

10 Career Tips for Women Returners

1. Complete a skills and experience review

Sometimes women returning find that their confidence has taken a bit of a nose dive. The last few months or years of spending time with children, talking about children and childcare and having a focus on family can mean that women forget their work abilities and competence. It's easy to lose confidence and one way of regaining it is to write out a long list of your skills and experience to remind yourself of how valuable you are.

2. Get to grips with any changes in your industry and recent news

If you haven't been keeping updated on company news and the news of other businesses in your business and occupational area spend a day or two doing some internet research and start reading the business pages of the newspapers a few weeks before you are due to return.

3. Check if your organisation is using any new systems or processes you will need to be aware of

Talk to your boss and check if there are any new IT systems in place and any courses/training you need to book onto as you return. If you know what you need to update before you return, chances are you will feel more prepared mentally and can plan accordingly.

4. Look like you are worth taking seriously

Dress maketh the woman. Whether we like it or not we are judged and we judge others on appearance. If you want to be treated seriously on your return you need to look the part. Update your work wardrobe. This may be as simple as buying some new accessories (belts, jewellery, scarves) or going all out with a new outfit or two.

5. Get Noticed! – Make sure people know you are back

Rather than blending in with the wallpaper when you get back make it known that you are back. Email key people, walk around the office/shop/site and make sure you speak to key people and say “hello, I’m here, lets catch up”. If you are going to a new job on your return from bringing up/having children, make sure that you meet new people early on and make key connections quickly.

6. Get ready to deliver and ensure your boss knows you have

Agree clear deliverables with your boss for your first 6 months, deliver them and let him/her know you have by recording your progress in 1:1 sessions and/or email updates. Not only will this ensure your boss values your contribution, it will boost your selfesteem.

7. Be an ambassador for your organisation

- Love it or leave it basically. You need to have a passion for what your organisation does Enthusiasm for the products, the people, the outputs – get some and show that you love it.

8. Make sure your childcare arrangements are covered and that you have a contingency plan if your arrangements should break down

You need peace of mind that you are as stress-free as possible at work and that your children are looked after well. Your employer also needs to feel that confidence that your childcare arrangements will create minimum disruption.

9. Remember what’s important to you

Know what your primary values are and what is important to you in life and that includes life beyond work. Actively decide what you want the balance to be between personal life and work life and focus on what’s important.

10. Seek support if things get out of balance

Identify your support team – family, friends, work colleagues and let them know when you need help. Try to be realistic rather than superhuman. If you find yourself struggling to manage all that life throws at you, be proactive about seeking support to focus on what you want and living life the way you want it. There are a number of routes to gain support and one of those is coaching. A coach can help you: focus on those areas you wish to develop, provide a safe environment for you to explore the areas you find difficult, challenge you to exceed even your own expectations, provide practical support to develop your knowledge and skills, and more importantly enable you to focus specifically on you and your results/wants.

Marie Taylor

Marie coaches professional men & women who already have successful busy lives. She works with clients to enable them to achieve success in all areas, be it business, confidence, managing people, relationships with others, or relationship with the self.

In addition to her individual coaching practice, Marie works with organisations to create effective leaders and effective teams. Through her company Living Right Now, she works with a business partner providing retreats and self-care inspiration for professional women.

If you want to find out more about Marie and the way she works contact her through her blog at www.marietayloronline.com

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