

## **Lawyer, management coach finds demanding dual role "not that hard"**

*By Katie Ryan  
Inside Tucson Business*

Dean Axelrod, 44, is a jack-of-all-trades.

During his youth, his family lived in places that included Tokyo, Brussels and London. After graduating from high school in London, Axelrod began his collegiate studies at the University of the Pacific in Northern California. After two years there, he transferred to Boston University where he received a bachelor's degree in English. In the early 1990s, Axelrod moved from New England to Arizona. Four years after moving to the Southwest, he began working on his MBA at the University of Arizona's Eller College of Business while simultaneously working on his J.D. at the UA's James E. Rogers College of Law.

While such an intense workload could overwhelm some people, Axelrod saw the challenge as a positive experience.

"Being in both programs at the same time made it easier and more fun," he said. "The elements from law, like 'stop, think, analyze, ask questions and research,' make me a better problem-solver in business."

This joie de vivre for learning is just a part of Axelrod's gregarious personality.

After graduating from law school, Axelrod worked for Bombardier Aerospace, where he worked in an interdepartmental team to improve efficiency.

"It was a great job," he said. "I loved it."

However, after changes at the company, he had to decide what the next step was going to be.

Even though Axelrod had his license to practice law, he was hesitant about it.

"It wasn't a lifelong dream," he said. "I'm customer- and client-oriented, so I saw this as an opportunity to help with legal services. I was very lucky and worked hard so I was able to start my practice (Axelrod & Associates, PLC, attorneys and counselors-at-law) very quickly."

One part of the law that he currently focuses on is real estate law. According to Axelrod, he took a liking to real estate law because of the personal connections he's been able to make with clients.

"It got to a point where clients were asking for help beyond the legal contract," he said. "I thought, why wait for these (management contracts) to fall in my lap? So I started Axelrod Management."

Axelrod Management Advisors currently works with clients on marketing campaigns, full-service advertising, change management, search-engine marketing and Web sites/blogs.

Balancing two jobs "is really hard," Axelrod laughed. But after a few moments, he added, "Actually, it's not that hard."

Axelrod said his law firm is larger than his management business, but he finds a satisfying balance between the two.

"There's only one of me," he said.

This go-getter attitude helped make Axelrod the keynote speaker at the State Bar Association this year, where he spoke of "success on your own terms."

This was not his only speaking arrangement. In 2007, Axelrod Management Advisors held a full-day workshop at the State Bar of Arizona Conference on Business Success and Personal Life.

"It's lots of fun to create and produce," he said. "I feel it's very enabling and empowering."

Axelrod takes a coaching approach when speaking at events. In his eyes, people are able to achieve more when they are working for core values and principles, and he enjoys "charging up" an audience by telling them to schedule in personal time by, for example, getting monthly massages.

One of the reasons Axelrod believes he's succeeded in both his professions is because he gives himself a personal assessment at the end of every year. The assessments consist of what he likes about his job, what he doesn't like and what he can do to ensure that his positives outweigh the negatives.

For Axelrod, the best lawyers and management advisers relate to clients on a you-and-me basis and then turn it into a we basis. The best approach is to ask, "How can we solve this?"

With numerous speaking arrangements and two successful businesses, Axelrod makes sure to take the advice he doles out as a keynote speaker and take a vacation once in a while.

"Life is too much fun to spend all your time indoors," he said.

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