

As an investment planner, I have one simple rule about human nature. By the time someone asks me about retirement benefits, they are usually starting about 10 years too late. Retirement planning, you see, is a long and tricky process. If I had my way, everyone would start planning for retirement as soon as they entered the workforce. This might seem pretty conservative to you, but it has a certain logic if you think about it. You see, a retirement is the culmination of your working life - your award for years of hard work. If people put even half of the money they spent on fast cars, expensive holiday vacations, and other trivialities into retirement funds, they could be done with work years earlier. It doesn't require sacrificing a good standard of living. Just using some good financial common sense is enough.

Of course, there are many different retirement benefit issues to deal with. Getting a job that offers an IRA or some type of pension benefits is always a good idea. The great thing about getting a position that does some of your retirement planning for you is that it is automatic. You have no choice to put off investing in retirement for another month or another year. Your employer handles those details for you so, whether or not you like it, you will at least be somewhat prepared when the time comes.

Of course, pensions are great, but ideally you should have some retirement planning above and beyond them. Your retirement benefits, after all, are not likely to be enough to cover the life you want to live as a retiree. Who wants to spend their last years dirt poor? That is precisely when you should be taking those luxury vacations, traveling around the world and enjoying life! After all, out of all of the retirement benefits there are, the biggest one is free time. You will enjoy it more if you can be carefree about your finances.

Another reason why you shouldn't depend too heavily on employee benefits is the notorious instability and corruption that so many businesses have shown in the last few years. Who knows if your retirement benefits will be plundered by ruthless executives, or if your company will go under years too soon to offer you the retirement package they had promised. It all comes down to one fact: the only person you can really trust with your financial planning is yourself.