

Can A Person Be “Too Old” For Franchising?

Is It Too Late To Follow Dreams?

It’s not about age. It all depends upon what you want and need at this stage of your career. You don’t have to give up dreaming in life – instead, you adapt how you manifest those dreams.



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Every once in a while, we'll be speaking with a client -- early in our relationship with them -- and they will ask questions of us, such as “*will I have to lift boxes?*,” or “*does it involve direct selling?*,” or “*will I have to manage minimum wage employees?*”

When we hear this, it always raises a “red flag.” It tells us that they are concerned about their age – and whether or not it is going to place limitations on their ability to succeed in franchising.

Let us say, clearly, here and now: AGE IS NOT A FACTOR IN A PERSON'S SUCCESS IN FRANCHISING. At least it is certainly not when *The YOU Network* provides you counsel, at least. Because we discuss the role of age in finding the right franchise with you – as part of our comprehensive evaluation process – and make sure the franchise you choose is within your range of current and future capabilities.

For example:

Most franchising consulting firms will take an “inventory” of your skills: what work you have done in the past, what you liked, what you didn't like, etc. We take down this basic historical information about you – but inquire about a LOT more as well. *Because if we assume that whatever you have done in the past is what you need to do going forward, we would be doing you a great injustice.* We know that SMART people are going to want to do what's going to be right for them for the NEXT decade – not the 4 preceding decades.

Take Jerry Jones, age 60 (not the Jerry affiliated with the Dallas Cowboys...) Jerry spent his entire career in direct sales roles-- knocking down doors, and signing up clients for his industrial manufacturing parts company. He was VERY. VERY good at it. In fact, Jerry still holds the record for the highest annual sales level achieved by any employee. But, truth be known, he was VERY, VERY tired of it. The travel, the glad-handing, the “being on” all the time with customers – and frankly, the physical challenge of traveling, of being on his feet all of the time. He liked to joke that “he was 60 and felt every year of it.” That being said, Jerry had a lot of energy – and still wanted to work when his company was sold to another in 2008, and he lost his job.

When Jerry came to *The YOU Network*, he hadn't focused his dream much more than “owning some little light manufacturing or food service business – and build some equity for his family.” His consultant had the wherewithal to probe MUCH deeper and ask, “*Jerry, you're 60 years old and you've done sales jobs forever – is THIS what you want to do going forward? What ELSE are you good at doing? Or have enjoyed doing in the past? Go way back – to high school if need be. What jobs (or even volunteer work) did you ever do that REALLY made you feel good about yourself? And why do you say they made you feel that way?*”

Jerry hesitated for a minute, and answered, “*You know, the most rewarding experience I have ever had occurred 20 years ago, when I coached “new sales hires” in the company. They were hungry to succeed – were seeking my direction – and I felt like I REALLY molded these people as they should have been molded, in order for them to WIN. And I was right -- I STILL get calls from these people – whether they are still with the company or not – telling me I was responsible for making them what they were today in the business world. I cannot tell you how good that makes me feel.*”

The point of telling you about this conversation with Jerry is that it opened up a *whole new area of discussion* – and got the conversation with his consultant “out of the box,” so to say. Jerry admitted he wanted something new – and his consultant had the experience to know to guide him toward franchising arenas that would

leverage secondary skills *that he had forgotten he had* – in addition to those that leveraged skills he had always leveraged in the past.

In addition, his consultant inventoried all of the things Jerry “didn’t want to do anymore” – like travel, or work 80 hour workweeks, etc. Given Jerry’s concern about his “tired legs” it would hardly do to introduce him to a franchise that had him standing on his feet all day!

Jerry ended up looking at a business coaching franchise, at a maid service franchise, and at several other B2B concepts that his consultant introduced him to – because all of these franchises required an owner that had a PASSION for sharing their hard-earned skills with employees or clients – among other requirements that made sense for Jerry as well.

We won’t say which franchise Jerry ultimately chose – you’ll have to ask your consultant for that – but you should know that today Jerry works out of his home office, is on the phone most of the time, or working face-to-face with employees, and uses marketing and advertising to drive customers to his business – versus direct sales. He’s happier than he’s been in years because he really feels he makes a difference in the lives of his employees – AND his own life is easier, more flexible as well.

OK. Here’s another example.

Marianne Smith, aged 56. A real go-getter. A marketing executive for leading national companies most of her career. A marathon runner – used to always participate in the annual race her company sponsored. In addition, “travel” has been her middle name – as her work has kept her flying and visiting clients in cities all over the U.S. Out of the blue, a few years ago, she had a serious accident, and injured her foot. After two years of physical therapy, during which time she couldn’t work, she can walk again – but she certainly isn’t going to run a marathon again – but at least she can re-join the human race and go back to work.

However, after years of success, Marianne found she couldn’t find employment. Doors were slamming left and right. Age was a barrier. Her physical ailment was a barrier. Frustrated, she sought direction about franchising from *The YOU Network*.

When Marianne discussed her needs with her consultant, she added more fuel to the “potential problem fire.” She only wanted a business where she would never have to do direct selling. She said she HATED direct selling, in fact. She knew marketing, and loved marketing – but it had to be a marketing-driven company that also didn’t require her being challenged physically. So... no travel, no “heavy-lifting” so to say, and no being on her feet a lot.

Marianne’s consultant was able to sort through ALL of Marianne’s skills and needs – and direct her to franchises that kept all of these considerations in mind. Marianne ended up leveraging her love for animals — and other special needs — into a pet services franchise. No travel required, all local marketing drives the business model which she can handle, and she develops and leads a staff from her home office. She’s having a ball.

Our final example:

Our president, Chris Wright, once had a client who was 76 when he first came to Chris for assistance. The client, Jim, (not his real name) told Chris he just “couldn’t stand” retirement and needed to go back to work. He was calling to learn about a handyman franchise that he had believed was part of our portfolio.

When Chris inquired why he was interested in this particular business, Jim replied, “*I’ve always kind of enjoyed working with tools.*”

Chris took this response at “face value” at the time, but began digging deeper into his background and history, only to discover that Jim had been the president of two start-up software companies, and had taken a third one public. He shook his head and queried of Jim, “do you *really* want to run crews that use hammers and a screwdriver?,” and Jim sheepishly admitted, “*no, not really – but what’s an old guy like me supposed to do?*” That’s where Chris straightened him out. He came into the process thinking that there would only be certain kind of work available to him – and if Chris hadn’t probed, he might have never had the success he had. Instead, the story ended like this:

Chris asked him, “*do you still love the world of technology?*” And his response was, “*I love it. I wish I could teach people – my age – how to use it.*”

This gentleman now owns a computer software training franchise that specializes in working with senior citizens. He is now 87 years old and *still* going strong – loving every minute of his business.

Now, these examples purposely over-simplify “the process of finding a franchise” – in order to address the relativity of age to franchising. At *The YOU Network*, all consultants are trained to gain comprehensive information about YOU – so that ALL of your current and future needs – not just those pertaining to age considerations -- can be properly met.