

# Rejoining Your Old Employer?

Going back to the company you worked with before is a risky proposition, unless handled deftly. SAUMYA BHATTACHARYA

For most people, careers have ceased to be a lifetime commitment to one organisation. But is it a good idea to return to a former employer? Well, that depends to a large extent on why you quit in the first place. If the reasons were personal or you left to pursue academics or may be you had an itch to check out new pastures, do consider rejoining by all means. But if the reasons for your exit were workplace-specific and still exist, mull your options wisely. "If you had a chemistry issue or disconnect, matching of minds is unlikely to happen," says executive coach Ashu Khanna.

For their part, organisations are increasingly open to hiring old-timers. Reason? Roping in old employees is smarter than incurring costs in recruiting a new employee. A former employee is, perhaps, already trained; that saves investment in training and development. "Moreover, a former employee is like a known devil—seen around, tried and tested," says Khanna. It takes time for a new employee to adapt to the organisational culture, grasp work needs and start delivering results, whereas an old-timer is familiar with the culture, the practices and the people.

Yet, it is important to evaluate the situation on several parameters. When you approach your old employer, the first apprehension could be: Will the organisation see this as a compromise? Your fears on this count are unfounded. No organisation will hire or rehire an employee unless it sees a reasonable value in him or her. Sure,

when you initiate your second coming, you have to make a higher level of adjustments once you join and the onus is definitely on you to prove your mettle yet again. But be cautious about compromising more than you require on compensation and the role being offered.

**"A FORMER EMPLOYEE IS LIKE A KNOWN DEVIL—SEEN AROUND, TRIED AND TESTED"**

Ashu Khanna  
Executive coach

On the contrary, when your former employer seeks you out, you already have a headstart; the organisation unquestionably sees you as a highly talented resource. Even so, don't get carried away. Be chary of giving in to obsequiousness; your move must be consistent with your career goals. The high of being sought-after is good while it lasts, but once the euphoria dies down, you will be operating in probably the same environment you left. Start reminiscing what made you quit. While organisations change and evolve over time, make sure you are aware of your new profile, team and responsibilities before you take the plunge. Don't get caught in a time warp. There are many instances where people move overseas and come back to join their old employers. They get a jolt because often the landscape of the local organisation has changed completely, says Khanna. ©

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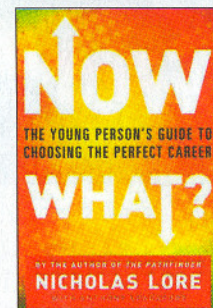


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## DOS AND DON'TS

- If you have been approached, hark back to your reasons for leaving. Do they still stand?
- If you have initiated the second coming, be ready to prove your mettle again.
- If you left on good terms, you can look forward to a smoother stint.
- Get clarity in terms of people, strategy, vision, etc., in the present environment.
- Be willing to accept that you have to learn again. Needs of the organisation may have changed since you left it.
- Be ready for higher employer expectations.

## SUGGESTED READING



**NOW WHAT?**  
The Young Person's  
Guide to Choosing the  
Perfect Career  
by Nicholas Lore