

Yes, you can go home to old job again



GEORGE HAYES

**JOB SEARCH**  
**Q:** I left a company on good terms four years ago. After bad experiences with two other firms, I long to go back. Is this realistic?  
**A:** Sure. People go back home all the time. Before approaching your old employer, however, make sure that whatever was so great about the place four years ago is still there and whatever caused you to leave is gone. Schedule a meeting with a former co-worker, someone whose opinion you respect. Find out what has changed—key personnel, products, customers and policies. Also try to get a line on how company managers remember you now. Was your departure considered a heinous act of disloyalty, or just a business decision?  
Next, figure out where you fit in the new scheme of things. Do you simply assume your old slot, or have you gained additional skills which might qualify you for a better position? Returning employees occasionally get an instant promotion if the timing is right.  
Finally, develop a simple strategy to get rehired. It's easy, especially if you were highly regarded when you left. Just have your primary contact mention to the Big Boss that, word is, you're looking again and might have an interest in coming back. The response could well be: "No kidding? When can we talk?"  
You might have to wait for a few weeks or even months until an appropriate job becomes available. But if you really do share your fond memories and there's no hard, you'll likely end up with an offer.  
An ex-employee is a known

quantity and, therefore, less of a risk than a stranger. Plus, you are "family." Your former supervisor might even feel some sense of vindication or magnanimity in allowing your return to the fold.  
I'm always amazed that so many people are reluctant to approach past employers out of embarrassment or because they simply assume returning isn't possible.  
It's really the best place to start your search, particularly if you haven't overestimated their opinion of you. Even when people leave under less than ideal circumstances, time seems to give old bosses a little perspective.  
■ Ross B., a top quality assurance professional, has moved for a company in Plymouth twice and a company in Royal Oak twice. Wherever Ross works, he gives good value, makes a few friends and departs gracefully. Everybody likes Ross and he is always welcome back.  
**Q:** I'm tired of looking for a job every few years because of downsizing. What about asking for a contract with a parachute?  
**A:** What you really need to take you back to the 1950s. Those were the good old days when anybody who stayed out of trouble could be assured of long term employment. The reality now is that we are all free agents. You have a one day contract. To "count on" your job being there tomorrow is simply naive.  
Senior level people still ask for and sometimes get a contract.  
However, they usually have to bring something unique—skills, experience, money, reputation—to the new employer that is deeply needed at the time.  
The company has to believe that getting such a person would be a major coup and radically effect the bottom line. It sometimes involves

going from a world class organization to a company that is in its infancy or just plain hurting.  
A contract of this type usually spells out salary, perks and benefits for a specific period of time. It may also define performance objectives which, if met, result in bonus or equity compensation.  
Of course, you're interested in the parachute clause which outlines severance compensation and out place service if you are canned or rifled.  
Look, if you're not a major player in your industry, don't angle for a contract.  
You could blow a potentially good deal by attempting to shift the focus from personal performance to indemnification from risk, it suggests that you expect to fail.  
**Q:** You said it was booming out there. I haven't been able to get an interview since late July.  
**A:** It's hopping. It's cooking. And it's hot. So people are out of town, on vacation, at the beach. We've had a top notch production supervisor candidate on hold for three weeks because our client can't round up enough people to complete the hiring process.  
Now, don't shut down your job search. Any time is a good time to plant career seeds. It's just that scheduling managers and interviews is frustrating this time of year.  
Employers tend to put things off in late summer because, even if they could get you in to meet with Bob, you would still have to come back to interview with Mary who is on Mackinac Island until next Tuesday. Dang! Bob's leaving for Ocoosa on Tuesday. Sally could go it when she gets back, but Bob should really be involved. Gee, we're sorry to put you off like this.  
To a lesser extent, the same thing happens around the holidays. Don't be too hard on yourself (or me). These are the dog days.

Milestones from page F5

Phil Uehno of Orchard Lake was named vice president in charge of all Silicon Graphics computer systems operations in East Asia. He will make his new home in Hong Kong, China.

Uehno previously served as regional director of U.S. automotive operations at the firm's Farmington Hills office.  
Lisa Vernick of Birmingham

was named account executive for West Bloomfield-based Star Trax Corporate Event Productions. Vernick is responsible for servicing all social clients and booking entertainment.

Comerica index: Recession chances remain low

The Recession Watch Index compiled by Comerica Bank, which forecasts the likelihood of a national recession occurring within the next 12 months, registered a 29 percent probability in July.  
The Comerica index had remained at the 28 percent mark since July 1996.  
"Our index continues to show an impressive level of economic stability," said Comerica vice president and economist William T. Wilson, Ph.D.

RECESSION WATCH

"The index is forecasting continued economic expansion in the coming year, with little chance of a recession."  
Comerica's Recession Watch index is designed to forecast an economic slowdown or recession well in advance, using a weighted average of three leading indicators: spread in the yield curve,

adjusted bank reserve growth, and the Commerce Department's Index of Leading Indicators.  
The index forecasts the probability of an economic slowdown or recession over the next 12 months.  
The index last predicted a recession, correctly, in July 1989.  
Comerica Incorporated is a bank holding company headquartered in Detroit that operates banking subsidiaries in Michigan, California, Texas and Florida.

LaBrecque from page F5

for nearly 15 years. As the Vice President of a large national plastics firm Schutz initially went to LaBrecque to have his taxes prepared.  
"Leon has helped me a tremendous amount," Schutz said. "When I first met him I didn't have two nickels to rub together. I was making less than \$50,000 a year."  
After laying out ideas for financial strategies and a game plan of future goals, LaBrecque helped Schutz realize his dream of going into business for himself. Schutz was thrilled to turn two of his hobbies into a pair of small businesses. Today he owns an excavating company and a nursery.  
"People just don't understand because they think they have to have fifty or one hundred thousand dollars to invest but that's just not the case," Schutz said. "I know he's taken \$100 clients because I was one of them."  
Amid helping people with plans and investments

"The trick is to have enough money, but not too much. If they've spent their lives saving and building it up, the kids may inherit it and just squander it. I encourage them to spend it on the kids and grandchildren now if that's what they want to do."  
**Leon LaBrecque**  
Financial adviser

LaBrecque also occasionally finds himself in the unique position of encouraging his retired clients to spend some of their hard earned cash.  
"With some of my clients I have to give them really terrible hypothetical situations about what the children will do with their money—how they'll waste

it—or how the government will take so much of it for taxes," smiled LaBrecque.  
"The trick is to have enough money but not too much," he added. "If they've spent their lives saving and building it up, the kids may inherit it and just squander it. I encourage them to spend it on the kids and grandchildren now if that's what they want to do."  
Not near retirement just yet, LaBrecque is still careful to practice what he preaches to most of clients. He is the proud owner of a used automobile and sticks a percentage of his income into a savings plan adopting the "reverse budget" scenario.  
"There is no magic to this really. There are no magic formulas," LaBrecque said. "The easiest way to save is to just get a really determined attitude and just start saving it."

To contact Leon LaBrecque at LaBrecque, Jackson, Price and Roehl call 641-7400 ext. 105.

Oxford from page F5

tise in the design, engineering and production of key suspension related components," stated Isakov.  
"Howell's expertise is complementary to our own," he continued, "and will be consistent with our objective of being the leading full service global supplier of integrated systems based on metal forming and related manufacturing technologies."  
Oxford operates 10 manufacturing facilities with state-of-the-art technologies in metal stamping, rollforming, welding and assembly equipment.

Jobless from page F5

month to month industry employment changes were typical for a July," Stites said. "The overall decline occurred because of somewhat larger than normal losses in local education."  
MESA's monthly survey of employer payrolls revealed job gains in motor vehicles (+2,000), retail trade (+2,000), transportation/communications/ utilities (+1,000) and services (+1,000). Stites noted that there were some vacation shutdowns in he auto industry during July and layoffs among industry suppliers, but losses were typical for the month and had little impact on the state's jobless rate.  
"Government, on the other hand, had some 9,000 job losses in July, due largely to local

schools recessing for the summer," Stites said.  
Michigan's unemployment rate fell a full percentage point below the national rate in July.  
Nationally, unemployment was at 4.8 percent, down from 5.0 percent in June. Michigan's rate has now been lower than the national rate for 28 straight months.  
Earnings levels for manufacturing and auto industry production workers fell in July. Average weekly earnings dropped by \$8.56 in manufacturing and by \$22.91 among auto workers.  
Average weekly hours worked were unchanged in manufacturing at 44.2 and down by half a point in the auto industry at 46.2.

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