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## Boomers seek 'encore' careers

### Change can create sense of fulfillment

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Almost everyone working now will have more than one chance to create a successful career, said Myles Golden, founder and president of Greenville-based Golden Career Strategies.

Younger workers expect to have 10 to 12 different careers during their lifetime, he said.

Daryl Wiesman, a professor of communications studies at Clemson University, said that second careers often revolve around the meaningfulness of work.

"A second career gives us time to go after work that's meaningful," he said.

Surveys agree with his assessment.

A survey by D. Hart Research Associates found that up to 8.4 million baby boomers will move into "encore" careers, many in the nonprofit, education and health sectors.

"Encore careers provide personal fulfillment, while also offering tremendous gains for society," Marc Freedman, founder and chief executive officer of Civic Ventures, a baby boomers think tank, told Inc. magazine.

The share of the labor force aged 55 and older currently is 17 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. It is projected to be nearly 24 percent by 2020. Golden's advice to everyone of any age: "Reinvent yourself."

And the key to selling that reinvention is networking, he said.

Golden is an example of career transition.

While working as president and chief executive officer of Ivan Allen Inc., an office products company, he watched a friend go to Houston twice to obtain outplacement help.

When Ivan Allen was sold, he went to a career strategy firm in Greenville to "buy an outplacement package." Instead, he was offered a job as a career counselor with Wright Management Consultants.

"I became passionate about a more customized, individualized and localized career transition program," he said.

Wiesman also is a career changer.

He was an industrial training manager in Cincinnati, Ohio, when he decided at age 44 to go back to school and get a doctorate so he could teach.

"It was a big risk," he said. "I had to compete with young people who are smart and know technology. But I always wanted to do it."

Many people change careers because they have little choice. Others, however, change because they are unhappy with their work experience, they have difficulties with their immediate supervisors, they don't feel appreciated, they've heard rumors of financial difficulties, mergers or acquisitions -- or they want a career where they can help others, he said.

When workers have a choice, Wiesman recommended: "Do a lot of up front work. Try to ascertain how your life will change. Talk to people in the field."

This could also be the time to upgrade your skills and education. Streamlined education, such as Quick Jobs for the Future, can provide training in six months or less.

But the initial step toward a new career may be one of the hardest.

"The first thing to do is back off, decompress a little bit and then take a battery of career assessment tests," he said.

Pam Owens, who retired as an official court reporter in Boston nearly a year ago and moved to the Upstate because of family, said she's looking for work because of "the inflation. My retirement check is pretty good. But any emergency, I need more."

Owens, 58, said she's considering part-time work recording depositions or other court-related proceedings, but that would require buying expensive equipment. She's also looking at secretarial or clerical work.

Before anything else, career coaches often ask clients to focus on significant accomplishments in their past career life, he said.

Then Golden gives them a values assessment and a career interest and confidence assessment.

"Values are important in finding your next career," he said, adding that he also uses leadership assessments with some clients. Any time he finds strength in skills related to entrepreneurship, he has clients examine that possibility closely.

Some career changers turn hobbies into jobs. For example if you enjoy photography, you could volunteer to be the "work photographer" or begin wedding photography with family and friends. That could turn into a career.

The results of assessments give the client possible careers he could seek, Golden said.

At that point, the client works to develop a resume that points up strengths, accomplishments and the skills that lead toward the desired career, he said. Next comes interviewing skills -- and practice after practice on that.

"We want our clients to be the best of the best," he said.

Next comes negotiating skills and learning how to network.

"Networking is the hallmark of the program," he said. "You should spend most of your time in networking."

Many people don't really know how to network, he said, adding that "it's not going to an event and hitting on people for a job."

Between 40 percent and 50 percent of the jobs found through networking don't exist until the employer meets the networker and creates a job to fit that person's skills, Golden said.

Wiesman said that networking and interviewing are more than just talking.

"It's the non-verbal communications that usually makes or breaks the deal," he said.

That includes how you look, how you shake hands, how you move and hold your body and how you listen. Job candidates need to learn to use body language to reinforce what they're saying rather than negating it.

"We believe the non-verbal communications over the verbal," he said.

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