

INSIGHTS

Retirement: Thinking Outside the Box

“Thinking outside the box...”

...this term has become so passé that I read about some public school needing to think outside the box...and allow fruitcake at their next bake sale fundraiser. Really? Outside the box? How about *this* for thinking outside the box:

General Electric, holding one of their engine fan blades in their hand and chucking it aside. “We don’t need this.” Yeah, a fan blade. The thing attached to that big spinney deal under each wing. The thing that keeps the plane in the air. The thing that food-processes squads of flying Canada geese and hurls BBQ’d chunks out the back without batting an eye. Yeah, *that* fan blade. Made of titanium. The hardest metal around. I worked on them. I know. Not needed? Nope. They’re switching to a *composite* fan blade. Wicked design, wicked weight savings, wicked fuel savings...to the tune of 10%. Airlines are freaked-out excited about this. They’ve lined up like fans at Star Wars’ first movie to strap one of these suckers on to their next plane order. THAT, is outside of the box! Here’s another...

“Breathe deeply, Mr. Frobersher,” the doctor calmly says as she threads a garden-hose sized pipe camera up the groin artery to ‘just have a look around’ during a diagnosis. Yeah, let’s do that twice. Not cool! Well, Parker Hannifin didn’t think so either, so they decided to chuck the garden hose for a soon-to-be-released *color*, ultra-high res camera attached to a steerable thread which easily inserts near the neck enabling doctors to diagnose with supreme ease, wildly increased accuracy and clarity, and patient comfort to boot.

So if a couple of companies can whip out the chalkboard eraser and reassess, is there any reason we can’t do the same when it comes to *how* we might retire? I don’t see any reason why we can’t. Here are a few who have:

“We sold everything, moved into a Honda Element and travel around the world.”

Okay...That’s better than radical fruitcake. But what about the grandkids?

“Rather than having a huge house for the few times the grandkids show up (and the expense of that house), I sold it, bought a motor home and now visit them.”

So, mobile then. But I don’t want mobile...

“When we looked at time to value as it related to lawns, watering, mowing, tools, rakes, shovels, we discovered that our ‘retirement’, wasn’t. We now rent a small place and come and go as we please...without any of the hassle of the ‘American Dream!’”

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I don't really care about traveling all that much...

"We now live in a community where no car is needed. We can walk to everything: the store, restaurants, movies, theater, park and biking trails. And we do!"

But what'll the family and friends think?

"At first I was fearful of what people would think about us in our 400sq ft house. But we have everything we need and can now do whatever we want. And interestingly, our friends are now wanting that too!"

HOW-TO BOOKS

I won't, and can't, provide a specific answer for how any of us might retire...what we do, how we do it or even *if* we do it (thongs are simply choosing not to retire in the text book sense by working part time making a few bucks selling handmade chocolates at farmer's markets). And just like all of those how-to books on raising kids (none of which applied anyway), we're now at the other end of the train with just as many books telling us in "7 easy steps" just how to retire. Well, I'm here to tell you, you've got to write your own book. And it's not that hard.

STEP 1 (I'm kidding...)

SOME THOUGHTS

Decide what you want to do, then back in to what you might need to change to achieve it. Be willing to take a chance and try something that to you, is radicle. It'll bring zing. Let go of the security blanket of a *house, car, location, [you fill in the blank]* to explore options. Less (stuff) is more.

Look out the window of your window seat at that big GE engine and feel comfort that they did it, and so can you.

Happy reassessment [you fill in the blank] planning...



Chris Brandkamp

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C.Brandkamp Investment Management | 422 West Riverside Ave. STE 909, 99201
509.838.0408 | cbrandkamp@cbrandkamp.com | KMS Financial Services, Inc.

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