

The advantages of starting a business after 50 years of age

It's never too late to start a small business. So if you are getting older and feel like your chance at entrepreneurship is fading away a little bit every year, think again. Now just may be the perfect time to take the plunge and start a small business. Here are a few of the advantages that they are on your side.

1. You have life experience

The most obvious and undeniable advantage of starting a business later in life is the fact that you now have years of life experience. You have more information about the world and about a business that you didn't have in your 20s. You are more patient and willing to take each step in the business startup process (even the steps that aren't a lot of fun) in order to give your business the best chance it has at success.

While you may not have practical experience in every segment of the business startup process, it is very likely that you understand the importance of things like having a business plan, creating a solid financial plan and conducting thorough market research. And you know who you need to help you with the pieces you can't do yourself.

2. You know more people and they know people who know people

At this stage of your life, you have likely built a large and diverse network of friends and colleagues. And these connections are valuable for the new business.

Think about all of the experts you have met in your life that could share their advice or provide services to help you in your new venture — attorneys, accountants, marketers, financial planners, real estate agents, contractors, designers, and etc. You already have experience in the business world, you also understand the importance of networking and are able to ask for introductions when needed to move projects forward. This depth of a thriving network often takes years to build, so age is certainly an asset in this situation.

3. You know how to set and achieve goals

Goal setting is an integral part of starting and running a business. In our younger years, we don't always understand the power of smart goal-setting for getting from one place in life to another. Young people are not very objective and realistic regarding business plans and goals. Your life experience will also help you remain objective when you consider different paths and goals. You can reach your goals in more efficient way.

4. You may have an advantage with investors

While young entrepreneurs are often favored by investors because it can be easier for them to get a bigger ownership stake and have more control in the business, older entrepreneurs offer better chances of success because of what they bring to the table. According to Entrepreneur.com, many venture capitalists are looking for older, seasoned and experienced entrepreneurs who have "been there, done that." Investors are opportunistic and don't want to lose their money, and young entrepreneurs make bigger mistakes.

5. You know what you're passionate about

Many young entrepreneurs know they want to start a business of some kind, but they may not know exactly how they want to do it. This is because they haven't had enough time to develop an idea of what they are truly passionate about. Richard Branson says that "Passion is one of the most effective motivators when it comes to launching a business — and often one of the strongest predictors of whether an idea will lead to success." Without passion for your work,

it's very likely your business idea will fizzle out at some point. Older entrepreneurs know what they enjoy doing — and what they don't — and can tailor a new business to fit that.

6. You are financially secure

Starting a business when you're young means you will probably be juggling the cost of business ownership along with the rest of life's major investments many of us face: mortgage payments, children's expenses (childcare, education, sports, holidays), insurance, automobile payments, student loan repayment and retirement savings. While the expenses never really go away, the older you get, the more likely you are to have paid off a significant percentage of the big stuff. This frees up cash to invest in your business. Plus, having less financial responsibilities makes the idea of starting a business less risky since theoretically you will have a lot less to lose if things don't work out.

7. You have a lot of startup options

When you're young, you have limited experience, a limited network and limited capital, so your startup options are often limited as well. As a financially secure, seasoned professional, you have more options when it comes to your path to entrepreneurship. Sure, you can start a new business from the ground, but that is not the only option on the table. You can buy into a franchise, leveraging the power of an already successful brand. You can also form a partnership with a fellow entrepreneur and split the costs, workload and profits. Or, you can become an investor yourself, moving to the other side of the table by providing capital for someone else's business idea. In return you get a percentage of the business.

8. You've failed before

Failure is a part of life, and the older people logically have experienced several failures. Whether you have two big failures on your list or 22, they are a huge benefit for two main reasons. The most valuable part of each failure is the lessons you learned in the process. Each failure taught you the importance of being prepared, hard work and why you need a contingency plan.

9. You are self-confident

Many young entrepreneurs have high self-esteem and a certain level of confidence naturally, but much of that comes from pure optimism that their business idea will turn into a hit. It often ends with great disappointment and failure. Optimism is definitely needed when starting a business, but when you take that optimism and add in confidence and experience that comes with a track record of proven success, it's unbeatable. You already know how the world works and you have already experienced both, wins and defeats.