

MANAGEMENT

Leaders & Success

Keep Chasing That Goal

Whiz kids aren't the only ones launching their own businesses. Seasoned executives are bypassing retirement to join the startup club. Why it's never too late:

- **Solve that problem.** There had to be a better way. That's what Louise Stoll thought after watching her pregnant daughter waddle off a plane toting a toddler, diaper bag and safety seat.

Instead of that bulky seat, Stoll envisioned a lightweight belt harness just for airplanes.

"I designed the product basically that night," Stoll told IBD.

- **Dot i's, cross t's.** With drawings in hand, Stoll consulted a patent attorney. That's where the 69-year-old grandmother got her first glimpse of the long, detail-laden journey ahead.

"I was impatient, but I understood," she told IBD. "You just had to be persistent."

She was. After getting airlines and a manufacturer on board, Stoll did bureaucratic loop-de-loops to earn safety certification from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Stoll had experience with red tape wielders while with the Transportation Department.

"You have to figure out their shtick. What is it they are there to protect?" she said. "You had to address their issues."

- **Join the club.** To keep her spirits up during the 10-year, idea-to-market process, Stoll joined an inventor's group in Washington, D.C. "It was like a therapy group for would-be inventors," she said. "It helped me stay calm during the many, many, many months of waiting."

Stoll's Cares child aviation restraint received the Good Housekeeping 2008 Good Buy award, among other accolades. What really jazzes her is seeing it used on planes. "I still can't believe no one else thought of it," she said.