



More Than Moonlighting

These entrepreneurs reveal what it takes to run 2 completely different businesses.

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Entrepreneurs sometimes find their lives split between seemingly incongruous businesses: a lawyer with a chocolate business; a pilot with a crawfish company; a TV and film producer with a dating empire. Some intentionally turned a hobby or interest into a moneymaking venture, while others took advantage of opportunities that seemingly dropped in their laps.

Once the businesses are up and running, just how difficult is it to sustain this double life? Whether it means keeping a suit at the factory or calling on friends in a pinch, these entrepreneurs share how they keep their disparate businesses in harmony.

Making a Choice

Criminal defense attorney Shawn Askinosie hasn't made the final decision yet, but he may one day turn in his briefcase for life as a full-time chocolatier. Askinosie began cooking to relieve the stress of the courtroom. In 2005, he had an epiphany: He was going to make chocolate, even though he knew nothing about the business. "So I did what I do, and that's research and find things out," says Askinosie. "Within a few months, I was in the Amazonian rainforest of Ecuador studying cocoa harvest techniques."



Shawn Askinosie strategically located his chocolate factory close to his law firm.

[Askinosie Chocolate](#) became available in specialty food stores across the country earlier this year. Askinosie built his factory three blocks from his law firm, Askinosie and Bilyeu

LLC, and keeps a suit in the factory in case of emergencies. "The chocolate has been receiving increasing amounts of time ever since my last jury trial, which was one year ago," he says. "I have a partner and associate [in the law firm, who] handle most everything and really only contact me when needed. For the most part, I am a chocolate maker."

Askinosie plans on reaching profitability in 2008. In anticipation, he's already put in place the same profit-sharing, open-book policy he employs in his law firm for both the chocolate company's employees and the cocoa farmers he directly sources his beans from and pays above fair-trade prices.

Seasonal Balance

For David Snell, his hobbies and personal interests have always directed his business decisions. He began giving airplane tours

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compensation can be a sensitive subject, and people get very passionate when trying to determine the most appropriate compensation plan for any business. Many human resource-related concerns need to be addressed, but equally important is understanding the financial aspects of employee compensation.



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of Dallas while studying for his piloting license in college. He went into the tech recruiting industry, but never gave up [Starlight Flight](#) as a side business. Later, he and a former college roommate started throwing crawfish boils. They purchased a beat-up trailer and set up shop--again, on the side while Snell was working full time.

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Today, he runs both Starlight Flight and [Cajun Crawfish Company](#) himself, plus a third company he recently added to his roster. "I just bounce back and forth like a ball," says Snell. "I go from one thing to the other and if I get bogged down, I've got a handful of assorted people who I've built relationships with who can help out."



Cajun Crawfish Company is Snell's main business these days. He's booked during crawfish season, which runs roughly from January through June, and expects to bring in \$400,000 in sales this year. With help handling the phones, he keeps Starlight Flight running, calling on local pilot friends, who also help with the crawfish boils, to fly during Valentine's Day and Christmas, both popular flight times.

"For the past few years, I've just been living the dream," says Snell. "I get done with crawfish season and go to the lake and try to improve on a very, very poor golf game."

To cover his summer living expenses, Snell started his third business, [DFW Custom](#)

The seasonality of the crawfish business helps David Snell balance his ventures.

[Wood Floors](#), which offers hand-scraped wood flooring.

Snell had his own floors done and was impressed with the group of men who performed the work. He noticed, however, that they had no marketing expertise, so struck up a partnership. Snell helps the floor installers find jobs and collects a fee of \$1 to \$2 on each square foot. "That's an extra \$1,000 or \$2,000 [per job], and all I'm doing is referring business because I had the vision of, "Wow, this stuff will sell itself," he says.

Snell's motto is to work smart and lean. He uses voice mail to manage appointments, the web to market his businesses and relationships with friends to help him out in the busy times.

A Surprise Coupling

For our last multi-tasker, her second business was somewhat of a surprise. April Masini made a name for herself as a TV and film producer, helping to bring the film *Blue Crush* and the 1998 Miss Universe pageant to Hawaii. She was asked to teach a course at the Learning Annex on how men could approach attractive women, and when her students remarked she should write a book, she did.

People soon were asking her for love advice, prompting her to start AskApril.com. Since then, Masini has been quoted in dozens of national media outlets and has appeared on the *O'Reilly Factor*. She also recently started politically themed websites, DatingRepublicans.com and DatingDemocrats.com, just in time for the 2008 election.

"It's really been like a runaway train," says Masini, who is still running her production firm, Masini TV & Film Enterprises, along with Masini Enterprises, the umbrella company for her dating/advice ventures. "I'm just one of those people who's very inquisitive. I start down a path and if it interests me, I just keep going."



April Masini didn't plan on starting a dating empire.

