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## Career Coach: Can You Go Home Again?

By [Kristen Bahler](#) March 7, 2016

**What are some things to keep in mind when returning to a company you've worked at before?** *Responses have been edited for clarity and concision.*



**Jeff Gilbreth**

**Jeff Gilbreth is a partner in the labor and employment group at Nixon Peabody, a Boston-based law firm that works with clients in asset management and other industries.**

The employee returning shouldn't just expect to walk back in on the first day to find the place the same way they left it. There could be a significant change in politics, and they need to embrace this as if it were a new opportunity.

The returning employee also needs to be looking to add value to the company. Whether it's technical or otherwise, there should be one, unique thing that they can offer a fresh perspective on. What did they see from in their time away that can be borrowed and integrated into this company? Morale? Efficiencies? There are lessons to be learned here.

When an employee is planning on returning to a company they've left, it's also worth asking if they can get service credit for their prior period of employment. A lot of benefits — like vacation time — are tenure-based. Rather than start over, a lot of employers will credit you those months or years. Some won't, but it's worth having that discussion.



**Bill McGinnis**

**Bill McGinnis is a career consultant at Exponential Careers, in Milwaukee, Wis., and a former portfolio manager with Capital Investment Services of America.**

It's important to understand that some people will be skeptical of your return. The strong team players who wouldn't dream of leaving might be a little hurt or resentful that you left, and might be skeptical of your return. Even though you've been there before, you're still coming in to the company as an outsider. Things have changed while you were gone, and people have moved into new positions and assumed new responsibilities. Your departure may have even altered their position and responsibilities. So take a little time to reassess the lay of the land before making any big steps forward.

It's important to let people understand why you've come back. Hopefully, that will include things like, "I saw what a wonderful organization this is," or "I've gained perspective on this opportunity that I hadn't realized before." Let them know that now, more than ever, you're excited to be part of the team.

The nice thing about returning to a former employer if you haven't been gone for a terribly long time is that you already have some institutional knowledge — who the players are, what the industry is like and the ins and outs of the organization. It allows you get to up to speed quickly, and hopefully bring back some outside knowledge you didn't have previously. So you can be the former you, but better.



**Melissa Llarena**

**Executive coach Melissa Llarena owns New York–based Career Outcomes, which offers job-interview coaching to financial services professionals.**

Not all organizations welcome back what the industry has termed "boomerang employees." First, see if your former employer would actually welcome you back, and take notice of others who have left and come back. How long did they end up staying their second go-round? If you find that those who made their way back enjoyed long careers thereafter, then attempt to reenter the company. Otherwise, see those second-time short tenures as a sign to not apply your efforts.

If you left for personal reasons, proving you can be trusted and be given a second chance to contribute is easier than if you left for professional reasons. If you left because a headhunter offered you a higher salary or a plum role, your employer will take into consideration that you may be easily lured once again. The key to rebuilding trust is pinpointing why you are now ready to work for your employer once again and explaining why things are different this time around.

When it comes to negotiating pay, you have leverage in that the employer knows your work. However, you have to do the heavy lifting when it comes to ascertaining your worth. Your salary expectations depend on what you did between your original date of employment and today. If you secured higher positions or learned valuable insights, then consider these bonus factors into your equation. Try to be objective and tie what you can do with what an employer needs to accomplish in the short term.