



## Building a Portfolio Career

How to build a career of board and advisory roles after the last big job

---

*You have had a great career and are currently in what will probably be your last full-time role. You are a little tired of corporate life and not really ready to retire but you don't want or need another full-time role. You know people who are serving on boards and as acting advisors to big name firms. That looks attractive.*

How do they do that?

The secret to building a successful portfolio career is in being purposeful about creating it and clear about what really interests you. The old maxim of finding what you're good at and what you love applies here.

About 12 months before you are due to retire ideally, go through your contacts and create a list of people who know you and could recommend you. Start calling them. Be transparent with them about what you're doing. That will make it easier for them to help you.

Develop a script: "We haven't spoken for a while. I wanted to let you know that I'm going to be stepping down from X, and I'm interested in board and advisory roles. I thought you would be a good person to advise me on that..... Do you know of any? Would you be willing to recommend me....." etc.

Then follow up. Set up meetings, coffees and lunches. Talk to people. Talk to more people. Keep an open mind but also keep your eye on the type of role you would ideally like. Don't commit to anything too fast, unless it's a dream role.

The best people to recommend you for board seats are peers or people senior to you in your industry. The second best are headhunters. Call the ones you know. If you don't know any, make a list of the big ones. Call them and ask to speak to the head of your industry's practice. Try to meet in person if you can.

Build your profile in your last year. Go to conferences, preferably as a speaker. Write about for industry and trade outlets. Update your LinkedIn profile. Get a decent headshot. Update your resume. Get it laid out professionally.

Do not spend 100 percent of your time doing your current job. It doesn't matter how important it is or how busy things are. You should have built capacity for others to pick up your load. You need to be spending at least 20 percent of your time on building your new career. They will survive without you. Take care of your people, but make sure you don't do that at the expense taking care of your future.