

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

November 6, 2007

This Week's Message:

**Planning On Working
Longer?**

Paths Forward

Resources

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Planning On Working Longer?

I was recently invited to deliver the keynote / welcoming talk at the Fall Career Fair Extravaganza on Boston's North Shore. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Dept. of Employment and Training's Career Centers, it was huge success that helped hundreds of job hunters make connections with dozens of willing employers. While there I observed something a bit different from other job fairs at which I've spoken.

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At least half of the job hunters I had the pleasant opportunity to meet would be considered (like me) "older workers". Some had been displaced by the merger or acquisition of their former employer, some were employed but searching for something that paid better or was more challenging and a significant number were those who had recently retired but who were not ready to stop working altogether. This prompted me to do a little research.

According to one U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics study 17% of the U.S. workforce will be comprised by those 55 years and older by the year 2010. By 2050 that number is expected to grow to 19%. In this same timeframe workers from 25 to 54 years old will decline to 67% in 2010 and 65% in 2050. Multiple studies show that the primary reason older workers stay in the workforce is the reality of financial need; social security is a smaller percentage of household incomes than ever before, IRA's and 401ks often fall short and I won't even get in to America's phobia about saving money (see LifeMap Archive, 1/23/07 edition at www.drpaulpowers.com.) However, an AARP study also showed that older workers were not only motivated by the need for extra money but also by a general desire to work for enjoyment, to have something interesting to do and to stay physically active.

I think this trend represents many positive possibilities for those who choose to take advantage of it and that includes younger workers, older workers, employers and society as a whole. Here are a few ways you might explore options for the latter part of your working career.

Paths Forward

• **Who Wants You?** At the job fair I mentioned above I was asked a number of questions about age discrimination in the job market. I won't deny that it exists but I will say it is much more rare in the kind of workplaces where you and I would want to be. Unless you are moved to be the litigating / avenging angel of "older" job hunters (and bless those who take on that role) I think it's probably a better use of your time to focus on those intelligent employers who are actually looking for experienced talent. I have observed that organizations with an older customer demographic are particularly interested in older workers. These include a variety of retail operations, social services and banking / financial service firms. Check out such web sites as Workforce50.com and RetiredBrains.com that question

employers who list job openings to certify that they genuinely want older employees.

- **Don't Neglect The Basics.** An "older job hunter" is first and foremost "a job hunter" not "older". Is your job-hunting campaign up to date? Have you practiced your interviewing skills lately? Is your resume a lengthy autobiography or succinct marketing tool that focuses on those qualifications and skills that are most applicable to the position you are seeking? Use the most popular career web sites (i.e. Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com, Hotjobs.com) but don't neglect the growing list of those geared to the specific needs of older job hunters such as Seniorsforhire.org, Retireeworkforce.com, Jobs4Point0.com and (the one whose name I rather dislike) DinosaurExchange.com. Do some research to see if there is a local organization near you that is geared to helping, counseling and training older workers like Boston's highly regarded Operation ABLE (ability based on long experience) www.operationable.net.

- **Go Back To School.** Long time LifeMap community members know how strongly I believe in life-long learning and the necessity of constantly upgrading your bank of skills. This becomes even more important as you consider second, third or post- retirement careers. There may a job or industry that interests you even though you know little about it. The classroom is one way to explore that future option now. On the other hand you may have a particular job in mind that requires specific training and certification. (A good example of this came to me in a recent email from Sami L. in San Juan, P.R. who is taking a course now for his eventual retirement career as a home inspector.) There are incredible educational resources out there for older workers and a good place to start is your local community college or public university, many of which allow free auditing of classes by older students. In my research for this particular *Path Forward* I was almost overwhelmed by the extent and breadth of educational and financial support programs that exist for older workers - to the degree that I will make this aspect the sole topic for a future edition of LifeMap.

- **Dream A Big Dream.** Maybe your next career goal is a job that is dramatically less physically or emotionally demanding than your current one such as a Wal-Mart greeter or a school crossing guard. If so, I say, "Great, go for it!" A while back I read a story about a former legislator who is having the time of his post-career life loading tourists onto rides at Disney World. But what if the dream you

postponed early in your working life still sits there hovering on the edge of your consciousness? Could you be the Ivy League MBA who after starting and selling two companies built a new career restoring antique pianos? Could you be the college administrator who gave it up to manage musical artists like Mary Wilson (of the original Supremes)? Could you be the 27 year IBM veteran with no medical experience who went to nursing school, became a family nurse practitioner and who now "makes a difference" on a Navajo Indian reservation in northeast Arizona? These are all true stories of people who dreamed a big dream and turned that dream into their everyday reality. This could be you because it is never too late to become who you could be.

LifeMap is about recognizing the many uplifting possibilities that exist in the world of work at any stage of your career - and helping you to grab some of that excitement for yourself.

Resources

Someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

To order the best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. "Winning Job Interviews: Reduce Interview Anxiety, Outprepare the Other Candidates, Land the Job You Love" by Dr. Paul Powers, click the link below.

Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

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Sincerely,

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