



## Success and the Single Mom

I have tremendous respect for any home-based business owner who is also a single parent. How they manage their dual responsibilities is beyond me.

June Bertucci of West Hyannisport has been a single mom for nine years, and a home-based business owner since 2004. Bertucci's two boys were 6 and 10 when she launched Small Office Computer Support of Cape Cod. She left behind a good job in IT and struck out on her own for them. She wanted to manage her time, so she could be with her children as much as possible.

When it comes to single parenthood, Bertucci is fortunate. She and her ex-husband communicate well, and they share responsibility for the kids. Even so it became apparent during a recent conversation that Bertucci has had to develop strategies to manage her dual roles as entrepreneur and mother. I find them instructive for anyone who is self-employed.

**Be responsive.** Bertucci strives to be available for client emergencies 24/7, even if this occasionally means showing up to a client's office in jogging clothes, or with a child in tow, or early in the morning when her kids are still in bed. Her clients are accommodating because they know she'll get the job done.

**Manage expectations.** Bertucci's children learned early on that when a client calls, they can't interrupt. Likewise, her customers understand that she is a self-employed single mother whose children come first.

**Be a communicator.** When she goes on vacation, Bertucci warns clients in advance. She also gives her kids a heads-up when an emergency threatens to disrupt family time, as happened one day last summer when a call for help came in during a family outing. "I forewarned the kids. 'We've got an emergency. We might have to fly here.'"

**Have a backup plan.** Bertucci has arrangements with two local computer specialists to back her up when she's unavailable. "That's one of the aces in my bag," she said. She also has strong personal supports that help fill occasional gaps in her parental duties.

**Learn to juggle.** One day in late June while driving with her sons to a baseball game, Bertucci took a call from a distraught client whose laptop had crashed. She dropped her boys at the game, drove to Mashpee to pick up the laptop, went back to the game to pick them up, then fixed the computer at home that evening. It's crazy, she says, but it works.

**Strike a balance.** On an exceptionally gorgeous Friday in June, Bertucci gave herself permission to take time off. "I'm trying to preserve this beautiful day. The boys and I will bike ride," she told me that morning. "There's a time and place for multitasking."

Bertucci's business is going well, and her year-over-year growth is impressive. Even so, she said, being responsible for a mortgage, two children and a business can be scary, that is until she thinks about the alternative — being "at the mercy" of an employer 40 hours a week.

Marilee Crocker is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Brewster. Her column about home-based business runs the first and third Sundays of the month. You can reach her at [marileecrocker@hotmail.com](mailto:marileecrocker@hotmail.com).

(Published: July 6, 2008) **Cape Cod Times.**