

Latest Trends In Retirement Planning Show Exciting New Opportunities

by Kathryn Hanson

(NAPSA)—Retirement is no longer a farewell event. Instead, it's a journey along a path lined with choices and paved with expectations. The journey will have many stages and begins, ideally, with careful planning. Among the key considerations for retirees are both the financial and the social effects of the choices as they relate to those expectations.

The good news is that they'll find more options than ever before. An increasing number of people nearing the "normal" retirement age today are continuing their careers, full- or part-time. Some are launching second and even third careers. Others are joining the growing number of volunteer organizations that thrive on the goodwill and sound work ethics of seniors.

Many Reasons For Working Longer

The massive march of baby boomers into their 50s and 60s is changing America's employment landscape. By 2010, one in every three workers will be at least 50 years old, according to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which also reports that up to 40 percent of entrepreneurs in the United States are over age 50. Meanwhile, more and more people between ages 55 and 64 are starting their own businesses, according to the University of Florida.

But for many, the new wealth in years isn't matched by financial wealth and that's another trend keeping older Americans busy. Some haven't saved enough to retire and recognize that Social Security won't provide adequate income to support their lifestyles.

In a recent study sponsored by Transamerica Retirement Management, Inc., surveying more than 2,000 pre-retirees of over 50 years of age, two-thirds said they plan to work in some fashion as they age.

Here's another reason many people will need to work longer:



Roughly half of all American workers have no pension benefit, and many lack the savings needed for a secure retirement, according to Bill Novelli, CEO of AARP. That organization has 35 million people age 50 and older—half of whom are actively employed, either full- or part-time.

The soaring cost of health care is another critical issue for older workers, Novelli points out. Many people who want to retire early discover they need their jobs to keep their health care insurance or must work to pay their medical bills.

Calculate All The Effects

Financial security isn't the only reason so many older workers are remaining in—or returning to—the workforce. Surveys by the Employee Benefit Research Institute show an increased desire among Americans to work longer, particularly among those with more education.

Too often, people exit the workforce without any plans for finding fulfillment. Especially for retirees whose jobs required travel, public speaking, and broad authority and responsibility, the sudden stoppage can plunge the best of them into nothing short of clinical depression. The sense of relevance, involvement and importance is gone. The ego is stunned.

With as much time remaining in the lives of many approaching retirement age, people should carefully calculate all the effects of leaving the workplace. Many will miss

the day-to-day stimulation and company of their colleagues and co-workers. Even for people who dislike their jobs, leaving that familiar routine is oftentimes felt as loss.

Opportunities Opening Every Day

For those who want to continue working, the opportunities may be increasing. Some companies are beginning to offer "phased retirement," allowing workers to reduce hours or reduce responsibility while staying on the payroll. Other employers appear to be waking up to the value of older workers and accommodating them with innovative policies. For instance, Borders bookstores, Home Depot, Starbucks and others are taking advantage of the availability of senior employees by offering flexibility, letting them choose their hours and location.

Volunteerism, meanwhile, is becoming a major movement among seniors, with dozens of organizations tapping into the interests, expertise and experience of older people. The Peace Corps is actively reaching out to seniors, increasing the number of over-50 volunteers from the traditional 1 percent to 6 percent.

Today, people have so many choices that retirement has become an industry unto itself. There are books, Web sites, talk shows, retail companies, financial advisers and life coaches—all serving Americans who are moving toward or living in this new phase of life. Many of these ideas are the inventions of those post-50 and -60 who, looking at their own active lives, decided it's time to move retirement off the sidelines and back into the game.

For more information on "second careers," visit <http://www.securepathbytransamerica.com/go/learnmore> or go to <http://www.aarp.org/>

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