

Older workers and 'legacy careers'

 torontosun.com/2015/10/07/older-workers-and-legacy-careers

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Publishing date:

Oct 07, 2015

In the recently-released movie, *The Intern*, Robert De Niro plays a 70-year-old widower who's discovered retirement isn't all it's cracked up to be. Seizing an opportunity to get back in the game, he becomes a senior intern at an online fashion site.

Sound like a far-fetched plot? It's not, assures Lisa Taylor, a leading expert on the aging workforce and inter-generational workplace, and president of The Challenge Factory, a career change and talent management firm based in Toronto.



De Niro's depiction of how it feels to be of retirement age but not ready to retire represents a growing Canadian demographic. According to an Ipsos Reid survey and Sun Life Unretirement Index Report of 2015, 32% of Canadians plan to work full time past age 65 and another 27% expect to work part time.

Most Canadians approaching traditional retirement age assume their only choice is to remain in the same job with the same employer or get an entry-level retail job. But there are other options, such as finding a role in a different sector or company where knowledge from previous working life is seen as a competitive advantage.

"There's a perception that you can't make any radical changes in your career because you've already spent 20 years in an industry or company with a title or in a particular area of expertise," Taylor says. "But that perception doesn't actually recognize that a whole new phase of career has emerged called a 'legacy career.'"

Many people embarking on this phase of their careers are "successful but not satisfied," she says. "They may be in a secure career but are ready for new challenges ... They're looking for good, meaningful work that honours and values the knowledge and expertise they've built up over a lifetime."

Marketing practitioner Bharat Vaishnav has held a variety of marketing roles in Canada, Dubai, Singapore and India and worked with a number of global brands — including a bank as well as a fashion and footwear brand — for the past 20 years.

Working with The Challenge Factory helped him realize his dream to one day teach part time. "Teaching marketing provides me an opportunity to positively contribute to students' learning and keeps me intellectually stimulated. This will hopefully complement my day job as a marketer," says Vaishnav, now a part-time marketing professor at the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Transitioning from mid-career to legacy career is not unlike transitioning from a foundational career to mid-career. "You transition with purpose," says Taylor. "You evaluate the market as well as your own needs and interests and what's going to be meaningful to you."

Taylor identifies three steps to transitioning to a legacy career:

Step one: Define what your legacy career looks like.

What do you want to do? It is market viable? What do you need — financially and from a responsibility and authority perspective? How many hours do you want to work and what type or length of commute is acceptable?

"For some people, it's one job or position; for other people it's a portfolio that might include sitting on a board ... as well as some part-time or freelance work or starting a business."

Step two: Plan to get from where you are now to where you want to be.

Determine what you need to do in three-, six-, 12- and 24-month increments to achieve your goal. If you need additional training or education, for instance, what's the right time to do that?

Step three: How will you market yourself?

What does your resumé say about you? How do you tell your story so people who may be decades younger than you see your value? What's your networking strategy? "So often leveraging your network is going to help you make those transitions, whether you're joining a board or a committee or launching a company or working in a new organization," Taylor says.

"Some people haven't been to interviews in decades. How do you not just go through an interview but go through an interview in a different sector than you've worked in before ... so you can find your sweet spot roles and careers as part of your legacy career path?"

Inter-generational management certificate

The Challenge Factory is launching a certificate in inter-generational management. "Managers are trained and encouraged to spend time with new graduates ... to help them explore career paths and identify their development goals and where they want to go next," says president Lisa Taylor.

But there are also benefits to helping mature workers transition from one stage of their career to the next. "There are people who may not want to stay in the exact same role they've been in for decades but who have enormous capacity to continue to drive innovation or to assist in other ways," she says.

"There's opportunity to capitalize on amazing talent pools if companies are forward thinking enough to consider programs, whether an internship program or something else."

