unique mobile users. I absolutely love it, and I have run into so many people that swear by it.

ChaCha is for people on the go who need answers to questions right away. You either text (242242) or call ChaCha (1-800-2ChaCha) with your question on just about any subject, and then ChaCha sends you back the answer almost instantly. This is remarkable considering that they get approximately 15 million questions a month.

The exciting money making opportunity here is that you can actually answer questions for money. ChaCha calls these people guides.

There are currently 55,000 guides in the ChaCha network. The process for becoming a guide is pretty straightforward. First, you must decide which type of guide role best suits your interest. There are four types of guides: generalist, specialist, transcriber, and expeditor. Then you have to pass a compatibility assessment for the role you choose. Next, ChaCha puts you through training, and finally you take a role readiness test.

### **Money in the Bank:**

Guides are paid on a per transaction basis, with most guides making about \$3-\$9 per hour. The payment for each answer is based on the accuracy and category of the question, your role, and your productivity.

The best part about being a guide is that you can logon whenever you want and you can answer as many questions as you want. There are no minimum work requirements.

### **Special Equipment Needed:**

You will obviously need a computer to logon and answer the questions, and it will need to have at least 512mb of memory, which is not uncommon for most [computers](#) sold today. You will also need a high-speed connection. Other than that all you need is your brain power and some time.

## **Mystery Shopper**

Yes, you can actually be a mystery shopper. According to the Mystery Shopping Providers Association, one of the largest professional trade organizations dedicated to mystery shopping, there are more than 1 million mystery shoppers in the U.S. Mystery shoppers are hired by third-party companies who have been contracted

by retailers to critique their businesses.

These third-party companies hire people like you and me to go into restaurants and stores to evaluate the quality of the product and the quality and efficiency of the service. The specific retail location itself is not aware that you are a mystery shopper, so you can have an unbiased shopping experience.

### **How To Become a Mystery Shopper**

There are literally hundreds of companies that do mystery shopping. The first thing that I would do is research mystery shopping companies and determine which companies appear to be legitimate. The [MSPA](#) is a good resource for finding legitimate mystery shopping companies. Some of the more reputable sites out there are [marketforce.com](#), [sinclaircustomermetrics.com](#), and [trendsource.com](#), just to name a few.

Once your application is accepted by a site, you get to choose the assignments that you are eligible, and you decide the date range during which you will complete your shopping. You then go into the designated business, and you ask questions and look for details that have been determined by the third party. Once you are done with your shopping experience you are required to complete an on-line survey of your shopping or dining experience.

One of my acquaintances has done numerous assignments. She told me about one assignment where she was asked to go into a major bank and open a checking account. She was told to observe a wide variety of items such as how long it took to be greeted, were they friendly, were they professionally dressed, and did they do a good job of determining her needs. The whole experience took about 15 minutes, and then she went home and completed an on-line survey, which took about 10 minutes. She was paid \$10 for this assignment.

And one of my co-workers has done mystery shopping at a restaurant. In one particular instance she was asked to go to a nationally-recognized restaurant chain and evaluate the quality of the food, the attentiveness of the service, and the length of time it took to get the food.

She then completed an on-line survey that lasted about 10 minutes. The third-party company paid for her meal plus \$10.

### **Money in the Bank:**

The average shopping experience pays \$5-\$20, and complex assignments pay up to \$75 or more. Sometimes you get to keep the product you have purchased, and in the case of restaurants, you obviously get the free meal. The key is to sign-up for as many Web sites as possible, so that you have the most opportunities to mystery shop.

The one important thing to note here is that you should never have to pay for mystery shopping opportunities. If someone asks you to pay, this could be a definite red flag.

### **Utilize Your Personal Web Site**

So many people have their own personal Web sites or Web sites for their small businesses. A great way to make money with your site is to add affiliate links.

Affiliate links are basically advertisement links on your Web site for a third party vendor like [amazon.com](#). Certain blogging hosts also allow you to add affiliate links to your blog.

### **Getting Started:**

The first step in getting started with affiliate links is to determine which vendors you would like to have on your Web site. These vendors should mesh with the content of your Web site since people with similar interests to you will most likely be visiting your Web site. The key is not to choose the most vendors, as your

Web site will become cluttered with ads, but rather to choose the right mix of vendors.

There are a number of Web sites like [affiliatetips.com](http://affiliatetips.com) that actually provide reviews of affiliate programs. This is a good place to start.

Once you decide on the proper vendors, you contact the vendor through their respective processes and request to be part of their affiliate program. Once the vendor approves you as an affiliate, they will send you the appropriate code and/or cookies to put into your Web site or blog. From there the vendor will track the traffic and purchases coming from your affiliate link. The best part is that becoming an affiliate is absolutely free to you.

## **Money in the Bank:**

Almost all affiliate links pay commission based upon how many products are sold through your affiliate link. Commission rates for products vary widely depending on the retailer and the type of business they are in.

The average commission is about 15 percent to 20 percent. For example, with Amazon books you receive a 10 percent commission for every product that is sold through your affiliate link.

[Chemistry.com](http://Chemistry.com), an on-line dating service, will pay you 100 percent commission for each first time user that comes through your Web site. This means a payment of anywhere from \$50 to \$160 depending on package chosen by the customer. You even get a 25 percent bonus if you generate 50 subscriptions in a month.

Remember, the name of the game here is to drive traffic to your site so that as many people as possible see and act upon the advertisements. The best way to increase traffic is to make your Web site or blog as interesting and attractive as possible.

Copyright © 2009 ABC News Internet Ventures