



# Returning from Retirement

## *YourEncore Keeps Retirees Active in Business Ventures*

By Gretchen Keen

**L**ounging on a beach chair in Boca Raton is a dream retirement for many; but for others, it's a snooze.

A typical retirement can feel unproductive for many people, but a full-time job might not leave enough time for hard-earned relaxation. A company called YourEncore, based in Blue Ash, has picked up on this disparity and is helping bridge the gap.

YourEncore is a brainchild of Procter & Gamble, whose executives pointed out in 2003 that the business could still use the skills of retirees. YourEncore now places retired scientists and engineers on projects for its client companies, which include P&G, Eli Lilly, General Mills and Boeing.

Mike Burns, 69, is the chief technical officer at YourEncore. He was previously employed as a chemist in P&G's technology division, working with fabric and homecare products such as Tide, Downy and Bounce. He later worked on hair care in the beauty department. Although Burns had a fulfilling career, he was ready to retire in 2002.

Very soon, however, Burns found that full-fledged retirement included a lot of downtime, and decided to pick up some consultant work to fill the void. Unfortunately, he had to find his own businesses to work with, which was difficult and time-consuming.

In late 2003, Burns was recommended by a former P&G colleague to work at YourEncore, which was in its preliminary stages as a company. Burns signed on as a relationship manager, matching retired experts with YourEncore's clients' projects. Now, as chief technical officer, he works with software systems, protects intellectual property, and ensures experts are compliant with contractual requests.

Because of his previous retirement situation, Burns can sympathize with the retirees he helps to find work. People tell

him all the time that retirement just isn't what they expected it to be.

"[The retirees] are mostly financially secure, but it's hard for them to stop working," Burns says. "A lot of them retire in their early 50s. They're still vital, vibrant, and have skill sets to use. They might want to use them in a new setting."

The most distinctive aspect of a career with YourEncore is that workers don't have the regular pressures of a full-time job. The company works with them to provide projects when they're available without intruding on personal time.

"If you're out hiking on the Appalachian Trail, that's OK. We'll talk to you about a project when you get back," Burns explains.

Burns works with retirees like Judy Stapler, 60, who is currently doing project work through YourEncore. She was a principal researcher in health care at P&G for 16-and-a-half years. Before that, she worked at Clinton Memorial Hospital in Wilmington.

When Stapler retired from P&G, she decided to start her own research business called Qualitative Insight. She didn't like the billing, advertising and invoicing part of the job, though. Stapler heard about YourEncore and decided project work was a good option while she put her business on the back burner. She now does research and conducts panels on new and existing products at P&G.

At a regular job, work can include mad rushes followed by lagging downtime, but Stapler says she can work at her own pace with YourEncore.

"When I finish my work I can go home without feeling guilty," Stapler comments on her new occupation.

Plus, she has more time to embrace non-work activities. Stapler recently went to visit her son in Virginia and was comforted by knowing she wouldn't need to constantly check e-mails or stress out about impending deadlines.

Above all, Stapler likes to be in the workplace, doing what she enjoys.

"I do need to work to keep my mind



**Top: Chief Technical Officer Mike Burns retired from a career at P&G to help start YourEncore in 2003.**  
**Bottom: For retirees like Judy Stapler, YourEncore is a happy medium between full-time work and a typical retirement.**

active and feel like I'm contributing," she says. "Plus, the pay is nice."

From what Stapler sees, this positive atti-

tude about working is ingrained in her generation — especially for women.

"The need to work is typical of women my age. We had to struggle to get jobs comparable to men's and don't want to give that up," she says. "When I started working, I couldn't even get my own credit card."

Stapler and her fellow YourEncore experts have impressed the companies they work for with their passion and insight. Karen Kruetz, a relationship manager at P&G, says her company has never been let down by YourEncore experts.

"There are never any 'dud' projects," she observes. "YourEncore does very well at matching the experts with projects."

Kruetz goes on to explain that YourEncore's business model sets up a win/win/win situation — the experts, YourEncore and member companies all benefit. Kruetz finds that this makes for very content employees. Also, the workers have less of a hurdle to jump because the matching system is so accurate, allowing them to perform duties they are qualified for and also enjoy.

The experts are also very efficient, often finishing projects earlier than predicted. In many ways, YourEncore experts understand processes that companies don't. For example, a Kodak chemist was brought in to P&G to explain an industry that was unfamiliar to the company. Other experts fly around the world to roll out product lines, conduct experiments on products or filter incoming product ideas.

So far, YourEncore has been very successful in its innovative business model.

"It fills a unique role at a unique time in history," Kruetz says. "It's just the beginning." ■

*For retired scientists and engineers interested in working for YourEncore, contact the Cincinnati office at (513) 794-9777 or [Staffing@youencore.com](mailto:Staffing@youencore.com). Visit [www.youencore.com](http://www.youencore.com) for more information.*