

The Age of the Older Entrepreneur



Foreword



Lady Barbara Judge
*Chairman, Institute of
Directors*

The changing world of work, combined with an ageing population, will pose serious questions for governments and businesses alike. As we continue to live longer and the retirement age rises, we must consider different ways of staying engaged in the workplace.

One option, being pursued by more and more people in later life, is starting their own businesses. Professor Mark Hart of Aston University, a government adviser who leads the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses programme, says that “the shake-up from the recession has provided the impetus for people who are over 50 to say that it’s time to do something that they’ve always wanted to do, and to take an opportunistic approach to creating their own business.”

These are not just people past retirement age, these are individuals with wisdom and experience, who have many years of productive work ahead of them. Choosing to take financial and business risks later in life can be difficult and I commend any person who decides to take this route.

As someone who is a strong advocate for working until late in life, I am delighted to see that many firms are now focusing on employing older workers. We, at the IoD are strongly supporting our own network of founders, of which I am pleased to say that many of them are older.

Authors



Jamie Kerr
*Head of External
Affairs, Institute of
Directors*

Jamie leads the IoD's engagement across government and the wider UK political community. He also leads on tech and entrepreneurship policy for the IoD, working closely alongside the IoD99, the 1,500-strong network for young founders.

Jamie joined the IoD in June 2014 and previously managed parliamentary affairs work, promoting the business policy agenda in Parliament. He has an MA in Politics from the University of Edinburgh and has not had previously worked in both the US House of Representatives and UK House of Commons.



Donjeta Miftari
*Media Relations Manager,
Institute of Directors*

Donjeta leads the IoD's work to represent members' views in the media and ensure that its public policy positions - from Brexit to tax - gain the greatest exposure. These positions are developed on the back of extensive member surveys and engagement, and build on the principles in the IoD's Royal Charter.

Prior to joining the IoD as Press Officer in May 2016, she worked for the Government of Kosovo and co-founded the tech startup, *Dropin*, a social networking app based on location. Donjeta has a BA in Economics and Politics from the University of Kent.

Introduction

If asked to describe a modern entrepreneur, most people will likely jump to the image of a 20-something founder of a high-growth tech start-up. This stereotype is fuelled by the stories underpinning a number of the world's best known companies. Endless front-page media coverage - alongside Hollywood's focus on highlighting the success of phenomena like Facebook and Snapchat - reinforce the assumption that youth is the secret to success.

However, while youth may be an obvious part of the Silicon Valley story, it is hardly the common thread connecting the majority of business founders across the UK.

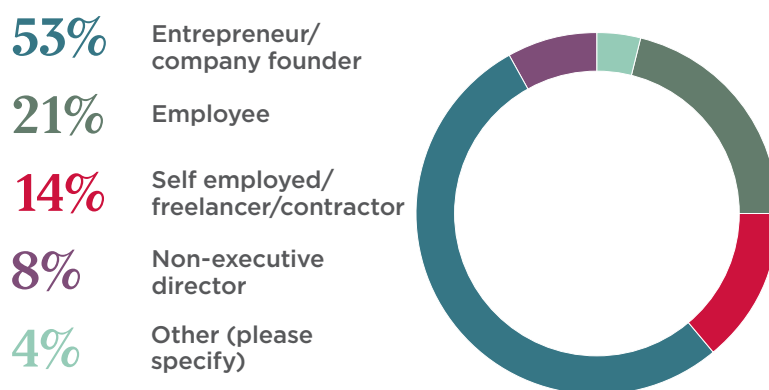
The high profile experiences of young millionaires are only part of the story, and entrepreneurship is not reliant on (nor limited to) tech. Entrepreneurship has also never been a route just available to the young. In fact, a growing number of people over 50 are joining the start-up community, many capitalising on the skills and experience they have accrued over long careers in order to start a successful business.

The IoD itself stands out as an example of where facts depart from fiction when it comes to entrepreneurship. A recent survey showed that 53% of IoD members define themselves as either an entrepreneur or company founder (see figure 1). In addition, 67% of members are above the age of 50. The London HQ on Pall Mall is - in effect - one of the longest standing co-working spaces in the city. Tables in the Directors Room are occupied daily by groups of seasoned founders, often gathered around a laptop discussing their next big idea. Although the IoD is not solely a place for business founders, it certainly is a leading advocate for enterprise.¹

Age is not an obstacle to starting a business, but like young people, those starting a business later face challenges, albeit different ones. However, most of the recent focus from the Government and start-up organisations has been on encouraging younger people to pursue an entrepreneurial career.

Figure 1

Which of the following terms most closely describes your primary employment status?



Policy Voice survey conducted between 23 Feb-9 March 2017, 1015 respondents

¹ Pg 6, http://www.yum.com/annualreport/pdf/2015YumBrands_AnnualReport.pdf

For those facing the prospect of retirement or leaving lifelong employment, starting a business can also be a great way to continue engaging with work. It may not be everyone's first choice for retirement, but it can keep an individual busy, stimulated and in some cases physically and socially active. For some, it may also be a decision taken out of necessity, such as the requirement for a supplementary income.

Additionally, business acumen will tend to improve with age², allowing founders to better understand industry nuances, and to utilise networks and skills built over their working lives. An IoD survey showed that 86% of members currently work in a field that is related to previous experience (see figure 2).

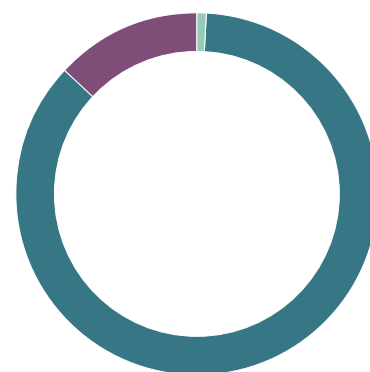
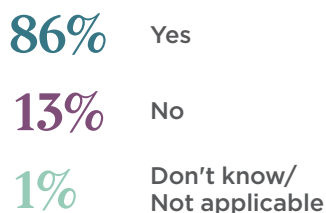
Ultimately, there is rarely a substitute for experience, particularly in complex industries. Research in 2009 from Duke University scholar Vivek Wadhwa found that 'the average age of a successful entrepreneur in high-growth industries such as computers, health care, and aerospace is 40. Twice as many successful entrepreneurs are over 50 as under 25; and twice as many over 60 as under 20. The vast majority — 75 percent — have more than six years of industry experience and half have more than 10 years when they create their start-up.'³

Demographics have also changed over time. When the state pension was first introduced, it adequately reflected the realities of the time. Today it does not, with life-spans expanding and the need for supplementary retirement income becoming more apparent. This is a problem looking for solutions and in need of more public debate, which we hope to amplify with this report. More than ever, it is essential to highlight why older people are in a good position to start businesses, where they may be struggling and identify how the Government can make it easier for them.

In this paper, we also hope to provide a better understanding of the implications of an ageing population on the workforce, and identify policy recommendations to help the Government to tackle this issue, by encouraging entrepreneurship for all ages.

Figure 2

Is your current work related to your previous career/experience?



Policy Voice survey conducted between 23 Feb-9 March 2017, 1015 respondents

² <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/252770>

³ Wadhwa, Vivek (2013) The truth about entrepreneurs. Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/the-truth-about-entrepreneurs-twice-as-many-are-over-50-than-under-25/>

Changing demographics

The huge amount of media time given to profiling successful young tech entrepreneurs, alongside the media profiles built around the likes of Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, have created a public perception that all start-ups are tech start-ups, and tech start-ups are solely the preserve of the young. This perception is wrongly founded, and - given the inevitable changes to the jobs landscape that are expected over the next few decades - largely unhelpful. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that, not only has entrepreneurship been dominated historically by more established business figures, but the next few decades will see the age of the average entrepreneur drift ever higher.

These shifting sands within the UK labour market have been well documented. An ageing population, alongside increasing levels of automation and technological change are posing serious questions about how we maintain a thriving and agile workforce over coming decades. Meeting these challenges successfully will require not just a positive attitude towards technology, but also an acceptance that individuals graduating today will need to shift careers, skill-sets, and working environments throughout their lives. Older people today are at the frontier of these changes, and we can learn a great deal through considering demographic changes in entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Life expectancy

The first - and overriding - change that has spurred fresh debate around older entrepreneurship is increasing life expectancy across developed countries. Incremental growth in the total fertility rate⁴ over the coming decades, alongside relatively high net migration and improving health outcomes, will continue to drive this trend in the UK. The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures project that the share of the UK population under the age of 16 will continue to decline over the next few decades as the number of over-65s increases⁵. Moreover, around a third of children born in the

UK in 2012 are expected to survive to celebrate their one hundredth birthday. By contrast only 1% of those born in 1908 lived to 100.⁶

The fact that we are all living longer is great news, and the questions posed by the trend are hardly new. However, while there has been seemingly endless coverage and analysis of the implications for social care and pensions, there has been remarkably little discussion - until recently - of how labour markets are likely to meet these changes.

Going into retirement

Politicians and business leaders alike are now beginning to search for how to address the political and economic implications of these challenges. There has already been some political movement when it comes to contemporizing the basic state pension age. When it was introduced in 1948, overall life-expectancy was 66 for men, and 70 for women. At that time, the basic state pension age was 65 for men and 60 for women⁷. Nowadays, with modern life expectancy so much higher, the cost of the programme has increased far beyond what was envisaged by its original architects. To partially address this, policy makers have decided to increase the retirement age to 66 from 2020 before raising it again to 67 between 2026 and 2028.

Tied to these changes - and particularly important for individuals themselves - is the increasing cost of retirement associated with longer life expectancy. While the current cohorts of workers nearing retirement are doing so - by and large - with relatively healthy savings, the same is not true of younger generations. As a case in point, a recent report by the Money Advice Service (MAS), showed that up to 16 million working age people (4 in 10) in the UK have less than £100 put away for a rainy day⁸, let alone a comfortable retirement.

The solutions to the question posed by this trend are - on the face of it - relatively simple. Either there will need to be a step change in attitudes to savings for younger people currently in work, or

⁴ ONS (2015) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea11principalprojectionuksummary>

⁵ ONS (2016) Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/february2016>

⁶ ONS (2016) <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lifetables/historic-and-projected-data-from-the-period-and-cohort-life-tables/2012-based/sty-babies-living-to-100.html>

⁷ ONS (<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewiXpeDHotjRAhVJVhoKHYP-Dc8QFggaMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ons.gov.uk%2Fons%2Fabout-ons%2Fbusiness-transparency%2Fad-hoc-data%2Fpre-june-2012%2Flife-expectancy-at-birth--england-and-wales--1910-to-2001.xls&usq=AFQjCNH6p5pUYayM8U9Mo97M9drrqZDeew&sig2=JDDCKu3uOtOa5ZzONS6ypQ>)

⁸ BBC News (2016) Millions have less than £100 in savings. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37504449>

those people will need to stay in work for much longer to fund their later years. The Government has recognised the need to tackle the first point. The recent introduction of Pension Auto Enrolment - requiring employers to enrol eligible works into a pension scheme, as well as make a contribution - has been a significant step towards plugging the savings gap. However, experts also agree⁹ that the relatively low levels of combined contributions associated with the scheme will struggle to guarantee adequate retirement income for those signed up to the schemes.

Table 1

When you choose to retire, which of the following options most closely describes what you think your main reason(s) will be?	
To travel or pursue more leisure activities	49%
Perceive myself to be financially comfortable	48%
When I can no longer work due to health reasons	33%
To concentrate on voluntary/charity work	20%
I don't plan to retire	16%
My children are no longer financially dependent	13%
My partner retires	8%
Other (please specify)	7%
Reach the state retirement age	4%

Policy Voice survey conducted between 23 Feb-9 March 2017, 1015 respondents

Case study



**Fiona Green, age: 52 & Caroline Boshier, age: 36
Co-founders of Renegade Generation Ltd**

Our business helps mature professionals successfully navigate career transition in a modern world by finding meaningful portfolio careers or jobs at the best companies. The online platform and offline workshops aim to inspire, empower and enable mature professionals to successfully transition from traditional employment into new career choices, flexible roles and entrepreneurship.

How would you describe your primary employment status?

We would describe ourselves as company founders.

What were the most important factors in motivating you to start your business?

For us both, it was really important to build a business that had a positive social impact, but one that is also commercially successful. We also started Renegade Generation because we saw a clear gap in the market, and opportunity for us to fill it, especially because it is something we would both like to make use of someday.

Is your latest venture related to your previous career?

Fiona: Having successfully exited my software business to Capita PLC, I knew at some point in the future that I would want to run my own business again. It's a bug and a desire that remains with you.

Caroline: Not directly, however as a User Experience (UX) Designer I'm always using my previous career experience to design and improve both the technology and service sides of our new business.

If your business were to fail, would you start another?

Definitely. The world will always have entrepreneurial opportunities and problems that need solving! We are addicted to the challenges of starting your own business and don't think we would be as fulfilled doing anything else. The knowledge and experience you gain from running and 'living' your own business is like nothing else.

Did you start your business alone?

No, we were lucky to be able to join forces. We have the right set of experience to complement each other, as well as the age (it's our secret weapon!) Fiona brings extensive commercial experience and Caroline brings modern methodologies and design thinking. The learning curve involved in starting a new business, especially when it's all new, is incredibly steep and we could not imagine doing this without a partner.

⁹ City AM (2016) Auto-enrolment contribution rates are far too low. Available at: <http://www.cityam.com/246329/auto-enrolment-contribution-rates-far-too-low-says-webb>

Flexible working and a fragmenting labour market

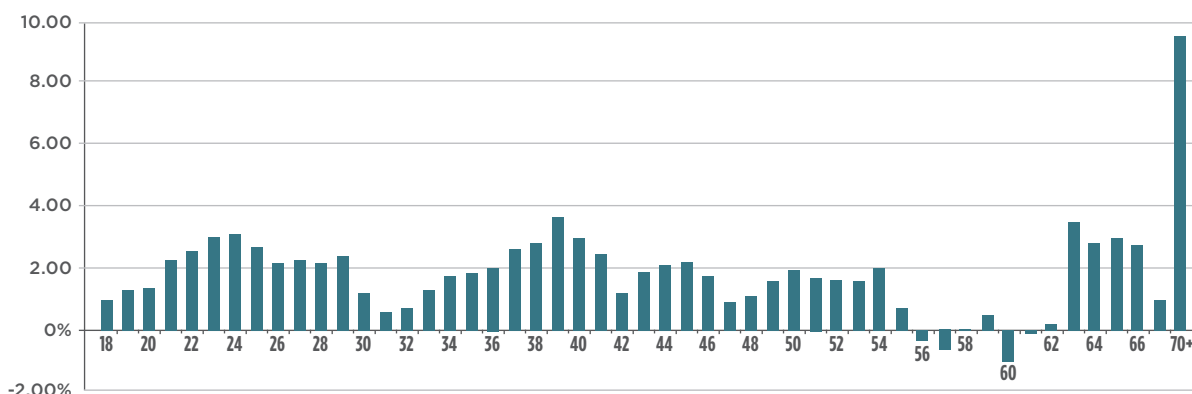
Luckily, it has almost never been easier to access flexible working as a way of supplementing retirement income. In fact, over 15% of the UK workforce is now made up of freelancers, temporary workers and contractors, many of whom have been encouraged to shift into self-employment through the unprecedented technological advances of the past few years. The traditional benefits of self-employment (autonomy and flexibility) have been met by the development of efficient and innovative new technologies, and the result has been a big change to working practices. Moreover, the fastest

growing group within UK self-employment – by a long way – is older people (see figures 3 & 4).

It's important to note at this point that there is a separate conversation to be had around identifying the distinction between self-employment and entrepreneurship. Some metrics, such as those measuring new business activity, frequently conflate the two.¹⁰ However, many also make the distinction between those looking to innovate and scale businesses, and those looking to work for themselves in a traditional sense to generate a stable income.

Figure 3¹¹

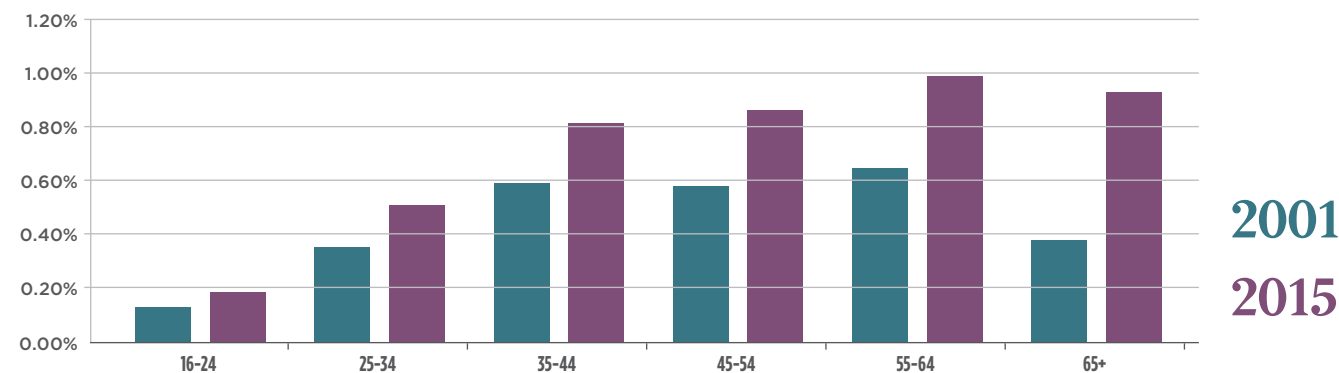
Across age groups % change between 2001 & 2015 of self-employment (as % total workforce)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2016)

Figure 4¹¹

Part-Time self-employment (as % total employment) broken down by age



Source: Office for National Statistics (2016)

¹⁰ Henrekson, M., & Sanandaji, T. (2014). Small business activity does not measure entrepreneurship. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(5), 1760-1765.

¹¹ Office for National Statistics (2016), Trends in self-employment in the UK: 2001 to 2015. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/trendsinsselfemploymentintheuk/2001to2015>

Needless to say, there can often be significant overlap between the two. For the purposes of this report, though, both can be applicable. In one sense, it is a positive trend to see more people opting for self-employment later in life, both in terms of the health and income benefits to individuals, as well as the broader impact of greater economic participation. However, the positive economic effects of a thriving start-up ecosystem are also well-known, particularly when they translate into a higher number of scale-up businesses (currently the holy grail for policy makers).

As noted above, self-employment has become a particularly attractive option for those looking to supplement their savings and retirement income. It gives individuals the opportunity to exploit the expertise and networks that they have assembled over long careers, whilst leaving them the autonomy to choose when, how, and where they want to work.

That isn't to say that this rise in self-employment comes without challenges; far from it. UK labour rights have grown up over the past 150 years broadly in line with the normalisation of the 'job for life'. With that option now becoming less commonplace, questions should be asked about whether labour rights are keeping pace with changing practices. At the same time, it will be vital to ensure that the ready availability of contract work does not become used by some traditional employers as a way of shirking their responsibilities to individuals who would much rather be fully employed. Policy makers need to rise to this challenge, and the IoD has broadly welcomed Matthew Taylor's proposal to bring more clarity to employment law in the UK.

Low levels of pension contributions among this cohort of workers has also been consistently highlighted over the past few years, with the proportion of the self-employed who contribute to pensions dropping off significantly over the past decade. The onus is now on politicians to help incentivise the self-employed to save more, particularly in light of an increasingly fragmented labour market.

Table 2

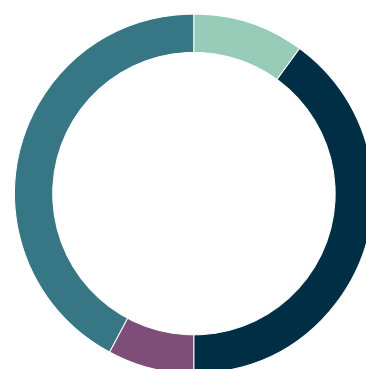
Thinking about the most recent business you have established, which of the following were the most important factors in motivating you to start the company?	
To build a successful business/product/service	81%
Financial reward	53%
Desire to be your own boss	50%
To make a positive social impact	21%
Personal status/reputation/recognition	18%
To improve/maintain my physical health & mental wellbeing	17%
Other (please specify)	6%
To stay involved with my local community	3%

Policy Voice survey conducted between 23 Feb-9 March 2017, 544 respondents

Figure 5

When you started your business, were you?

- 42%** In full time work at another firm
- 40%** Exclusively working on your new business
- 10%** Other (please specify)
- 8%** In part time work at another firm



Policy Voice survey conducted between 23 Feb-9 March 2017, 544 respondents

How the IoD can help you

Starting your own business can range from freelance consulting to setting up a coffee shop, and anyone looking to strike out on their own may still feel apprehensive about taking what is possibly a life-changing decision, especially in a time of political and economic uncertainty.

This is where the IoD can help, providing expert advice and steering you through an exciting but challenging transition and ultimately helping you to get your new business off the ground. The Information and Advisory

Service (IAS) offers tailored, confidential one-to-one advice from specialist professionals up to four times a calendar year. This service includes an opportunity to put your business plan in front of our experts, who will provide you with the feedback you need to help turn that plan into reality.

1 Finance
Our finance adviser can discuss the various funding options available for start-ups, while the information team can also provide additional supporting detail.

2 Market research
You can request market research summaries from the IAS, as well as company listings of potential competitors.

3 Forming a company
Get guidance on the different forms a company can take, and discuss your situation with one of the IoD's business law specialists.

4 Marketing
Our marketing adviser can run through your strategy, and offer you expert guidance on the available options, including how to get the most from your social media strategy.

5 Legal and tax questions
From the details of setting up in Europe to VAT rules for selling online, our helplines can provide a quick answer to legal and tax questions for members up to 25 times in a calendar year.

6 Business Information Service
BIS can research enquiries, including market research, funding providers and company structure information. Again this service is available for members up to 25 times in a calendar year.

7 Brexit helpline
We have created a hub where you can find the latest information, guidance and advice. This includes a helpline to address any concerns you may have about starting a new business.

8 Certificate in Company Direction
This certificate provides business leaders (including those running start-ups) with a foundation in effective directorship to deal with all aspects of running a company - regardless of its size. It is the best option for somebody starting their own company, as well as for experienced directors going solo who may need to develop a 360-degree view.

9 Networking
Meet and exchange ideas with other entrepreneurs at IoD events held at our 15 regional centres across the UK. Members of Office Solutions also benefit from regular networking events at 116 Pall Mall that provide an ideal opportunity to talk to directors who have started their own business.

10 IoD Policy Voice
The IoD's authoritative public policy panel connects 3,000 members of all levels of experience. It allows entrepreneurs, new and old, to shape the IoD's approach via surveys and forums and set the agenda for our regular dialogue with ministers, government officials and key influencers.

11 Director magazine and director.co.uk
Both the magazine and website are full of expert advice and help as well as stories of inspiring entrepreneurs - of all ages. And remember - members get special discounted rates for adverts on the website and in the magazine.

Case study



**Malcolm Small, Age: 62
Founder of the Retirement
Income Alliance Ltd (RIA)**

My business is a new form of employee benefit that employers can provide to their staff to help educate them around their choices for the financial and other aspects of retirement. It aims to help people better understand all their options for generating income in later life, including options they may not have thought existed. Using tools, tables, calculators, videos, games and journalism, its mission is to get financial options to people who may not think they have any.

How would you describe your primary employment status?

A bit of everything – I am currently doing a bit of freelance journalism and hold non-executive director positions, but I very much see myself as an entrepreneur.

What were the most important factors in motivating you to start your business?

Naturally financial reward plays a significant role but making a positive social impact is fundamental to the RIA. The idea for the business came out of the pension “freedom and choice” reforms of 2014/15. The choices confronting retirees, or prospective retirees, are now almost infinite and I could see people need help navigating a good path for them. This is not just about what to do with your pension fund, it’s about all the other assets you have, or could build, such as residential housing equity.

Is your latest venture related to your previous career?

Yes, I’ve worked in financial services for most of my life and I see this as part of my legacy. RIA is an effort to put something “back in” for consumers.

If your business were to fail, would you start another?

I think when you’re an entrepreneur once, you’re always a entrepreneur, so I would certainly not rule it out. Having learnt so much building businesses over the years, it would be a shame to waste that knowledge. That having been said, the strains and risks of business-building are considerable and you probably don’t want to be betting the house on an idea in your 60s or 70s.

Did you start your business alone?

This was the first one I built with a full Board from the word “go” and external investors, all my others businesses I’ve built myself or with one other trusted partner. Managing Board colleagues and investor expectations is a full time job, 24/7/365, not for the faint hearted.

What can be done?

1 Boost awareness of support schemes available to older founders

- Many of the support schemes available to start-ups - including funding initiatives - have been poorly publicised by the Government in recent years. In the five years running up to the end of 2015, general awareness amongst IoD members of many of the schemes set in place to encourage businesses to start and grow was less than 30%.¹² We would urge Whitehall departments - alongside local government, local enterprise partnerships, growth hubs and others - to investigate more efficient ways of communicating these schemes to potential entrepreneurs.
- The IoD has previously suggested using high profile new regional institutions, such as Metro Mayors, as one-stop-shops for individuals seeking information on Government support initiatives. There is also a strong case for expanding the information on such initiatives that go out to individuals in HMRC correspondence.

2 Boost appetite for training and higher participation rates in adult education

- With automation and new digital innovations increasingly likely to replace tasks historically performed by human beings, lifelong learning has become a key buzz-phrase in the worlds of politics and business in recent years. The IoD has also consistently said that individuals will need to re-enter training throughout their working lives in order to ensure they are protected in a changing jobs landscape.
- Older individuals looking to start new enterprises or remain in work generally will need to access lifelong learning as much as anyone. In a 2012 survey, 40% of 55 to 64 year olds had undertaken no formal training since leaving school, while people with higher incomes, qualifications, or in full time work were more likely to participate in learning.¹³ Moreover, a Government Office for Science report also revealed in 2015 that 60% of non-internet users aged over 64 consider the internet 'too difficult to use'.¹⁴

¹² IoD (2017) Business Manifesto: Starting and scaling a business. Available at <https://www.iod.com/Portals/0/PDFs/Campaigns%20and%20Reports/Start%20ups/Starting%20and%20Scaling%20a%20Business.pdf?ver=2017-05-05-173947-200>

¹³ Government Office for Science (2016) Future of an ageing population. Available at: <http://www.cityam.com/246329/auto-enrolment-contribution-rates-far-too-low-says-webb>

¹⁴ Ibid

- We would like to see the tax system flexed to encourage individuals to access different types of training throughout their working lives. For those still in work, we propose the introduction of a 'shadow personal allowance' to be offset against an individual's income tax liability - provided that the learner has personally paid for, undertaken and/or remains in, a qualifying lifelong learning programme in that tax year. Any surplus could be carried over into the following year.

3 Boost the potential of personal pensions as a means of investing in new businesses

- The Government should consult on the introduction of limited, tax-free withdrawals from personal pension pots if money is earmarked for start-up investment. The withdrawals would be in addition to the current 25% tax free allowance.
- A theoretical cap on the withdrawal amount could be set at, say, £100,000 (or 10% of the fund value if smaller), provided that they are invested in the same tax year in the ordinary share capital of a qualifying trading entrepreneurial company.
- Related to this is the ongoing question of low pension contributions amongst many of those who are the self-employed. The introduction of auto-enrolment for employees has been a positive step in ensuring the majority of those in employment begin to accrue savings to set against retirement. However, savings participation amongst those in self-employment continues to lag those in employment, and in the decade between 2001/02 and 2012/13, the proportion of self-employed contributing to pensions more than halved¹⁵.
- The IoD urges the Government to consult further on how the self-employed could be nudged into more regular, adequate contributions to personal pension pots.

Case study



Steve Perry, age: 59 Founder of No Desire to Retire

No Desire To Retire is a website that specialises in helping over 50s find work. It is an online platform that allows anyone in this age group to showcase their skills for free. In turn, employers can search for

those skills by post code and contact the appropriate individuals using the site's internal mailing system.

More recently it has become the website of choice for many employers to advertise job vacancies, knowing that the respondents to the roles will all be aged over 50. Employing older workers is gaining momentum, especially in roles where long-term experience is valued.

How would you describe your your primary employment status?

I am a company founder.

What were the most important factors in motivating you to start your business?

The idea to set up *No Desire To Retire* was an accident, born from a conversation in a client meeting regarding succession planning within a family business. Upon closer inspection, it became apparent that there was a big gap in the market place for helping over 50s to find employers who are looking to take on mature staff members.

My role as head of the business has also evolved into one of corporate social responsibility (CSR), championing the cause of older workers and making sure that the over 50s cohort has a proactive voice. I am trying to change the way that employers recruit and to tackle ageism in the workplace.

Is your latest venture related to your previous career?

Yes, to a degree. For the past 20 years I have been working within senior digital marketing roles, helping businesses develop their online presence. My experience in this field has given me the knowledge to be able to put a team together to develop my vision into a real business.

If your business were to fail, would you start another?

Almost certainly! I have carved my own pathway for more than 35 years. I probably don't know how to do anything else!

Did you start your business alone?

The idea was mine but it needed a cross section of skills to make it come to life. It was built on many of hard work and very little financial investment. It's the hard way to make a business work but it definitely does focus the mind when making financial investment decisions.

In the main, I think that ideas shared and nurtured are the best ones. A team of creative big idea thinkers gets a broader position developed and this was definitely the case for *No Desire To Retire*.

¹⁵Resolution Foundation (2015) The self-employed and pensions. Available at: <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2015/05/Self-employment-and-pensions.pdf>

Conclusion

Labour markets are changing. Increasingly sophisticated (and ever cheaper) consumer technologies are opening up routes into work for many who have traditionally felt locked out of the jobs landscape. For many older people in particular, this trend has the potential to facilitate flexible access to work as they transition out of full-time jobs and into retirement. As the joint trends of increasing life-expectancy and diminishing pension savings continue to put pressure on traditional retirement models, the explosion of cheap and flexible options for self-employment could be an important development for those looking to supplement their existing savings.

At the same time, it's clear that some of the key comparative advantages available to those building successful businesses are a deep understanding of the markets they're entering and networks of contacts built up over years working in specific sectors. The experiences of IoD members bear out the importance of these characteristics, which so often get lost in the media narrative around young, disruptive start-up founders.

The IoD has long been the home of budding entrepreneurs, recognising that start-ups are not solely the preserve of the young, and good leadership practices are not just a concern for FTSE 100 directors. Over half of IoD members are entrepreneurs, and our packed working spaces up and down the country highlight the important role the organisation plays in bringing together business founders across age groups and sectors of the economy.

The IoD believes that more can still be done to encourage people to engage with start-ups and entrepreneurship throughout their lives, and this report sets out some areas where some Government intervention would be welcome. In the end, though, improving the wider cultural perception of what makes a typical entrepreneur, not to mention building on the strength of peer-to-peer support networks up and down the country, will be essential to fostering a thriving landscape for older entrepreneurship in the coming years.

Institute of Directors

For further information on this report, please contact:

Jamie Kerr
Head of External Affairs
+44 (0)207 451 3264
jamie.kerr@iod.com

The Institute of Directors

The IoD has been supporting businesses and the people who run them since 1903. As the UK's longest running and leading business organisation, the IoD is dedicated to supporting its members, encouraging entrepreneurial activity and promoting responsible business practice for the benefit of the business community and society as a whole.

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