

# USA TODAY

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# Life



# Sports



# Money

## SMALL BUSINESS

A LOOK AT ENTREPRENEURS ACROSS THE USA



**STRONG INTEREST:** Jack Barringer sells his World Class Arm Wrestling Machines through franchises for \$25,000.

### He's pumped up about arm-wrestling machines

**AMES, Iowa** — The axiom goes: If a market for your product doesn't exist, create one. Meet Jack Barringer, a man who has made his living for 12 years by promoting arm-wrestling matches and who is trying to put that proposition to work. His plan: Get us to test our strength on one of his World Class Arm Wrestling Machines. Sounds far-fetched? In just six months, Barringer's World Class Events Corp. sales have totaled \$950,000 — enough to pump up his dream of making arm-wrestling machines as popular today as mechanical bulls were a few years ago. Barringer spent \$350,000 to develop the sophisticated machines — which allow lefties to wrestle right-handers, short-arms to wrestle long-arms, and even teams of mixed doubles to try to set off the bells, siren and lights that flash for the winner. "It's an ego sport," he says. Barringer sells the machines through a franchise agreement for \$25,000 each. Franchisees then bring the 300-pound devices to shopping malls or barrooms. They charge \$350 to \$1,000 to set up a contest — and they pay Barringer \$50 for "sanctioning" the event. Once you're hooked on the sport, the promoter has another proposition for you: join his club for fans, the U.S. Arm Forces.