

Minding Your Own Business

The Province

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Names: Mary Ann Westendorf.

Business: Bizzy Butler, Maple Ridge.

Contact: www.bizzybutler.com; 604-466-9008.

Number of employees: One, plus eight on-call staff.

Time in business: Eighteen months.

What do you do? I provide personal assistants to help people manage their households all over the Lower Mainland. I can pretty much do anything -- cleaning, grocery shopping, cooking, catering, handyman jobs. We plan, cater and assist people with private parties, weddings and corporate events, and we can also clean and decorate homes for re-sale. I also arrange one-day adventures in the Vancouver area that can be used as corporate incentives, employee rewards or family outings.

How did you get into this business? I've been involved with the hospitality industry most of my career, in bartending, catering, sales and marketing. I also have a diploma in interior design. When I retired, I wanted something to do part-time -- I didn't want to punch a clock any more. I know how hard it is to juggle work and life, having raised four children and managed a large home on an acreage, and I came up with the idea of being a personal assistant. I'm 58 now and I'm probably working 60 hours a week, but it's a wonderful job.

What is your greatest challenge? Trying to explain what I do. People here associate a concierge with a hotel, and when I say I'm a personal assistant, they think of executives. It seems that busy people have no problem hiring someone to clean their homes but have a harder time letting go of all the other time-consuming chores.

What do you like best? I love the diversity and that every day is different -- I can

wear six different hats every day.

Future plans? I have trademarked my company name and I'm planning to franchise in the next couple of years. I want Bizzy Butler to be to personal assistants what Molly Maid is to house-cleaning.

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