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## Tips For Joining Your Former Employer

It's one of those things you think you'll never do, but then one day it actually seems appealing. Or seems like the most sensible thing to do. Sure, you may have your concerns, like "What will they think that I'm coming back?", or "Will I look like I failed elsewhere?", or even "Am I going backward in my career?" But the fact is, sometimes going back to an old employer is simply the best course of action.

Maybe you just need some reassurance. Maybe you've moved around and now you're back in that industry.

Whatever the case, if you're in this position, here are some tips on how to make the best of it...



### Do Your Homework

Research your former employer as though you had no history. Things will no doubt have changed in your absence, and there may have been turnover or organisational restructuring. If you are going to approach the company, make sure you are informed about its current situation and goals.

Make a list of things you disliked about the company before. Do those problems or personnel still exist? Will a position with the employer help you return to your career path, or put you on a new

one you want? Can you expect to add to your knowledge and skills or apply those you learned while you were away?

### **Test the Waters**

Find out if others have boomeranged to your old employer, and talk to them about their experiences. If you respect and can trust your former supervisor (or another manager), call and share your thoughts about returning.

### **Know the Drawbacks**

While employers may be interested in rehiring experienced candidates, they may do so without reinstating former benefit status. The prospect of returning to your former company as a contract worker is one possible downside. You may also face resentment from former co-workers who stayed behind, and it could take a while to re-establish trust.

If the situation looks ideal for both you and your former employer and you decide to return, be prepared to stay at least a couple of years. Returning to an employer can be a positive career move, but only if you stick around the second time.

### **Make your experience relevant**

Your longer-term experience of the company can be an asset for members of staff yet to fully understand the organisational culture. Take every opportunity to add value to the organisation by informing business decisions based on your previous experience of the company.

### **Pre-empt and troubleshoot**

It's more than likely that the senior management team of the organisation won't have changed much unless you have been away for over a decade. Use this to your advantage and seek to pre-empt requests you can see the board making based on your greater knowledge of their personalities.

### **Compare and contrast**

Whilst you will likely have greater experience of the long-term history of the business, also realise the value of your experience outside of the business. Be proactive and put forward suggestions of practices and initiatives that were successful in your previous organisation to showcase what you have learned in your time away.

### **Resist romanticising 'the glory years'**

Whilst your previous experience of the company is useful when it comes to managing management personalities and the organisational culture, resist the urge to constantly compare the softer side of life within the company.

So talking about how great company socials or your team were 'back in the day' will only serve to alienate your colleagues who will have formed their own dynamics in your absence.

### **Keep it professional**

There is someone in every organisation whose personality will be totally different to yours, which can lead to clashes. Avoid voicing criticism of former colleagues who have left the business since your first stint. You don't know who within the building are still friends with those who have since left the building.

### **Connect with your old manager**

The first person you should approach is your old boss – and do so in person if possible. When you decide that you want to go back, don't apply online without speaking to your former supervisor, and don't email them. Here's why: He [or] she is going to want to know why you want to come back, and they are likely to have some strong feelings on the matter. When you go straight to them, and they find out from you, with you present, you get to control the narrative.

### **Focus on the positive outcomes of leaving**

Refer to the benefits of having left at the time you did. For example, did you go back to studies? Did you take some time off to travel? Link the benefits of that back to how you can now have an even more positive impact within their company. Maybe you learned a particular skill or had a complete change in perspective. Be sure to clearly explain how your personal/professional growth will be very beneficial to them. The easier you make the decision for the employer, the better.

Reaffirm your commitment

If you're determined to head back to work for a previous employer, you really need to show your commitment to the company and their mission. It will be even more important during this time to show that you're in this for the long haul, rather than just a quick fix. After all, if you left on your own terms before, it is crucial that they know you're not just going to jump ship again.

Sell them on the benefits of rehiring you

New employees take both training and time to ramp up at a new job. When pitching for a job at the old company, mention that besides your skills and fit, you are at a significant advantage as you already know the company culture and the informal networks and will hit the ground running.

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