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## Looking Out for No.1

The Complete  
Guide to  
Managing Your  
Career



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Do You Need It?  
Can You Get It?



"I just wanted the business to survive. That first winter, I thought a lot about the Pilgrims."

Jean Kelly, 44

**Old job:** commercial architect

**New job:** furniture designer

**Advice:** hone and polish your one true talent

onestly think I got in re fishing."

**DESIGNER:** When Kelly graduated with a degree in architecture from University of Virginia in 1979, she says, "I wanted to get a job with a big name in New Orleans. After I was dissatisfied. "Oh, sure, I got buildings. But because they were fights with the clients, technical aspects were not work. It got so that by the time the work was done, you didn't

laise, she decided to give up. She and her husband bought a dining room table and chairs.

She designed them herself. Who to build them? She found a shop she liked and got to know the owner.

He later died unexpectedly, and Kelly, whose interest in furniture had grown, offered the heirs a deal: She would work in the shop part time for three months to learn the business ("I believe in dating before marriage," she explains), and they would give her a first option to buy. She studied grains, learning which woods worked with which. She learned to fit together designs on a smaller scale than she was used to. And she savored the scent of cypress and walnut, learning to distinguish types of wood by smell alone.

In 1989, Kelly, with the help of her husband, Dennis—a lawyer and Harvard business school grad—engineered an LBO. She quit her job. Her mother loaned her \$30,000, and (18 months later) a bank extended her a \$25,000 line of credit. She says she didn't have to make any special economies, since these had already been made for her: As parents of two little girls, she and Dennis "had no social life" to cut back. For medical coverage, she signed on to Dennis's bar association plan. Working from home was never an option: With two little kids, "I felt like I was inside a pinball machine."

Her first year was tough. Though she herself preferred postmodern design, the shop's late owner had made a specialty of antique reproductions. "So I had to put on my Chipendale hat. At that point I just wanted the business to survive." She took any job that came through the door. A \$25 repair to a chair leg? Fine. "That first winter I thought a lot about the Pilgrims." Eventually her own designs started winning regional awards, and her clientele grew with her reputation.

Three partners later bought in (including Becky Gottsegen, another woman who wanted to learn the business), bringing with them additional funds, and by 1993, Kelly & Gottsegen Furniture Design was so well established that Kelly could concentrate on making original designs full time. Sales have since doubled. "Now we wouldn't even consider a \$25 repair job," she laughs.

Certain touches are characteristic of her work—for example, the use of decorative writing. She got the idea from the same source she turns to for much of her inspiration: New Orleans's older buildings. Court houses, she noticed, were often set off by a frieze of words around their top. Why not do the same with furniture? Her first ap-

plication of it was for a dining room table. The client, wanting something different, jumped at the idea but had no words in mind.

Kelly found just the thing in Homer: "Here let us feast, and to the feast be joined discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind." ("It's not a small table," she says.) She since has used the same idea for other pieces, including a grandfather clock surmounted by some verse of Emerson's, edited slightly. ("We sized it to fit the clock.")

Her designs take shape in a former warehouse with 14-foot ceilings, cypress beams, and exposed brick walls, about a mile from downtown in New Orleans's lower Garden District, a semiresidential area off the tourist path. She and her partners work with six employees. Her daughters' school is within walking distance, and home is but a 15-minute drive. "It's a big old house on St. Charles Street, about 100 years old. We've been renovating it a room at a time. I got to design my kitchen cabinets—neocolonial, with Greek columns."

Sounds idyllic. How's the money? "My last architectural job was very well paid, and I'm still not back up to that level yet. I'm making two-thirds of what I made then. In another few years it should rise to what it was. In the meantime, I'm building equity." Asked whether she feels more secure as a furniture designer than she did as an architect, she says, "I feel much more secure about my marketability. Before, I had no reputation as a designer. I was known as a technical person—somebody competent to write specs."

She now regards architecture as having been "too dry, too complex." Furniture suits her better: "architecture on a smaller scale." She likes the fact that a design of hers can be built in three months, not three years. Better still, "I look back on designs I made years ago, and I still like them."

**BANDLEADER:** No child, asked what he wants to be when he grows up, ever says, "A throwback." But that's what Bob Hardwick has made himself: an avatar of the suave, sophisticated, high-society bandleaders of another time and place—a prewar, Astaire-Rogers world of orchids, syn-copation, and black linoleum. When he leaves his terraced Manhattan penthouse for a day's work, attired in one of five immaculately tailored tuxedos, the sun is setting. And when he returns home (many bars of "The Continental" later), the clink of cham-



pagne glasses lingering in his ears and the kisses of society hostesses on his cheek, a pre-dawn restorative of cookies and ice cream with his beautiful wife, Beth, awaits him.

Do you suppose Bob misses being a vice president of U.S. Trust?

He does not.

Yet the road that took him from a world of banking to this far, far better one was long and winding. He grew up genteel, in Louisville, where his father was chairman of Louis-

ville Trust. From childhood on, he played piano—and with his father's blessing, but only as long as music remained a hobby. Business, felt Father, was serious; music was not. Bob became a banker.

He did it perfectly well, first at Citibank, then at U.S. Trust, becoming a vice president in 1980. All the while, though, he continued making music, playing friends' parties and weddings on the side.

The first Hardwick to kick the corporate habit wasn't Bob, but Beth, who in 1979 left her job at a market research firm to start her own business conducting focus groups. Bob banked on. Both Hardwicks agree that

the security offered by big corporations exerts an emotional pull that's hard to break, but eventually Bob followed Beth's lead and left. "It was a very difficult transition," says Bob. "I loved banking; I loved selling; I loved being part of a corporation." But by 1989 he had been juggling banking with bandleading for 13 years. "It was time to take stock."

Bob increased the number of events he was playing. "It really helps if while you've

sical macadam down which roll all the familiar standards of Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers, and Berlin. This is not music for taking out the trash on Monday morning. It conjures up gay divorcées, doomed liners, wrong-way flights, Rob Roys in parker cars. It unlocks the latent, toe-tapping power of old feet.

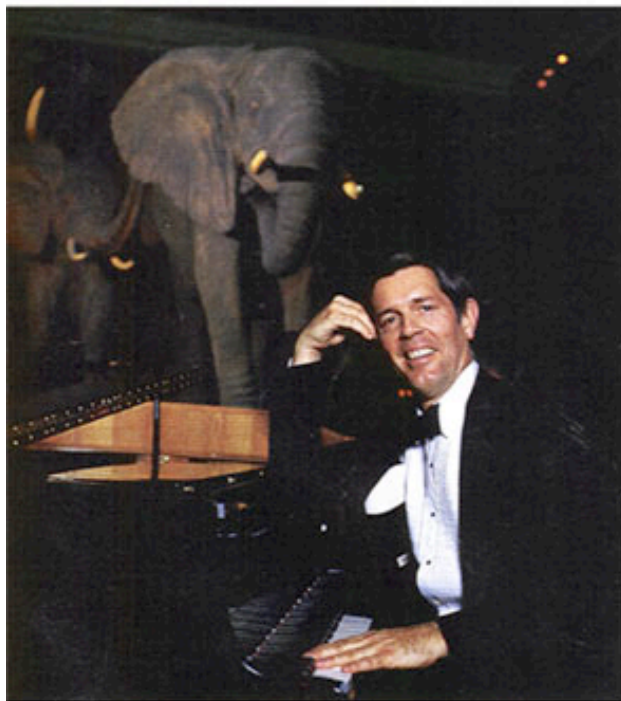
The Sound carried Bob into the top tier of society bandleaders, which includes Peter Duchin and the antediluvian Lester Lanin.

Has success had any downside? Bob says he works longer, stranger hours than he ever did in banking. "My father used to ask me, 'Son, if you were a musician, what would you do all day?' There's never a quiet moment. I just got a call from a woman who has us booked for January 1, year 2000, and she wants to talk to me for 20 minutes so we can get started on it now."

The upside? An arpeggio of C notes. Bob's salary as a banker was in the low six figures. "I'm making much more than double that now." He typically charges \$7,800 to \$15,000 to play a Saturday-night party in New York City featuring himself at the keyboard. The fee is less for using one of four satellite Hardwick bands with other pianists. Right now 45 musicians are on call, with bookings coordinated by an office manager, Calvin Kerr.

Clients appreciate Hardwick's willingness to tackle special challenges. For the

annual ball of the American Museum of Natural History in November, he was asked to lead two orchestras in two different rooms simultaneously, by means of a special electronic hookup. From 6:30 to midnight he did it, not once missing a beat, as gray stuffed elephants gaped and guests whose names you could not make up (Lansing Lamont) twirled. Ladies in Diors, Vera Wangs, Calvins, and a pink Oscar de la Renta, paid homage to The Sound (in stereo, no less) and complimented Bob for his openness to new ideas. At least one, before champagne glasses clinked their last, had kissed him. ▀



"It really helps if while you've still got your first career, you can start to see dollars coming in from your second."

Bob Hardwick, 53

**Old job:** banker

**New job:** bandleader

**Advice:** segue when the moment feels right

still got your first career, you can start to see dollars coming in from your second," he says. He and Beth paid off their mortgage. They postponed major purchases. (Bob still drives the 1982 Datsun he drove then.) Finally he segued: In 1990 he got a three-month leave of absence (unpaid) from U.S. Trust so he could spend all his time rehearsing. Though he was careful to keep his bridges back to banking open, he never had to use them.

Why? He had by then unleashed what he calls The Bob Hardwick Sound, and society hostesses were flocking to him. The Sound is up-tempo, jaunty, buttery smooth—a mu-

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