

JOBSEEKER TIPS:

PREPARING FOR RE-ENTRY: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN THE WORKFORCE

Takeaway Points

- Former employers and colleagues can be great resources when it's time for your re-entry.
- It's unlikely that the exact position you left would still be a perfect fit. Open your mind to job possibilities for which your basic skill set will transfer well.
- Consider attending trade shows or seminars that relate to your professional interests.

By: Team Pongo

When Pat H., 42, of Barrington, IL, wanted to return to work after several years at home, her biggest barrier was confidence. She feared that hiring managers would take one look at her resume and decide her skills were hopelessly outdated and her professional value badly diminished. Today, after a few years back in the workforce, she has learned several lessons and gained insights that would have been very helpful before she made the re-entry journey. Perhaps her experience can help make your transition back into the workplace a little easier.

Lesson 1: Employers Can See Your Value

Pat's fear was that the gaps in her resume would overshadow her skills. But to most of the hiring managers who read her resume, the so-called gaps were just the usual stuff of life. They were able to see that her skills, even the rusty ones, had value. Returning workers are a hot commodity these days, and some companies actually seek them out!

One action that turned out to be very helpful was that Pat had maintained contact with former employers and colleagues over the years, and let them know she could take on occasional freelance work for them. Every so often, they'd call with a project.

Lesson learned: When you step out of the workforce, don't neglect your networking. Former employers and colleagues can be great resources when it's time for your re-entry.

Lesson 2: You're in Good Company

It's become pretty common for people to take extended periods of time off because of family issues, medical conditions, military commitments, and a variety of other reasons. The flip side, of course, is that those people will eventually return to the workforce. So relax, you've got plenty of company.

The workplace is full of returned workers (and workers who have yet to leave, but will). For all you know, the person interviewing you may have just returned from family leave, or may have a partner at home who is taking a sabbatical. Life happens to everyone.

Joining online and face-to-face social groups will help you keep in touch with others, both in and out of your field. Consider attending trade shows or seminars that relate to your professional interests. It's a great way to keep a finger on the pulse of your field without making a huge time commitment.

Lesson 3: You Can Be Good at Lots of Things

You're not the same person you were before you left the workplace. You've had new life experiences, and probably have new priorities (especially if your time off was for parenting). It's unlikely that the exact position you left would still be a perfect fit. Open your mind to job possibilities for which your basic skill set will transfer well.

JOBSEEKER TIPS: PREPARING FOR RE-ENTRY: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN THE WORKFORCE

“Joining online and face-to-face social groups will help you keep in touch with others, both in and out of your field. Consider attending trade shows or seminars that relate to your professional interests.”

Did you know?

The Pongo ResumeBUILDER (www.PongoResume.com) provides you with all the tools you need to enhance your job search. You can build as many resumes as you like!

When Pat left the workplace, she had been employed by a large company as a grant writer. Several years later, she eased back into the 9-to-5 routine with a temporary position as a substitute teacher. For her, it was the perfect transitional job. She and her family had a chance to adjust to her being out of the house, and it gave her the flexibility to take time off for interviews while looking for a permanent position. After three months, she landed a full-time position in a PR firm. Her writing skills complemented the marketing skills she'd picked up while operating a small home-based business. That opportunity added new, transferable skills to her repertoire and served as a great stepping stone into her new situation.

Enjoy the Journey

From the outside, we tend to view the mainstream workforce as a group, all dedicated, all career-focused, all on the fast-track to success. But it's really just a bunch of people like you who have outside commitments and priorities that change over time.

The days of fighting your way straight to the top of the ladder are dying out. The modern workplace is a blend of people whose career paths will have interesting detours, unexpected twists, and many changes as each of us completes the journey that works best for us.

www.pongoresume.com

Pongo Resume is a premier full-service online resume-building resource that provides a suite of tools to help job seekers market and manage their career. Pongo generates over 100,000 resumes per month through its 4+ million registered users and has in excess of 1/2 million unique visitors per month. The company is privately held and headquartered in Northborough, Massachusetts.