

Bulletin Board: Married teams take care of business

by Amy_Winter

Husband-and-wife business partnerships are growing in popularity, possibly due to the struggle to balance the duties of work and family time. Family businesses make up 80 percent to 90 percent of U.S. business enterprises, and married couples lead 1.2 million U.S. companies, according to statistics from the Family Business Review and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Dave and Linda Skromme of San Mateo, Calif., decided to take the plunge 18 years ago. Dave chose to run a franchise called FASTSIGNS in order to gain a more flexible schedule.

"We had two small children and Linda was doing international traveling," said Dave. "One of the motivators (of the franchise) was spending more time with the family."

Linda ended up partnering with Dave to keep up with the demands of their franchise. She was able to reduce management pressure and share in the responsibility. Having different duties in the business is important for a husband-and-wife team to succeed.

"I do the hiring, firing, marketing and finances," says Dave. "And Linda handles the day-to-day operations, the administrative duties and most of the vendors/supplies relations."

Spending ample time together, both at work and at home, can serve as a challenge.

Mike and Pam Moore of San Antonio run a Kitchen Solver franchise from their home. Pam admits it is difficult sharing a business and a home with her husband; however, keeping the line of communication open as well as having different responsibilities makes it more manageable.

The Skrommes solve this problem by separating their working areas in the office so they aren't "stepping on each other's toes."

Lori Kiser-Block, president of FranChoice, a network of franchise referral consultants, feels the benefits outweigh the negatives when it comes to family-owned businesses. She says the flexibility of scheduling your day is the biggest key. It allows families with younger children or elderly grandparents to have the ability to work and spend time at home. Not only can couples make their own hours, but they can also pursue the same goals and share their future investments.

"Few who make the decision to go into franchising do it without the support of a spouse," says Kiser-Block.

The Moores are glad they have been able to run their business together, although they regret not starting earlier. They see it as an advantage for young couples with children.

"It was a good fit because we could do it together and help each other," says Pam.

For more information on franchises, visit www.franchise.com.

THEY DIDN'T GET THE JOB

Job-seekers may go to great lengths to impress a potential employer; however, some answers to interview questions just make for a good laugh. Accountemps, a staffing service, asked 150 senior executives to recall the weirdest responses from possible hires.

Some of the strangest interview pitches included:

- "One candidate said that we should hire him because he would be a great addition to our softball team."

- "One candidate sang all of her responses to interview questions."

- "One individual said we had nice benefits, which was good because he was going to need to take a lot of leave in the next year."

- "A gentleman delivered his entire cover letter verbally as a rap song."

- "A person said he had no relevant experience for the position he was interviewing for, but his friend did."

- "An individual told me he was allergic to unemployment."

Accountemps suggests tips for preparing job-seekers in answering the question "Why should I hire you?":

- Answer in a positive manner: Describe how you would help the organization.

- Practice your responses: Emphasize your talents that relate to the position.

- Describe your interest in the company.

For more information visit www.accountemps.com.

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