

Getting Back to the Workforce after a Leave

Whether you've taken a break from work for personal or professional reasons, the return to the office needn't be stressful. Use a few helpful strategies to make your re-entry into the workplace successful and anxiety-free.

There are many reasons people sometimes take leaves of absences from work—having a child, illness, taking care of a family member or continuing education are just a few. Whatever your reason for taking a break, there are several ways you can make sure that your transition back into the working world is a smooth one. Here are some pointers on how to reenter the workforce without feeling like you've missed a beat.

Try to stay in the loop.

Ask your boss or coworkers to start copying you on emails and meeting minutes a few weeks before you return. Knowing what's going on, even if it's just a part of the big picture, will keep you from feeling clueless on your first day back.

Stay sharp while you're out of the office.

While you are on leave, keep up with current trends and developments in your industry and profession. Subscribe to e-newsletters or trade magazines and check out online news sites. Consider taking a professional development class or two, which will boost your resume and your skill set.

Keep up with colleagues.

Stay active on professional networking sites, and keep going to professional organization meetings. Attend alumni events and other company social functions. The more you stay in touch with people, the easier the transition back to work will be.

Be confident.

There are many reasons people need to take leaves of absence from work. Whatever your reason for absence, remember to be confident in yourself and your abilities when you return to work. Don't feel the need to apologize for your absence. You want the spotlight to be on your good work and skill set, not on the reason you left.

The secret weapon: A great outfit.

Returning to work after a leave can feel like the first day of school, and having a great outfit will give you a bigger boost than you might expect. Looking great will make you feel great, and that will help your attitude and outlook in a big way.