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# Execs Grab Another Chance To Rise; Pro Rebirth

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Success can be sweeter on the second try. The gift of a fresh start:

• **Reach out.** "There's always hope for people, no matter how far down they've gone," Rick Roussin, CEO of Coast to Coast Computer Products, told IBD. Of 200-plus employees at his computer accessory firm, 25% are involved in addiction recovery programs. "We've held our hand out for those people."

• **Bounce back.** Roussin knows all about recovery. "It's who I am," he said. "I'm that guy, and a lot of my managers are too."

He launched his business out of desperation in September 1985.

"I had been fired for the third time," he said. "I was basically unemployable when I was drinking. My original intent was to be a one-man company."

Roussin worked the phones as a solo salesforce, but didn't quit drinking until January 1986. "I was still doing what I call research without development," he said.

• **Gain strength.** Sobriety sharpened Roussin's abilities, and his startup boomed. Friends he made in 12-step meetings took notice.

"They said: We think you're onto something," he said.

Some became his first employees. Thirty years later, the Southern California firm still draws from the recovery talent pool.

"We do recruit a lot of people from 12-step programs," Roussin said. "I'm not really concerned about someone's past if they are determined to change their futures."

• **Pull together.** Today, Coast to Coast Computer's employees have more than 400 years of combined sobriety.

"I knew the importance of a second chance in my life and have stayed committed to the idea of providing that to others," Roussin said.

• **Tune in.** Being at the top of his professional game made finance industry veteran Dean Niewolny restless.

"My main goal had been to accumulate as much wealth as I possibly could. That was the scorecard," he said.

Standing in his swank Chicago office in 2006, Niewolny let his inner angst become audible.

"I just screamed out: Is this all there is? There has to be more to life than this."

Success panic is how Niewolny described the emotion.

"I really felt a strong sense it was time to go down a different path," he said.

• **Take steps.** Newly attuned to a desire to give, Niewolny found himself in South Africa helping widows and orphans as part of a church mission trip.

"It was so far out of my comfort zone," he said. "Going to South Africa was life-changing for me."

Energized by the experience, Niewolny delved into Bob Buford's book "Halftime" and attended programs at the Halftime Institute.

That's where Buford teaches executives how to answer the question:

Now what?

"It's all about learning about yourself," Niewolny said. "It's really archeology and construction."

• **Pursue it.** The Halftime Institute helps executives come up with a plan to use their existing resources to move from professional success to personal significance.

Giving doesn't require a 180-degree professional turn like joining the Peace Corps. A tech executive can add meaning to a highflying career by launching a math program for local youths.

"It's about how to find margin around your time, talent and treasure," said Niewolny, who became CEO of the Halftime Institute in 2011. "I believe everybody is wired in a way that they want to be significant. They want to leave a legacy."

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