

## Work/Life Balance Can Be Achieved For Small Business Owners



Copa Di Vino small-business owner James Martin and wife Mollie pose in front of downtown Dalles, Oregon  
By Janice E. Pierce, Video and Photo

*Running a small business can be all-consuming and take up all your free time. How do you develop a healthy work/life balance? For USA TODAY's second annual Small Business Challenge, we are following three small businesses for three months as they try to expand. This week, the Small Business Challenge coaches offer their advice on achieving the proper work/life balance.*

**Challenger 1: Boston Beer's Jim Koch advises carve out family time from business needs**

**Participant:** James Martin, founder of Copa Di Vino in The Dalles, Ore., a

seller of individually packaged glasses of wine.

**Coach:** Boston Beer Founder Jim Koch

**The situation:** Martin's work and family time frequently overlap. "Everyone is around us and everyone pitches in," he says. His sons, 10 and 14, help after school and his daughter — a recent college graduate — is a full-time employee.

The convergence of personal and professional time suits Martin and his family well. "I don't disappear for 70 hours a week into a deep huge skyscraper somewhere," he says. The family often works seven days a week, but the children get to see their dad in action, and benefit by learning professional responsibilities at a young age, he says. Yet there are some drawbacks. Without a stringent work/personal life separation, Martin says that his family — in particular, his wife and daughter — "watch me experience an enormous amount of stress and deal with challenges," as he manages the family winery and tries to get Copa Di Vino off the ground.

**Koch's advice:** Martin is fortunate that he can spend so much time with his children. When Koch was building Boston Beer, he was often on the road and didn't have that luxury. "Like most small business owners, I did not have as much time with my young family at that point as I would have wished," he says.

Koch advises those who are parents and entrepreneurs to carve out some specific family time in which there is no shop talk allowed. "Don't be on the phone trying to do business, don't get on your email," during that time, he says. "Those things make (your kids) feel like the business is more important than they are."

He advocates "making memories" by planning activities that deviate from the normal family routine such as taking trips together.

"There is a tendency to just work, work, work when you have your own business," he says. That's why it's important to schedule specific family time. "You have to do as much planning and prep for that time as you do for your business time," he says.

His approach: mark family days on his calendar months in advance.

In February, he blocks out every Monday and every Friday during the summer to spend time with his wife and two younger children at their weekend home. "I lose about half of that time" due to business needs, he says. "But if I didn't block out the time, I'd lose them all."

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