

Tennis tots Buchinsky created a business that could provide some spare time



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Avoiding the Entrepreneurial Trap.

You quit the corporate rat race for your own shop. But how do you stop running?

BY ANITA HAMILTON

LYNN BUCHINSKY IS THE KIND OF ENTREPRENEUR who isn't supposed to exist. Working just 12 hours a week, six months a year, she expects to earn more than \$30,000 in 2007, thanks to the portable tennis program she created for day-care centers and schools in Solon, Ohio, just outside Cleveland. Launched last summer and designed for kids ages 3 to 11, Buchinsky's Little Racquets is different from other tennis lessons because it brings all the equipment—even the net—directly to the schools. That means parents don't have to shuttle their kids back and forth to private lessons and schools don't have to put a gym teacher on the payroll. Best of all, the 45-min. morning classes leave afternoons free for Buchinsky to work out and still get home in time to meet her three kids when they get out of school.

Although corporate shakeouts have contributed mightily to a new class of entrepreneurs, the data on start-up successes haven't changed much: only 1 in 5 new ventures is still around after five years. The hardy survivors often put their personal life on ice to stay afloat, thereby adding another irony. "A lot of people choose entrepreneurship because of the flexibility. But they end up spending more time working be-

cause the demands are so great," says Steven Preston, who heads the Small Business Administration.

Some self-starters like Buchinsky, 43, have found a way to make time for themselves even as they build their dream business. Not only does she have an original idea with low expenses—the equipment cost \$600, and her liability insurance is just \$227 annually—but because she is not the primary breadwinner for her family (her husband is an internist), Buchinsky can afford to work part time.

Even if you do pay the mortgage, rein-ing in your workaholic tendencies can help

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—DAVID NEWTON, BUSINESS PROFESSOR, WESTMONT COLLEGE

your chances at success. "The hardest thing for entrepreneurs to do is to set parameters. They feel so vested that their venture becomes a direct reflection of who they are, and anything short of wild success is perceived as a character flaw," says David Newton, professor of entrepreneurial finance at Westmont College in Santa

Barbara, Calif. That's a recipe for the kind of burnout that could not only sink your business but sabotage your personal relationships as well.

Finding the right balance isn't easy. It took Kelly Schandel, an interior designer and lifestyle consultant in Santa Monica, Calif., who used to work in publicity for Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, two years after launching her own business before she could ratchet back on her 70-hour workweek. "It consumed my life. Even if I wasn't in the office or meeting clients, I was at the newsstand reading magazines. It wasn't very financially rewarding, but it's turned the corner," says Schandel, 42, who says she now grosses about \$15,000 per month and leaves the office at 6 p.m.

There are other smart strategies for maintaining a balance as an entrepreneur. Beth Schoenfeldt, co-founder of Ladies Who Launch, a nationwide networking group for entrepreneurial women, recommends starting small and controlling growth by taking on only the projects you really want in order to grow at a comfortable pace. For Louise Cady-Fernandes, 46, that meant starting a children's sweater company out of a spare bedroom in her Lexington, Mass., home and marketing her designs online instead of paying the rent on a bricks-and-mortar boutique. An added perk: she's deep-sixed the 2-hr. daily commute she had when she worked for a sportswear firm in downtown Boston.

As your business grows, don't be afraid to get help. "The healthy entrepreneurs are ones who have come from large organizations where people are delegated responsibilities," says Newton. Buchinsky had 20 years of marketing experience before she started Little Racquets, and has hired two college students whom she pays \$10 an hour to help teach her growing class load. Schandel found an assistant at nearby Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles whom she pays \$17 an hour.

Newton also recommends allotting yourself regular time off in short amounts, just as elite athletes rest between workouts. Schandel treats herself to Pilates classes. Buchinsky runs half-marathons. And Cady-Fernandes even splurges on real vacations—she's headed to Costa Rica with her husband and two teenagers this summer. After all, success may be its own reward, but it sure sweetens the deal if you can take a few moments to savor it as well. ■