

CALLING ALL AGES

Have you ever had a great idea for a product or service, and then seen someone with a similar idea become wealthy?

Does your creativity spring to life Sunday evening and invent reasons why you can't go to work Monday morning?

Do you awake to the shrill-ring of an alarm clock, dreading another day searching for a job?

How often have you wondered what it would be like to work for yourself?

Owning one's own business has long been an American dream. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, many people were self-employed as farmers, shop owners, and carpenters. This movement coaxed people into working for a company. Business owners exchanged the uncertainties of self-employment for the security of a paycheck. They traded in being the boss—to being an employee—reporting to a boss.

POWER SHIFT TO EMPOWERMENT

Wake-up calls are reverberating throughout the world to make a positive difference in our own unique way. It's about following one's passion and using talents to serve others. It includes greater commitment to a sustainable environment, humanitarianism, nutritious food, and holistic well-being.

Endemic downsizing and turmoil in the world have motivated people to reflect on the direction of their lives and careers. Many individuals awaken to realize their livelihood is not fulfilling. Careers that promised security, status, and money have little in common with their heart and soul. They are earning a living, yet sense their essence is dying in the process. Individuals want more out of life than running on an employer's treadmill. Many people are exchanging tedious routines for the promise of a more rewarding livelihood. Being your own boss (BYOB) is replacing reporting to a boss.

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The trend to entrepreneurship includes college graduates who recoil from the thought of working in an office cubicle for 50 years, the mid-level manager who is burned-out, the retiree who is too vibrant to quit working, someone who is unemployed—and others. In 2010, over 900,000 people who didn't have a job started a business in the U.S.

Under 25 Years of Age

New job creation has not kept pace with young graduates. Since 2000, the number of college graduates has grown 38 percent. Over 50 percent of them are not finding work at the level for which they were educated. Some bypass the corporate route to start businesses and create jobs.

Liza Shirazi and Marley Brush talked about starting a business while they were students. A few years after graduation, they opened Crema Café in Harvard Square (www.cremacambridge.com). The women said, “The decision to open our cafe, and in turn become our own bosses, was about a passion to create a space and serve products that brought others as much joy as it brought us.” Crema Cafe has expanded into a bakery and catering business with 40 employees. Entrepreneurship offers myriad possibilities as an alternative to the traditional job search for graduates.

Ages 25 to 49

Some people question the direction of their careers after they have worked for others for several years. Their livelihood doesn't live up to their expectations. Mary Kay Ash started an enterprise in a small store in Dallas with five products and her life savings of \$5,000 when she was 45 years old. She created opportunities for others by helping women and men achieve success selling the Mary Kay line of products. As of 2014, Mary Kay, Inc (www.marykay.com), offers more than 200 products and has more than three-million independent beauty consultants.

Encore—50 and Better

Baby boomers, who are not ready—emotionally or financially—to retire, are turning to entrepreneurship. According to a Gallup poll, 80 percent of people plan to work either full-or part-time, past retirement age. Of those polled 44 percent because they want to, and 36 percent, because they need to earn money. A study by MetLife Foundation revealed that approximately 25 percent of individuals who were between 44 and 70 years old, are thinking about establishing a business or a nonprofit organization

Two books may inspire anyone who thinks they are too old to start a business. *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain* by Gene Cohen, M.D., Ph.D., highlights various myths about our brains as we age and offers optimism to all who are not as young as we use to be. Dr. Cohen cites scientific data that confirms the ability of the brain to improve with age. *The Boundless Potential* by Mark S. Walton offers examples of people who were creating and accomplishing new literature, art, and other pursuits into their 90s and beyond.

The seasoning that occurs over a lifetime empowers us. By the time we achieve the 50-year line we have acquired experience, developed strengths, and gained a variety of skills. We have encountered setbacks, learned how to deal with challenges, and then moved forward. This seasoning can enhance your ability to succeed in your own business. Many folks over 50 years of age have launched successful ventures. In 1952, Colonel Harland Sanders sold his first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise when he was 62 years old. By 1963, there were over 600 stores. Walt Disney made a dream come true—for him and millions of others—when he inaugurated Disney Land at the age of 53.