



Leveraging the Encore Talent Pool As an Asset for Nonprofits

Presented by Phyllis N. Segal, vice president, Civic Ventures
2009 Nonprofit Human Resources Conference

Monday, October 5, from 11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Description:

This interactive plenary session will examine how the encore career is emerging as a new stage of work in the second half of life. It will explore what encore careers mean for the nonprofit sector in general and for your organization in particular. You will learn about the conditions that have created this shifting notion of work, hear about people who have encore careers, discuss the attributes of encore career seekers, and consider the implications of employing encore workers in challenging economic times and beyond.

Topics include:

- What is an encore career, and why is it emerging?
- What do we know about people in encore careers and encore career seekers?
- What is the potential scale of the encore talent pool?
- How does the nonprofit sector view this idea?
- How is encore talent being leveraged to strengthen nonprofit organizations?

The presentation will include highlights from two national surveys conducted last year by Peter D. Hart Research Associates Inc. for MetLife Foundation and Civic Ventures: www.civicventures.org/surveys.cfm.

Three fast facts from the 2008 Encore Career Survey

1 Millions of Americans have already launched encore careers combining income and personal meaning with social impact.

A surprisingly large number of people between the ages of 44 and 70—a total of 5.3 to 8.4 million people, or 6 to 9.5 percent of this population group—have already launched encore careers.

- A majority of Americans age 44 to 70 want work with meaning. More than half of those in encore careers (55%) and two-thirds of people interested in encore careers (64%) say they are motivated by a desire to use their skills and experience to help others.
- Of those who are in encore careers, more are women than men (56% vs. 44%, respectively) and most are highly educated (67% with college/technical or graduate degrees). Still, almost one-third (30%) of those in encore careers do not have college degrees.

2 The number of people in encore careers could grow rapidly in coming years, creating a new workforce for social change.

Of those between age 44 and 70 not already in encore careers, half say they are interested in moving into jobs in such fields as education, health care, government, and the nonprofit sector.

- People interested in encore careers are a more diverse group than those currently in encore careers. Those interested reflect a more equal distribution of women and men (52% and 48%, respectively), are less well-educated, and slightly more blue-collar.
- Those most interested in encore careers are the youngest: 50 percent of trailing-edge boomers, age 44 to 50, say they want to join the 7 percent of their group already in encore careers.
- Most of those interested in encore careers express concerns about flexibility, time off, pay, health insurance and pensions, and difficulty in finding a job. Most in encore careers say these issues haven't been serious problems.

3 Those currently in encore careers express deep satisfaction with their work.

Eighty-four percent of those in encore careers say they get either a “tremendous amount of satisfaction” (38%) or “quite a bit of satisfaction” (46%) from their encore careers.

- Commitment and flexibility come together in encore careers. Although most (59%) in encore careers work full time, 73 percent say they have “been given the flexibility” they need to work when they want to and take time off when they need to.
- Three-quarters (76%) of those in encore careers say they are earning the income or benefits they need.
- Nine in 10 of those in encore careers say it is “definitely true” (54%) or “somewhat true” (40%) that they have seen the positive results of their work and know they are making a difference.

The 2008 Survey of Nonprofit Employers resulted in nine key findings:

Nonprofit employers find encore workers at least as appealing as workers in other stages of life.

Half of nonprofit employers (50%) see encore workers as highly appealing (rating them 8-10 on a 10-point scale), with an additional 39 percent finding them moderately appealing (rating them 5-7). Only 10 percent said that the idea of hiring encore workers was not appealing (rating them 0-4).

Most nonprofits have employed late-career or previously retired workers in the recent past.

More than two out of three nonprofit employers (70%) say they have hired encore workers, while nearly all (95%) have employed younger workers just starting out in their careers.

Interest in encore workers is fueled by growing concerns about finding talented staff and managing skilled labor shortages.

More than four in 10 nonprofit employers (42%) see recruiting and hiring talent as a top human resource concern. Nearly six in 10 (59%) see recruiting skilled employees as a big challenge. Very few nonprofit employers (9%) expect it will get easier to find the talent they need.

Nonprofit employers see the benefits of hiring encore workers. Nearly seven in 10 nonprofit employers (69%) rate the valuable experience encore workers bring to the job as a significant benefit, and 67 percent say the same about encore workers' commitment and reliability. (These percentages include only the "significant benefit" category; if "some benefit" is included, these categories are both at or above 95 percent.)

Nonprofits have concerns about the encore workforce, but no more than one in four sees any of the concerns as "serious." Between one-fifth and one-quarter of nonprofit employers have "serious concerns" that encore workers will demand higher salaries (25%), will be reluctant to learn or adapt to new technology (23%), will lack technical or professional skills (20%), will have higher insurance or benefit costs (19%), or will not stay in the job long (19%).

The perceived cost of encore workers affects their appeal. Only 25 percent of those employers that expect higher costs see encore workers as highly appealing. In contrast, encore workers are highly appealing to 45 percent of the employers that don't anticipate higher costs.

Nonprofits with experience employing late-career or recently retired workers are the most positive about hiring more. Employers with such recent experience are more likely than other nonprofits to view encore workers as very appealing – by a margin of 53 to 40 percent – and are less likely to express serious or moderate concerns. They are also more positive about encore workers who have switched from business to the nonprofit sector (40% to 29%).

Most nonprofits say they already offer a key workplace characteristic important to encore workers – flexible work arrangements. Nine in 10 nonprofit employers (90%) say that they offer part-time work, and 86 percent say they offer flexible schedules to all or some employees. But just 40 percent say they offer employees the flexibility to do work from a mobile office or at home.

A majority of nonprofit employers say they would like help hiring and retaining encore workers.

In addition, some nonprofit employers say they would like help finding and screening encore workers (48%), preparing and training encore workers (25%), and providing health insurance or other benefits (22%).