How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path

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Outline

- What and Why
- Benefits and Challenges
- Strategic Factors
- Practical Steps and Path Forward
What Is a Nontraditional Career?

- Tailored to individual needs
- More than one source of earned income
**IPro Index**

**MAJOR REASONS FOR ENGAGING IN PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTING WORK**

- Variety of work: 76%
- Sense of freedom: 75%
- Perceived ability to earn more: 73%
- Flexible hours: 64%

- Generally satisfied with the kind of work they do as an IPro: 87%
- Very satisfied with working as an IPro: 82%
- Frequently think of ceasing work as an IPro: 24%

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IPro Index 2013, Melbourne, Australia: Entity Solutions sponsored study conducted by Monash University
Balance Favoring Nontraditional Career Path

- High satisfaction
- Growth
- Personal alignment

- Stagnant wages
- Growing pay inequity
- Reduced long term benefits
- Low levels of employee engagement

Example of a Nontraditional Career

- Individual Counseling/Coaching
- Workforce Consulting
- Writing
- Volunteer Work
- Adjunct Teaching
- Guiding and Supporting a Practice

Relationship of Individuals, Organizations & Community

How My Path Unfolded ...

- Business and volunteer experience
- Identified area of interest
- Master’s
- Organizational experience/teaching
- Individual practice/first book
- Organizational practice
- Incorporated/extended team/second, third and fourth books

When Can You Start Along this Path?
TOO LATE TO START?

by Anna Vital

quarter-life crisis  mid-life crisis

meanwhile elsewhere in the universe

25
Jan Koum founded WhatsApp
Michael Arrington started TechCrunch
Tim Westergren started Pandora
Jimmy Wales founded Wikipedia

35
Mark Pincus founded Zynga

4142
Robin Chase founded ZipCar
Craig Newmark founded Craigslist
Robert Noyce founded Intel

52
55
65
Harland Sanders started KFC
John Pemberton invented Coca-Cola
Ray Kroc started McDonald's

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE.

Funders and Founders

New Beginnings
Career and College Guidance

Eldon Organizational Renewal
Foundation

Purpose

Values

Personality

Life Experiences

Skills

Interests

Sweet Spot for a Nontraditional Career

- Passion/Interests
- External Needs
- Skills

Benefits and Challenges
What Might Be Some of the Benefits of a Nontraditional Career?

- Autonomy
- Alignment with interests
- Contribution
- Financially attractive
- Improved risk/reward profile
- Personal meaning

What Might Be Some of the Challenges of a Nontraditional Career?

- Breadth of skills needed
- Launch time
- Uncertainty
- Access to benefits
- Isolation

Strategic Factors

- Whether or not to connect the components
- Balancing the components
- Finding differentiation
- Pace of entry
- Building needed skills
- Partnering

Whether or Not to Connect the Components

- Benefits of Connecting
  - Accelerated entry
  - Marketing clarity
  - Infrastructure economies
  - Value creation for customers
    - Transfer of learning

- Drawbacks of Connecting
  - Increased risk
  - May limit scope

Nontraditional Career Component Connections

- Content
- Skills
- Interdependence
- Geography
- Customer
- Mutual Influence

Balancing the Components: Example

Financial Contribution

- Adjunct Teaching
- Individual Counseling/Coaching
- Writing
- Volunteer Work
- Workforce Consulting
- Guiding and Supporting a Practice

Time to Secure

Finding Differentiation

- What excites you in your work and interests?
- How might those areas be valuable to others?
Sources of Differentiation

- Product or Service
- Operational Excellence
- Commitment
- Team Capability
- Customer Relationships
- Customization
- Flexibility
- Speed
- Cost
- Linkages

Pace of Entry

- Gradual development vs. full immersion
  - What are the advantages and challenges of each approach?
Factors Affecting Pace of Entry

Personal preferences

Practical considerations

Support from others

Building Needed Skills

Foundational

Interpersonal

Customer facing

Support service management

Personal Characteristics

- Integrity
- Tenacity
- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Comfort with ambiguity

Partnering

Informal

Customer facing

Internal capabilities

Practical Aspects: Nuts and Bolts

Business structure

Regulatory & related

Internal infrastructure

Customer facing

Moving Forward

- Initial Entry Decision
- Launch
- Growth and Evolution
- Completion

Questions for Path Forward

- What benefits might a nontraditional career offer you?
- What excites you in your work and interests and what might this mean for components of a nontraditional career?
- What strengths can you bring?
- What gaps need to be filled?
- Whose support do you need?
- What strategic decisions do you need to make?
- What steps will you take next?
Suggestions

- Be clear about purpose
- Stay true to personal beliefs
- Expect unexpected supporters and barriers
- Be patient in starting components at the right time
- Develop core skills before launch
- Nurture relationships
- Build valued portable knowledge and skills
- Enjoy the journey

Resource

How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path
Embracing Economic Disruption

Readily available from on-line sources such as:
amazon.com
barnesandnoble.com
abc-clio.com
Thank You and Best Wishes

Follow up questions please contact Ron Elsdon at renewal@elsdon.com, or 925 586 9039