

# 5 ideas for building a lasting career legacy

Making your mark through your work doesn't have to take a lifetime.

If you left your job today, how would you be remembered? Thinking of the legacy you're creating through your career or business helps you focus on the big picture – and enables you to maximize your influence for decades to come.

People rarely get the chance to preview what their career legacy will be, but the inventor of dynamite did. In 1888, his brother died and newspapers mixed up the two siblings. One obituary read, "The merchant of death is dead," which shocked the 55-year-old inventor. His name? Alfred Nobel. He famously rewrote his legacy, changing his will to leave his money to a foundation that would

fund Nobel prizes – including one that promotes peace. You don't have to have Nobel money to make your mark, though. Here are some tangible ways you can leave a legacy through your career.

## Become a mentor.

Chances are, someone helped you get to where you are today. You can be that lifeline for a colleague as a mentor or advocate. If you're a business owner, you can help other entrepreneurs as a volunteer mentor for SCORE or the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. And don't forget children – mentor.org will match you with a child who needs a caring adult in their lives.

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## Make a business succession plan.

As a business owner, this is a crucial yet often overlooked task. Nearly 43% of family-owned businesses don't have a succession plan, according to a 2016 survey conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The same goes for selling a business. A staggering 67% of owners selling a business did not do any in-depth planning before putting it on the market, according to a 2018 Market Pulse Survey produced in part by the International Business Brokers Association.


## Take a chance in your career.

Not taking enough career risks was a top regret cited in "30 Lessons for Living," a book based on interviews of 1,500 people over age 65. For you, maybe this means taking that assignment in a new location or overseas. If you're a business owner, maybe it's pursuing your dream of expanding your business.

## Publish your insights.

If you've gathered wisdom about business and leadership over your lifetime, maybe it's time you shared that knowledge via a blog or a book.

## Pay it forward.

Let the resources left behind and opportunities created for you by your predecessors in the workplace inspire you to find a way to leave your own positive impact. Studies show that when we think about what we've gained from the prior generation, it spurs us to think about what we want to leave behind. 



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