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YourEncore Keeps Retirees in the Game

Account managers for the Web-based service recruit the best scientists and engineers for member companies' ad hoc projects

By [Laura Lалlos](#)

Some workers think of retirement as the day they'll close the door and walk away from their jobs forever. Not so the scientists and engineers who have signed on with YourEncore, a Web-based service that connects retirees with companies that need their expertise.

The service, headquartered in Indianapolis, allows the more than 50 member companies to tap into advanced professional skills as needs arise. For the more than 5,000 retirees who have signed on, YourEncore provides a way of continuing to work and generate income with time left over to "become a better golfer and fisherman," as Phil Bross, a former Procter & Gamble ([PG](#)) analytical chemist, puts it. Bross, 58, started working with YourEncore in 2008, two years after he retired. He enjoys "the luxury of working 10 to 20 hours a month on innovative projects with experts from a variety of businesses."

YourEncore was founded in 2003, after Procter & Gamble and Eli Lilly ([LLY](#)) asked consultant John Barnard to devise a way to draw on the expertise of their retired employees.

Barnard, who had retired from Lilly, joined forces with Brad Lawson, now YourEncore's CEO, and Tim Tichenor, now CFO, to start the venture with backing from angel investors ([LLY](#)). Boeing ([BA](#)) soon signed on, then General Mills ([GIS](#)), which has a small equity stake. Lawson won't disclose revenue but says the business has grown about 50% per year over the past six years.

Participating companies pay membership and network access fees, which vary by the size of the company and how it is using the service. They work with YourEncore account managers to define projects and recruit the best experts for each job. Pay depends on an expert's experience and the company in question. Retirees can negotiate a fee for an entire project or bill on a daily or hourly basis.

Lilly uses YourEncore on 75 to 100 projects a year "for research and development, to gain diversity of thought," says Jim Grace, senior director of operations at Lilly Research Laboratories and a liaison with YourEncore. As Lawson explains it, a company such as P&G can "leverage the experience of a systems engineer from Boeing to apply virtual computer modeling to design diapers." If a company anticipates a need for, say, a team of aseptic package specialists in two months, YourEncore will vet candidates and have a team ready to go. YourEncore's Innovation Community, a Web-based tool that lets companies post problems confidentially and receive solutions from experts, is increasingly popular, says Lawson. Experts can showcase their skills and may receive compensation for solutions.

RECONNECTING WITH COLLEAGUES

Tim Bohrer, a 60-year-old chemical engineer, runs his own consulting firm from his home office in Chicago. He has done nine projects through YourEncore in the past year. "It's been stimulating and fun working with other experts on important projects," says Bohrer, who does not consider himself retired and who worked at several companies before starting his firm in 2003. "I can reconnect with past colleagues, and it is even more exciting to meet new people I had not run into in my career."

Lawson says a growing number of YourEncore applicants are pursuing full-time alternative careers as independent consultants. But even the retirees aren't technically retired, he notes. "To retire means to disengage, to withdraw. You don't see that much anymore. Our experts are 'post-employment' but still professionally active."

yourencore.com, retirement, consulting, alternative careers, encore careers, second act, second career, Procter & Gamble, IBM, eli lilly, general mills

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