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AOL KEYWORD: ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE

Making the goal: "Know what steps are necessary to reach the goals you've set, then follow them as you would a road map," says Susan Bock.



schedule and at her own pace—which she finds exhilarating. “If you thrive on unpredictability, challenge and [the opportunity] to find your own inspiration and creativity, then self-employment is a great opportunity for you,” she says. “However, hope should not be your only strategy for success. You have to go in with your eyes wide open.”

Doing something you love, rather than doing something merely to survive, is the key to making a post-retirement career a success. Edwards refers to the tasks that fire your imagination as “mental food,” because these activities feed you in terms of personal satisfaction.

Dream a Little Dream

FIND YOUR PERFECT BUSINESS BY TAPPING INTO WHAT YOU REALLY WANT FROM LIFE.

BY EILEEN FIGURE SANDLIN

Not so long ago, the act of turning in the keys to your company car or clearing out your desk on retirement day were unmistakable signs you had come to the end of your useful life. Now, they're symbols of the new kind of career freedom people over 50 are experiencing in increasing numbers.

Recent studies show that 1 of every 5 people contemplating retirement wants to start a business, and these people are launching businesses directly related to their previous careers.

According to Paul Edwards, co-author with his wife, Sarah, of *Finding Your Perfect Work*, professional service businesses are among the hottest startup choices for today's senior entrepreneurs. Among the services most in demand:

anything related to elder-care services, such as geriatric-care management; professional services like tax preparation, financial planning and technical communication; and consulting in virtually every field.

“We use a lot of consultants in this country, so using the skills, talents and capabilities you used in your professional life in a fresh and original way can be a viable way to forge a livelihood in retirement,” says Edwards.

In fact, the Institute of Management Consultants lists nearly 280 different types of management consultants, so chances are, whatever your specialty was in corporate America, there's a pressing need for it today.

Susan Bock, 54, a Huntington Beach, California-based executive coach, business consultant and motivational speaker, can relate. She turned a lengthy career as a corporate executive into a thriving business she now runs from her home, on her own

“I've seen people practically sprout endorphins sorting paper, because it's what they love to do,” he says. “When you do something you truly love, you won't even think of it as work anymore—it becomes a joy.”

So how do you find your perfect job? Edwards believes it's as simple as asking, “What do I really want to do?” “Too many people worry about what they could do, what they should do or what's the best thing for them to do,” he says. “Instead, decide what you want from life and what you want your life to be about. Think about your destination, then build your work around what's important to you.”

Bock suggests mapping out your career strategy in detail once you've determined which career path you wish to follow. “You can't just put a billboard on top of your house that says ‘Hire Me,’” she says. “You need to know what steps are necessary to reach the goals you've set for yourself, then follow them as you would a road map.”

EILEEN FIGURE SANDLIN is an award-winning freelance writer and author who writes on business topics.

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