

UP & RUNNING

Turn your job into a small biz

By Roger Pierce
www.bizlaunch.ca

Gavin MacMillan gives new meaning to the word "spin." He's spun a successful bartending career into a whole new business.

MacMillan, 29, owns The Movers'n'Shakers (www.themoversnshakers.com), a company that's turned routine bartending into entertainment.



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Called "flair bartending," MacMillan flips, spins, tosses and catches bottles and liquids to give cocktail consumers a truly memorable show.

His company swishes and swirls drinks for a growing list of corporate events as well as trains new bartenders on how to "flair" on their own.

MacMillan always loved his work, but dreamed of self-employment. "While working for others in the hospitality industry, I began to identify business angles to what I was doing," he says. "I just recognized opportunity and ran with it."

One of Canada's top bartenders, he's worked in 11 countries over five continents and competed professionally. MacMillan tied for second place at the 2003 3C World Bartending Championship.

"I've used bartending as a means to travel the world and make great money. When I returned to Canada, I thought about how I could earn money outside of bar or nightclub hours but still ply my trade."

His impressive bartending abilities got him noticed by the Toronto Institute of Bartending, who hired him to develop a training program to teach others how to spin, dazzle and pour. While bartending at a nightclub, some regular customers hired him to bartend at their private parties. "That led to three corporate events and I've never looked back since," MacMillan says.

MacMillan enjoys beautiful synergy between his business and job. He bartends part time at the trendy downtown nightclub Shmooze on Mercer Street.

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"At the club, business people get to see me in action and it creates bookings for my company. My job is a great source of referrals for my business," he says. "Plus, I hate borrowing money so I'd rather keep a side job until my young business is able to stand on its own feet."

SPIN YOUR JOB INTO A BUSINESS

- Identify opportunities to do your work differently.
- Search out customers not served by your employer.
- Consider contracting your services to your employer.
- Combine what you do with a new twist.
- Look for ways to work with your employer as a business.

Juggling more than just bottles, MacMillan says he makes plenty of personal sacrifices to accommodate both an employer and his business. "Scheduling conflicts are a big issue because all my work is done at night, but I do my best to make everyone happy."

If you love what you do, MacMillan says you don't have to quit your job and start competing with your employer. "Identify customers or markets that aren't served by your employer," he recommends.

Other employers may actually prefer to contract your services through your business, if the company is downsizing or changing its business model.

"Most jobs can be turned into a business, if you just look at your options creatively," MacMillan says.

MacMillan oozes enthusiasm about his career choice to become an entrepreneur. "I've found something I love to do that makes people smile. And, I'm master of my own destiny. I like that!" he exclaims.

-- Entrepreneurship expert Roger Pierce trains people on how to start a small business in the Up & Running Biz Launch Program.

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