



Living Life to the Max: Working After Work

If You Need the Income

In considering retirement the tendency is to focus on the things you won't have to do. You won't have to wake up early, you won't have to fight traffic or crowds in a commute, and you won't have to hit deadlines.

Well, maybe. Or maybe not.

If you've saved enough to retire at your present lifestyle level, you are in the minority. Most studies say fewer than half of all baby boomers have saved enough to maintain their current lifestyle. For some that might just mean cutting back a little on expenses if the gap isn't too big, but for others it may mean they have to work after the traditional retirement age.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that nearly one-fourth of all people age 65 through 74 hold jobs today. Two decades ago, it was fewer than one in six.

But studies also indicate that about one-third of all boomers who return to work are doing it because they need the money.

So if you are going to pursue work for the cash and less for the other benefits, here are some ways to leverage your skill set and get the most bang for your buck.

Consider consulting. In fact, your final employer is often a great place to land your first consulting assignment. Many times a company won't have considered the possibility. You should. Remember that you have specific skills and knowledge that are valuable to your employer; their loss won't be easily replaced. Suggest you train your replacement for a few weeks or months, depending on the requirements of the job. If you know one time of the year is particularly hard, offer your services for that time period.

Volunteer in your field to update credentials.

If you have the time this is a smart move to do while you are still employed in your final pre-retirement job. If you don't have the time, try to line up volunteer opportunities that can begin as soon as you officially retire from the final office job.

Consider part-time opportunities. A company that balks at taking on full-time employees is usually much more receptive to part-timers—especially if you possess skills that are hard to find elsewhere. And if you can stress your maturity and ability to be a self-motivator, they'll see that you won't require much management.

Consider temping if you have good office skills. For straight up cash, temping for a specialist firm is a great way to land some quick jobs. In addition, you will get to see many companies from the inside. It is quite common for a temp to be offered a full-time or part-time position with a company after their official assignment is over.

Look at continuing education to improve your hire ability. Just as volunteer opportunities can add to your credentials and cachet, so too can advanced courses and degrees.

Bottom-line: You almost certainly possess far more valuable skills and contacts to leverage for post-work work than you may realize. In addition, the talents that brought you this far will serve you well if you are looking for new income sources after you retire from your last job.



The “Hobby” Job

If you’ve saved enough to retire on, you have a real luxury to contemplate. Now, you can choose to work when you want to and to work at just what you want to do.

For example, a former high school teacher who took a relatively lucrative early retirement package realized she could mix her love of books and people by going to work at a local book store. She doesn’t have to work there. In fact, she calls it her “hobby” job.

But it is important to her not so much for the financial benefits as it for the social and structural benefits it adds to her life. She retired from teaching at age 52 and didn’t want to sit and knit doilies for the next thirty years!

That high school teacher is typical of many retirees who discover after they leave their jobs that working was important to them for reasons beyond a paycheck. For many, the job had filled the majority of their waking time. And especially if they are single or “empty nesters,” it is quite common to feel a bit lost after leaving their jobs. For many it also means a loss of identity.

Traditionally the identity issue had been more of a problem for retiring men, but in recent decades that’s changed. Women are gaining equality in the workplace, and that’s good, but they are also finding when they retire that more of their personal self was connected to the job than they quite realized.

To address that situation, consider going back to work—but on your terms!

Some of the tips and ideas we’ll discuss here are similar to those for finding a volunteering opportunity. However, in this case you will be paid—even if the salary is secondary to you and relatively small (if it is retail, for example)—and that fact does change the dynamic to some extent. Volunteer organizations are much more flexible about adapting to your schedule, while a paid job will likely expect you to fully meet the specific, and sometimes rigid, requirements of the position.

Remember, too, that at some places, such as a coffee house, working there is not quite the same thing as being a customer. Coffee houses are great places to relax—for paying customers. For workers, it is food service that can be hectic. You may love working at a coffee house for the mix of people and high-energy environment, but apply with eyes wide open. Know that working there isn’t going to provide the same kind of experience as being a customer there.

But if you’d like a little spending money, or if being paid something is an important part of working for you, then consider looking for your “hobby” job. It’s really a matter of finding creative ways to match your interests to fun, relatively easy paid work. For example:

- ◆ Perhaps you like scrap booking. If that’s the case, think about working at a local craft shop. You might also consider working for a scrap booking company.
- ◆ Good with numbers? Consider seasonal or part-time work at a firm that provides accounting or income tax preparation services.
- ◆ Skilled tradesman or handy around the house? Consider a position at a local home improvement or hardware store.
- ◆ If you are a natural salesperson, think of a product you particularly enjoy. For example, you may want to explore working the perfume counter at a local department store, or become an independent sales representative for a cosmetics company.
- ◆ Love children? Maybe working at a local daycare or preschool is for you.

The trick is to think about your interests and match them with a job that pays a little something. After you have identified an area where you feel a passion, take a drive around and think about the places you like to go to anyway. That can be the start to finding a great “hobby” job.

Helpful Resources

Monster.com

800-MONSTER (800-666-7837)

www.monster.com

This is probably the leading online job resource in the U.S. It has the most listings and makes searching by type of work easy. They also offer help on issues such as updating your resume and preparing for an interview. There is a cost to join. While Monster prefers online contact, there is also a phone number to help get started:

Yahoo Hot Jobs

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/>

Similar to Monster, though it has fewer listings. But Yahoo is strong on online tools such as getting your own resume up on a web Page. There is also a cost for the service.

Seniors4Hire

<http://www.seniors4hire.org/about/resources.asp>

An excellent resource for older adults who want to re-enter the workforce. Features helpful articles and resources on how to best present your experience in a job search. Also features great links to other websites ranging from state resources to sites that help older adults make meaningful use of their time.

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