

7 entrepreneurs who've proved it's never too late

By Alan Manly, 06 September 2017 Lifestyle



It's never the perfect time to make big decisions. Whether you're investing in a house, buying a car or even committing to a relationship, it's all in the timing. You have to be in the market, be a willing buyer, able to find a willing seller or be a risk taker ready to take the plunge.

Ultimately, when the opportunity presents itself and you think it's right, then it simply is. When it comes to entrepreneurs over forty, their success stories come in spades.

The Kauffman Foundation [surveyed](#) 500 successful high-growth business people and they found the typical successful founder was forty years old, with at least six to ten years of industry experience. With that in mind, let's look at some top success tips from these seasoned entrepreneurs:

Robert Noyce (41 when he founded his company)

Intel

Noyce co- founded Intel, which utilised innovation to revolutionise computer technology and formed the foundation of the personal computers we use today. Known as a visionary born to inspire, he's quoted as saying: "Optimism is an essential ingredient of innovation. How else can the individual welcome change over security, adventure over staying in safe places?"



Robert Noyce in 1959 with one of the first computer motherboards

Ray Kroc (53)

McDonald's

Ray Kroc was working for a declining milk shake-mixing machine company when he started his partnership with the McDonald brothers as a franchised chain. Expanding a restaurant company to become the most successful fast food corporation in the world, you could say he is one super salesman.

A great quote by Kroc is: "The definition of salesmanship is the gentle art of letting the customer have it your way."

Charles Flint (61)

International Business Machines (IBM)

Charles Flint launched IBM at 61. He was a businessman's businessman operating in the early 20th century. Political correctness didn't inhibit him when he expressed his thoughts saying: "Ambition and thirst for power have a part but greed, and greed alone, is the reason for a man wanting to swell his ward."



Colonel Harland Sanders was not just an entrepreneur, but the face of his company and a celebrity of sorts

Harland David Sanders (62)

Kentucky Fried Chicken

In 1952, at the age of 62, Sanders franchised his "Kentucky Fried Chicken" for the first time. When asked about his late blooming as an entrepreneur he said: "I just say the moral out of my life is don't quit at age 65, maybe your boat hasn't come in yet. Mine hadn't."

Sally Arnold (65)

Creating Encores

Like many before her, Sally Arnold concluded the time was right for her to become an entrepreneur later in life. She went on to set up a personal coaching empire and cut her commercial teeth in her sixth decade, though not in the circumstance she would have wished for:

"My husband had lost a lot of money so I started from scratch, and he died three years later, so I was totally on my own with limited finances. Before that I was earning a good salary but something within me said I had to get out and take my career forward. So it was about self-belief and self-worth. It was about – is this going to work? Who do I talk to?

"It was a lonely path, but one that I knew I didn't have an alternative. I'd gone as far as I could in the arts world of Australia and knew that to get to the next level, I had to embark on the path of being an entrepreneur."

Carolyn Hartz (55)

SweetLife

The founder of natural sweetener, SweetLife, Carolyn Hartz confessed that she might have seemed like a failure waiting to happen, considering that when she started her first business she didn't know how to switch on a computer.

Adding to the challenge, she said: "I didn't start my company until I was 55." The youthful-looking 70-year-old is a testimony to her products.



Carolyn Hartz on the Today show with Karl Stefanovic and Lisa Wilkinson

Len Ainsworth (72)

Ainsworth Game Technology

Ainsworth founded Aristocrat in 1953 when he was only 30 but he stepped aside in 1994 after a cancer scare. But he didn't really slow down. In 1995, at the ripe old age of 72, he went on to establish Ainsworth Game Technology (AGT) which is now the world's second-biggest gaming-machine company.

He remains an executive director after selling his majority stake to Austrian gaming giant Novomatic last year for \$473 million. Despite his advanced years, Ainsworth still pushes his team hard to remain at the forefront of technological development.

He's fond of the expression attributed to US philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson which goes, if you "build a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door".

Is age a factor in start-up success?

After talking to aspiring entrepreneurs over many years, I've never spoken to anyone who said the motivator to be an entrepreneur was because they were having a particular birthday. They've almost always said they thought they had a great idea and that it met a particular need in the market which could be commercialised.

So if you have a great idea, take the opportunity to investigate if the right time has come for you to be an entrepreneur. Maybe before your next birthday.

Have you aspired to set a new career path?

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