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# Retirement Guide 2000

## Candy Striper, My Ass!

By Jason Tanz with Theodore Spencer

Don Spieler, 64, had a good run. After 33 years at Kodak, where he had become president of the company's Mexico operations, it was time to retire and return to his hometown of Rochester, N.Y. Spieler was excited by the idea. Like many executives his age, he saw retirement as a chance to give something back, to volunteer. In Mexico he had served on the national boards of Junior Achievement and the Special Olympics. He was a two-term president of the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico. He figured nonprofit agencies in Rochester would be thrilled to get his combination of business acumen and volunteer experience.

So Spieler eagerly stopped in at the Rochester chapter of the United Way and met with the director, who seemed very happy to have him aboard. Spieler had envisioned joining a committee to evaluate the group's grantees or sitting on the board of directors. It wasn't until a couple of weeks later that a United Way staffer called with Spieler's assignment: fundraising. "That's not what I'm interested in at all," Spieler responded, bewildered. He hadn't even mentioned fundraising during his interview. "I was pissed off," he says today.

Over the next two years, Spieler went to seven different nonprofit organizations; at nearly all, he was asked to do work that was boring or that ignored his expertise as a businessman. One organization wanted him to volunteer as a two-day-a-week office manager. Or he could attend community meetings and write up minutes for the Chamber of Commerce. "I felt like a trainee again," Spieler says. "I found an entrenched

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Spieler says. "I found an entrenched group of agencies that did not accept the skills I could provide for them." Eventually he signed on with the Service Corps of Retired Executives, which pairs former businesspeople with young entrepreneurs. After four years, he's running for the agency's national board.

snapshots. Plus: [e-50 Index quotes and charts](#) and [The Fortune e-50: Update](#)

Get ready for a big bang. The worlds of business and nonprofits are about to collide. The leading edge of the 76-million-strong baby boom is beginning to retire--and shows no signs of going gently into the sunset. This new wave of retirees is leaving work in the wake of the biggest bull market in history. Accordingly, an unprecedented number will have been captains of industry or successful entrepreneurs. "There's a much larger group of skilled people looking for second acts," says Marc Freedman, founder of Civic Ventures, a San Francisco group that focuses on senior volunteers. Although many of the new retirees will move effortlessly into volunteerism, others will run for the golf course or part-time jobs if they are asked to stuff envelopes or hand out juice and cookies at the local hospital. "Volunteers in general are not given very challenging work," says Nan Hawthorne, editor-in-chief of CyberVPM.com, a volunteer-management network.

A challenge for the nonprofits is that so many business people are retiring at a much younger age than their parents did. Civic Ventures says the proportion of men 62 and older in the work force has dropped from 81% in 1950 to 54% today. The image of old men doddering around the back nine or puttering in the toolshed has been replaced by a much more vibrant picture of retirement: active citizens returning to work part-time, doing some consulting, or volunteering. In 1998, 48% of Americans ages 55 or over volunteered, according to Independent Sector, a Washington, D.C., group that monitors the nonprofit field. "A lot more people are going to get involved in helping," says Pat Gilbert, director of volunteer programs for OASIS, a national senior organization in St. Louis. The question is, how long will they stay involved if their work is drudgery?

Ed Kahn had been a group president at a

Fortune 500 consumer-products company overseeing a \$1-billion-a-year business. After that he managed two small, successful consumer-products companies. Then, following a 35-year career, he decided to retire. Kahn identified ten organizations for which he would have liked to volunteer--"among the most well-known public-service organizations in the Philadelphia area," he says--and wrote them letters detailing his interest and experience. He had worked for large and small companies. He knew how businesses were run. He was seeking nothing in return. Was there anything he could do to help? Three organizations did not respond. Six sent letters thanking him for his interest, but telling him that there was no place for him. He had one meeting with a man who seemed to have work for him. Weeks later, the director called back to say the board had filled the job with a paid staffer. Kahn was 0 for 10. "You want to give," he says, "but after a while I sat back and thought, 'Wait a minute. Why fight the battle?' It was nuts."

Three months later Kahn was back in business, having started a publishing company. He had no problem finding people interested in his skills once he reentered the private sector. "I approached people and was welcomed with open arms for what I could contribute," he says. Volunteering, he adds, "felt like another world." Susan J. Ellis, president of the volunteer management firm Energize Inc., agrees: "It really is a Mars and Venus thing." Then, acknowledging that the clash involves more than gender, she corrects herself. "This is Pluto and Neptune," she says.

**Next Section: Should we be surprised that business people and nonprofit veterans don't see eye to eye?**

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