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
Evolving Work Environment

Economic Disruption

Unemployment at early and late career stages

Availability of computing tools

Access to health care safety net

**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%

IPro Index 2013, Melbourne, Australia: Entity Solutions sponsored study conducted by Monash University
Comparing Nontraditional and Conventional Careers

Balance Favoring Nontraditional Career Path

- High satisfaction
- Growth
- Personal alignment

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

Nontraditional

Example of a Nontraditional Career

Individual Counseling/Coaching

Writing

Workforce Consulting

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
- Individual practice/first book
- Organizational experience/teaching
- Organizational practice
- Incorporated/extended team/second, third and fourth books

When Can You Start Along this Path?

New Beginnings
Career and College Guidance

Elsdon Organizational Renewal
TOO LATE TO START?

quarter-life crisis  mid-life crisis

25  35  41 42  52  55  65

meanwhile elsewhere in the universe

Jan Koum founded WhatsApp
Michael Arrington started TechCrunch
Tim Westergren started Pandora
Mark Pincus founded Zynga
Jimmy Wales founded Wikipedia
Robin Chase founded ZipCar
Craig Newmark founded Craigslist
Robert Noyce founded Intel
Ray Kroc started McDonald's
Harland Sanders started KFC
John Pemberton invented Coca-Cola

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE.
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 Have You Found Most Rewarding About an Independent Career?

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

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

And the Challenges?

- Difficulty in finding suitable roles: 32%
- Uncertainty: 25%
- Constant need to network: 21%
- People who don't listen: 12%
- Loneliness: 10%

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

Mutual Influence

Interdependence

Skills

Geography

Customer

Balancing the Components: Example

Financial Contribution

- Adjunct Teaching
- Volunteer Work
- Writing
- Individual Counseling/Coaching
- Workforce Consulting

Time to Secure

Guiding and Supporting a Practice

Implementing Balance

Adjusting and Refining

Developing Criteria

Implementing Balance

Assessing Performance

Selecting Components

Finding Differentiation

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

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

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 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

New Beginnings
Career and College Guidance

Elsdon Organizational Renewal

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 or to be added to newsletter distribution list please contact Ron Elsdon at renewal@elsdon.com, or 925 586 9039.