

5 Things To Know About Establishing a Post-retirement Career

The notion of retirement calls to mind a life of ease—most see it as a new chapter in life wherein one has more time for hobbies and leisure. However, the modern idea of retirement paints a different picture. It shows that behavior during retirement varies significantly from conventional expectations.

Today, the amount of free time you have during retirement largely depends on retirement readiness. Moreover, individual attitudes towards retirement differ based on financial and personal factors.

According to a survey on US workers conducted by the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, 57 percent of the respondents plan to work after retirement. Of this percentage, 21 percent plan to work full-time, while 36 percent expect to work part-time. In another survey conducted by the mortgage lender American Advisors Group or AAG, a third of seniors seek to work past retirement age, or have no desire to retire at all.

Retirement does not always spell the end of your working career. It can provide opportunities to augment your retirement savings or open up a new career path. While the idea of a post-retirement career sounds contradictory, retirees or those planning for retirement constantly redefine their later years.

For example, it is never too late to embark on emergent fields in technology, or career opportunities in computer science even for retirement age workers.

Taking on a post-retirement career or a new job in retirement can be a beneficial strategy for older workers. Not only does a post-retirement job provide additional income, but it also offers opportunities for growth, socialization, learning, and fulfillment.

Outside of paid work, it can be a way to pursue a lifelong dream that stayed dormant in one's younger years. It can also pave the way for being self-employed or starting a new consultancy business.

However, before you consider embarking on a post-retirement career, there are several points you must consider to determine if working past retirement is the right path for you.

What is a post-retirement career?

A post-retirement career is a job you pursue past the conventional retirement age or after formally exiting the workforce and entering a new financial stage. Post-retirement career planning refers to the planning process to engage in career-related activities past the retirement age actively. Moreover, it often involves introspection that considers many variables: financial, health, social, and psychological.

Historically, the retirement picture has shifted according to socioeconomic conditions. Before the 20th century, the idea of retirement barely existed. People worked as long as they could. However, Social Security was introduced in the first half of the 20th century. The introduction of Social Security made retirement a statutory opportunity.

Within the latter half of the 20th century, gender profiles

began to emerge, with male workers striving towards retiring earlier and women workers working to delay their retirement. From 1980 to 2000, men's retirement age declined due to socioeconomic conditions. Socioeconomic conditions past 2000 changed the retirement situation again as populations age and economies flounder.

Retirement today is a pension-receiving state involving some detachment from regular employment. However, this definition is flexible, as it allows for further work.

The definition of retirement today generally allows for a post-retirement career. Previously viewed as a complete stoppage of work, the current idea of retirement has become more malleable and has transformed into a late-career development stage. It could also mean voluntary engagement in various occupations as a means of self-actualization.

1. Be Clear About Your Reasons for Returning to Work

Before establishing a post-retirement career, consider whether you are comfortable returning to work when many of your peers appear to be slowing down. What are your reasons for going back? Such explanations should be clear before you embark on a new post-retirement job.

Some people work after retirement because they need an additional source of income. Their nest egg may not be enough to support their retirement, or they must earn more to support a better lifestyle and afford some luxuries. Some Americans expect to work past retirement age because their plans and savings weren't sufficient to cover all the retirement costs.

Others work past retirement to regain their sense of identity, restore social connections with coworkers or clients, meet new people, restore a sense of purpose, explore new opportunities,

and embark on new pursuits—perhaps an unfulfilled passion in a new industry.

One compelling reason to start a post-retirement career is the health benefits. It is possible to gain health benefits from working past retirement. Working longer and overall health can mutually reinforce each other, but there are conditions attached—your post-retirement career should be a satisfying one.

2. Learn How To Pursue a Career Post-retirement

After deciding to pursue a post-retirement career and carefully evaluating your circumstances and reasons, you should prepare for this new phase in your life. Plan to get back into the workforce and equip yourself with what you need for a successful post-retirement career to ensure a smooth transition.

Re-skill and Upskill

Suppose you are trying to enter a new industry or career requiring technical knowledge. In that case, it is ideal to supplement your existing knowledge with formal courses taught at your local university. You can also work on technical certifications and industry-specific programs provided by industry organizations, foundations, private companies, or the government.

Take advantage of the numerous online resources available to update your skills according to the present demands. Find a reputable institution or provider and choose the course or skill relevant to your employment goal. You can also fill gaps in your professional knowledge through e-books, industry-based publications, webinars, podcasts, e-newsletter subscriptions, and specialized YouTube channels.

Decide how much work you devote to your new career.

A post-retirement job can become a big commitment, so before applying for work, consider just how much responsibility you are willing to take on and how much time you are ready to devote. An aging workforce is more likely to prefer part-time work versus those in other age brackets.

Luckily, post-retirement careers generally provide opportunities for greater flexibility. If you remain interested in your field yet want to retire, you can downshift a little and transition from being a full-time employee to a part-time worker or a consultant. Consultancies allow you to work for a few days per week.

Do a self-evaluation on what you find fulfilling.

Retirement is an opportunity to pursue a passion. Your golden years could be your chance to succeed in an encore career. This way, your post-retirement job can take on more meaning than merely a way to generate additional income.

Beyond supplementary income, your “second wind career” or encore career can be a great source of personal joy and gratification. Moreover, doing what you love can relieve stress and pressure from your retirement job.

To hone in on your passion, consider opening yourself up to new experiences to kickstart a process of self-discovery. Another way to spark a new passion is to expand your social circle. Meeting new friends can expose you to new perspectives. Furthermore, some recommend that you look back to your childhood. Revisit your earliest interests and passions. What made you happy in your younger years? The answer could provide clues to your ideal retirement

profession.

Take advantage of new hybrid setups and remote work.

Today you can decide on the workplace setup of your post-retirement career. Think about the location and the amount of independence you want. Working online or applying for hybrid settings could offer you the best of both worlds—the opportunity to mingle with coworkers and precious time at home.

Flexible work allows you to fit in healthy habits like exercise. To get into the digital nomad lifestyle, you can explore remote or exotic overseas locations while earning an income.

3. Have Realistic Expectations About Your Career Transition

It is essential to set realistic expectations when you “un-retire.” While there are broader and more varied options for a post-retirement career, remember that the transition may be somewhat rocky.

The decision to try a new job may result from an initial economic shock. Some find themselves under sudden financial strain or with unexpected healthcare costs. Handling this delicate transition is crucial to your psychological and financial well-being. Managing your expectations about your new job is essential, especially if it is a contingency or emergency measure rather than a passion project.

Moreover, it may take time for you to find a new job. The delay and the rejections may cause you to lose self-confidence. Adjust your attitudes and gather a support system to help you deal with the strain of the transition.

4. Understand the Hidden Costs of Your Post-Retirement Career

Working past retirement age could have unintended consequences on one's overall retirement income. There are risks and trade-offs—you may find that your benefits as part of your passive income could change with your new working status.

Working post-retirement could affect your eligibility for some healthcare programs. It can impact Medicare, pensions, and retirement accounts. In addition, Social Security benefits could get more complicated when you are of retirement age and start earning an income. The US Social Security Administration uses a formula called “combined income” to evaluate the taxable amount of your paycheck.

Is Social Security Taxable?

While Social Security accounts for approximately 50 percent of Americans' income in retirement, those who continue to have other sources of income, including work, need to understand the concept of “combined income.”

You should expect income taxes on your Social Security benefits if you have a part-time job, a 401(k), or a full-time post-retirement career. Those who depend exclusively on Social Security for their retirement income will likely avoid paying taxes on their benefits.

Thus, compute your costs in tandem with your gross income. Carefully consider the pros and cons of your decision.

5. Know Which Jobs To Pursue After Retirement

Once you've weighed your options and are ready to embark on a new career; it's time to consider the best jobs suited to your

qualifications and new goals.

Your choice of a post-retirement job matters, as it determines your financial and overall well-being. The following are some rewarding jobs to pursue in your post-retirement career:

Business or Management Consultant

If you have experience at the executive or management level, business consultancy could be right for you. You can leverage your knowledge of business processes, management practices, and culture or training. Consultancies can offer you the best of both worlds—a desirable income, prestige, and flexibility. Moreover, a consultancy can morph into a small business. In fact, as an independent consultant, you ought to already view yourself as a small business.

When building a management or business consultant career, you must evaluate your market, define your niche, create a sales and marketing plan, and hire people to make the most of your own business.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeping may offer you a steady retirement paycheck if you are an accountancy graduate or pursued accountancy as a full-time career pre-retirement. Bookkeeping can keep you happily engaged if you enjoy recording data, being detail-oriented, and tracking client payments.

To be efficient and competitive in your field, you must be familiar with the most recent versions of accounting software, so be sure to re-skill or upskill as required.

This job pays modestly at \$20 per hour and can be a reliable part-time source of post-retirement income. As you can take on as many or as few clients as you like, this job gives you great flexibility in planning how much work you wish to take on.

Engineer

Being in a technical field may be a way to stand out and get hired quickly. If you pursued a technical career before retirement, or have a background or education in engineering in a specific field, consider seeking engineering jobs. Engineering jobs are usually in high demand because employers need in-depth knowledge and experience.

Your years of career work in engineering may pay off as employers need the professional judgment of those with years or decades in a narrow or specific field. What's more, your experience qualifies you for many leadership roles and roles for training young professionals.

There is no cookie-cutter path to follow when you're an engineer looking for a post-retirement job. You can take many different approaches, carrying your expertise with you. Such positions include engineering professor, environmental consultant, engineering supervisor, electrical designer, etc.

Joining a Board

Joining a board is an excellent path to leverage your management and corporate experience. As a corporate director for a nonprofit, you can earn up to \$115,000 if you sit on the board of a large private corporation. Moreover, a board seat at a public corporation could pay up to \$214,000.

Remember to earn the necessary certifications, such as directorship certifications, to advance your career and maximize your income in this area. This type of post-retirement career could be both lucrative and fulfilling, as board seats often carry prestige with them aside from the prospect of a sizable paycheck.

Adjunct Professor

An adjunct professor is part-time and may be labeled contingent faculty. Adjunct professors are not considered part of a university's permanent teaching staff. Such professors are also not on the way to being tenured. Instead, they are contract employees and enjoy the freedom of deciding on a teaching schedule that aligns with their work preferences.

You can teach one or several classes as an adjunct professor. You can even accept jobs from multiple schools. To qualify for an adjunct professor role, you need good communication and presentation skills, technology skills, and the ability to create course materials that align with the university's teaching guidelines.

Moreover, you must fulfill specific academic requirements, such as a master's degree or even a Ph.D. If you have an advanced degree, working post-retirement as an adjunct professor at a local US college could be a great choice. Compensation ranges from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per course.

Another bonus of taking on an adjunct professorship is the environment. Several college towns rank among the best retirement places in the US.

Build a Lucrative Post-Retirement Career by Leveraging Your Best Skills

While accumulating a sizable nest egg is the ideal way to prepare for retirement, many find themselves in various situations that could be more financially ideal. Hence, the concept of retirement today has become more fluid. It is now the next step in career development rather than the complete work stoppage.

There are many reasons to pursue a post-retirement career; however, finances are not necessarily the main factor. People work past retirement age for a sense of identity, to follow a new mission, keep themselves active, afford luxuries, meet new people, and benefit their health.

Your choice of post-retirement career contributes significantly to your overall mental well-being and work-life balance. The best post-retirement jobs combine a satisfactory income with high levels of career fulfillment. It would help if you tapped into the benefits of continuing education, upskilling, or even re-skilling to make your job search easier. Upskilling enhances your current skill set and maximizes your employability and potential income as you take on a new post-retirement job.

Remember that you can turn age into an advantage in your later career. Older workers have benefits such as long-term experience, mentorship potential, leadership skills, decisiveness, certifications, higher academic achievement, and technical depth. Take stock of the core strengths of your lifelong experience and learn to leverage your skills to make the best of this new and potentially fulfilling encore in your career life.

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