



Rex Dittman

[DREAM JOB]

Katherine Cohen

She knows what it means to be wise — Ivy Wise, that is

By WENDY STRAKER

KATHERINE Cohen is the CEO and founder of Ivy Wise, an educational consulting company guiding students through each stage of the application process — from kindergarten to college and beyond. Meet the best-selling author of “The Truth About Getting in” and “Rock Hard Apps,” and find out why some kids are preparing for college as early as ninth grade.

What’s a typical day like?
It depends on the season. August through December is application season, and it’s absolute insanity with back-to-back appointments and no

breaks. Days might start at 8 a.m. with a phone call from a student in Asia, and then I’ll quickly come to the office and start taking appointments from here, either by phone or in person. Our busiest month is probably August — we call it application boot camp month — because students fly in from all over the world to work with us on their college applications.

Once applications are in, things calm down a bit, and that’s usually when I’ll start a project, like writing a new book.

Right now we’re in the process of creating a Web-based college counseling course that will help students throughout the entire application process.

And yes, I do take time off. I take the entire month of July!

Do you have any daily rituals?

Lunch; it’s the same every day. I get chicken soup delivered from Hale & Hearty, and I eat it at my desk.

Do you remember your college essay?

Yes, and I still have it. I’m one of those people that has a hard time throwing things away. My college essay was about three photographs — and it was written through the eye of the lens of the camera.

The first photograph was of my host mother when I lived in Argentina for four months in high school.

The second was of a performer in the Olympics, and it was about how I responded to that performer because I was a dancer. And the last was of

an elderly man who looked very sad — and that was about my desire to study psychology and understand the human mind. And I actually majored in psychology at Brown. I applied to Brown early and got in early. I’d wanted to go there since my sophomore year in high school.

If your office had a theme, what would it be?

Part retro, part forward-thinking and modern. My best friend, Lulu Kwiatkowski, designed the fabrics and all of the paintings. And it’s a mix, which is why I like it. It sort of defies time. As for my desk, it’s no different than anyone else’s. We are very much a family here, and I don’t like closed doors.

What’s your favorite part of the job?

Helping students to take their interests and talents and use them to make an

impact in their community. And a lot of it’s teaching them to think outside the box, which can occur as early as ninth grade.

I might be working with a student that loves to write, but her school doesn’t have a literary magazine. And I’ll say something like, “So, why not start one?” and then I’ll help her to get that magazine off the ground.

Once a student starts something — no matter how big or small — and sees it grow and make a difference in their community, all of a sudden they are empowered and confident. And that’s when they begin to shine. So, not only do I see my students get into the school of their choice, but I also help them to improve their high-school experience and evolve into better human beings.

What was your first job?

Teaching SAT prep courses at The Princeton

Review. I was 16.

Did you always know that you wanted to help kids get into college?

I always knew that I wanted to be involved in education. I was one of those people that loved school — I always wanted to know everything — and I hated being absent. And this really is my dream job. I love working with adolescents and inspiring them to do their best.

What advice do you have for aspiring entrepreneurs?

Do your research and really understand what makes you different and what the market needs. Also be able to look at a setback as a learning experience, because you are going to make mistakes. And finally, know what you can and can’t do — and for the things you can’t do, make sure that you delegate to people who can.