

He makes a living off love

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A happy client is one making a love connection for dating consultant Thomas Edwards.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Thomas Edwards started his own consulting firm The Professional Wingman
- He's helped more than 100 socially inept people improve their love lives
- He interviews clients about their dating past, current goals
- Edwards will observe and offer tips or introduce a client to groups of people

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(CareerBuilder.com) -- Consultancy is one of the best ways to make a living right now. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says that the consulting industry is expected to grow by 83 percent from 2008 through 2018. It seems everyone wants expert advice when it comes to managing their money, marketing their business and, apparently, improving their love lives.

Thomas Edwards, a 24-year-old from Boston, specializes in the latter. Technically "a dating and lifestyle strategist," Edwards describes his business, [The Professional Wingman](#), as "a company that helps men and women enhance their dating and social lives" and says his main goal is to increase his clients' odds of attracting - and retaining -- the opposite sex.

If you've ever seen the Will Smith movie "Hitch," a romantic comedy revolving around the foibles of a professional "date doctor," consider yourself familiar with Edwards' job.

The Professional Wingman tells us what it's like to make a living off of love.

QUESTION: How did you become a professional wingman? Was there a certain event in your life that prompted you to start your business?

THOMAS EDWARDS: It all started from a breakup. Having my girlfriend cheat on me motivated me to really focus on myself and being a better person for me -- not for anyone else. I started a blog as a way of holding myself accountable for the things I wanted to accomplish. I got a lot of attention when I talked about dating and personal growth and so the blog focused on those topics.

After a while, people started to personally write in and ask for my advice on issues they were going through. At the end of one e-mail

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from a guy I helped handle his divorce and move forward, he wrote, "You should get paid for this. This is professional grade advice here."

That made me think, but nothing really popped into my head until one night out with friends. A friend saw a really attractive woman and asked me to be his wingman so he could talk to her. And right then, the [business](#) was created.

Q: How long have you been The Professional Wingman?

EDWARDS: The company has been around for 15 months. When I started over a year ago, it was something I did on the side. That lasted three months and I quit my "day" job as a hotel manager since I had enough clients and gross income. I haven't looked back since.

Q: How many clients have you worked with since starting the business?

Over the past year, I've worked with over 100 clients. My youngest client was 19 and my oldest was 59. It's amazing how many different people I have met in the past year alone.

Q: What type of services do you typically provide to your clients? Do you spy on them from across a restaurant and give them tips through an ear bud?

EDWARDS: If there was an ear bud, then it would really seem like a movie. All of my services are primarily one-on-one basis; like you have the option of wingman coaching where I work with you for a night to see what problems you are having and give you advice on how you should handle it.

If you're having a hard time approaching women, I will open up groups of people and introduce them to you. If you'd like a more valuable and long-term experience, you can work with me where I place you in real-life exercises to break through your sticking points and develop self-confidence.

But first, I have to know who you are, what your [dating](#) past is, and what your goals are.

The cool thing about this is that I'm with you every step of the way. You'll get unbiased, constructive feedback that will ultimately help you make the changes you need to be successful. And we'll have fun every step of the way.

Q: Can you share a success story?

EDWARDS: One of my clients had a really hard time approaching women. He was a quality guy but he just didn't have the confidence to go approach a woman. After working with him for a few weeks, he was able to approach really attractive women with ease, but then he came across another issue - flirting. He didn't know how to let a woman know he was interested.

After working with him again for several weeks, he became more comfortable openly flirting with women in a way that made him attractive and allowed him to express interest in women. Since then, his life hasn't been the same. He's very happy with the life he leads now and he's been dating someone for over four months.

Q: What do you like most about your job?

EDWARDS: It's really hard to have one thing, but if I were to choose, it would be something I call "the subtle moment of success."

This moment happens when a client would initially fail at an attempt to attract someone they were interested in and I would give him or her feedback so he or she can make adjustments. The client goes

back out there, tries it again and succeeds. Watching that happen in real time is something I really enjoy because I know at that moment, the client is happy, confident and excited to learn more.

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