



SECOND ACT

► Steve Mochel and Laura Shuler, 46 and 49

THEN: Execs at a marketing agency

NOW: Founders of a high-tech driving school

WHEN LAURA SHULER SHARED HER IDEA for a high-tech driving school with her husband in early 2008, “he shot me down,” she recalls. But by year’s end she and her spouse, Steve Mochel, had co-founded Fresh Green Light, which uses camera-equipped hybrid cars and computerized simulators to teach driving.

What happened in between? First, one of Mochel’s two sons (from his first marriage) learned to drive. “Seeing that the curriculum hadn’t changed since 1949 made me think there was an opportunity,” Mochel says. Shuler, then president for U.S. business at a global marketing firm, continued to research her idea, which had come to her while managing a campaign on teen driving for a car dealership. And when Mochel, a senior VP at the same firm, was laid off in November, she followed him out.

The couple have since opened two locations of Fresh Green Light not far from their home in Rye, N.Y., and will take in \$300,000 this year. “Down the road,” says Mochel, “we’d like to be the Stanley Kaplan of driving preparation.” —JOSH HYATT

HOW THEY’RE DOING IT

1 By providing their own funding. They started up with \$250,000 from savings. They also banked \$200,000 from severance and deferred compensation for living costs through 2010, after which they’ll draw a salary.

2 By slashing their spending. Losing two big salaries, Mochel and Shuler—who each have two kids—had to cut way back on spending. Among their economies: ditching the nanny and renting out their second home.

3 By rethinking their retirement. The deferred compensation would have padded their nest egg (now in the mid six figures). But the couple hope the business, which they’d like to franchise, will provide income in retirement.