



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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CLIP

DEALS & DEAL MAKERS

The Zagat's of the Home

Elizabeth Franklin was an investment banker at the banking boutique James D. Wolfensohn Inc. when she decided it was time to change her life. After Mr. Wolfensohn left to become head of the World Bank, "investment banking at Wolfensohn had lost the sparkle it once had," said Ms. Franklin, who left in 1995. With one four-year-old girl and another one-year-old in diapers, "I actually did want to attend one birthday party on the four-year-old birthday-party circuit."

After a few years at home, rather than go back to work on the Street, Ms. Franklin had the idea of starting a business. She battled with her husband,

banker Jeffrey Sechrest, now a vice chairman at Merrill Lynch & Co., over who would get use of the bigger office in their apartment. "He had a real office. Once I won the argument, I had to do something with it," she said.

So she launched the Franklin Report, which would track the home-services industry -- architects, designers, contractors, painters, plumbers and other vendors. The Franklin Report (\$22.50) is a sort of Zagat's of home services and renovation.

So does all this beat banking? "One thing I could say, I'm working more hours as an entrepreneur than I ever did as an investment banker," the 43-year-old Ms. Franklin said. "I've followed my passion."

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