What’s Old is New Again
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From Rosie the Riveter to Green Irene
Bringing women into the Green Revolution.

Green Products
Make your clients’ projects environmentally friendly.
Bridging the Employment Gap

Women have made great progress as entrepreneurs.

For many people, having a gap in employment is inevitable. With more and more employees falling victim to the economy and getting laid off or opting to temporarily leave their job to take care of an elderly parent or raise children, hiring managers are noticing an increase in employment gaps.

And whether those people voluntarily took time off or lost their jobs, when it comes time to re-enter the job market, they often have hesitations and fears: "What if the industry has changed so much that I can’t keep up?" "What if no one wants to hire me because of my gap in employment?" "What if during this time away I’ve lost my edge?" The list of worries is virtually endless.

Today, with the rising unemployment rate, employers know that many people have to take time off, and most employers actually expect it. Additionally, according to AARP, more than 30 million households are currently providing care for an adult over the age of 50. And women bear the majority of the caretaking responsibility. That’s a large number of people who are potentially out of the job market. Therefore, savvy employers realize the worth people with experience bring, regardless of any employment gaps.

No matter why you took time off from work or what construction industry you’re in, you need to remember that you are your most valuable resource and asset. While your list of experience on your resume is certainly important, employers are also looking for people who display self-confidence and who know the value they can offer a company. So even though technology and policies change rapidly in many industries and you may feel less than confident in your skills, you can take steps to make the most of your employment gap and showcase all you have offer. The following guidelines will help.

Be upfront and honest about the employment gap.

If you’ve chosen to leave the workforce to take care of a parent or to raise your children, you are showing a distinct level of commitment that employers are seeking. Realize that many employers complain of a lack of commitment from their staff these days, so demonstrating that you have commitment, even in a non-workplace environment, is a definite selling point. Therefore, don’t lie about any gaps and don’t stretch the dates of your previous employment to make the gap appear shorter. Be honest about what you did during the gap, whether it was taking care of an aging family member, raising children or looking for employment in an uncertain economy. In this case, honesty really is the best policy.

Keep up with your industry and education.

With the Internet, it’s easier than ever to stay up-to-date on industry trends. During your absence from the workforce, regularly visit any pertinent industry web sites and subscribe to relevant industry journals and magazines. Additionally, take online courses that would sharpen your skills or advance your education. Be sure to state on your resume that during your leave of absence you were taking steps to keep your skills and industry knowledge current, and detail the exact measures you took. Chances are you’ll have done more industry-related research during your absence than many people who were gainfully employed in the company.

Take time to take care of yourself.

Many people who take on a caretaker role for several years fall into a pattern of ignoring their own needs and pushing themselves to the limit. Others who have been laid off may lose their self-confidence. As a result, they feel and look as if they’re constantly tired. When you’re trying to re-enter the workforce, the last thing you want is to appear exhausted and frazzled. Therefore, give yourself time to rest and get yourself mentally and physically ready to be employed again. Also, if you’re going back to work because the person you were caring for passed away, remember that you’re still dealing with the grieving process. So don’t push yourself too far. Set your bar at an appropriate level. The last thing you want is to feel overwhelmed and regretting your decision to go back to work.

Explore a new business.

Adversity can open up new doors of opportunity. If you’re still uneasy about going back to your old profession, then maybe it’s time to look into starting your own business or trying a new industry. For example, if you’ve been taking care of a par-
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In the end, being honest, staying abreast of your chosen profession, taking care of yourself, and knowing all your options will give you the confidence you need to successfully re-enter the workforce. Take comfort in the fact that most employers understand what's going on in real life and are accepting of employment gaps. And if you do run into a potential employer who has a problem with your employment gap, then at least you know that particular employer isn't one you want to work for. By showcasing all the talents you have to offer — both work-related and personal — any employment gap will seem insignificant because you have the confidence and know-how to excel at your chosen field, and you and everyone else will know it. 

Confidence = Employed

When you do get hired and are on the first few days of your new job don't hide your employment gap from anyone. There is no need to anymore. Chances are that one of your co-workers is going to end up doing the same thing or something similar that you did one day. As long as you've kept up with your industry during your time away, you can hold your own and prove your worth.

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