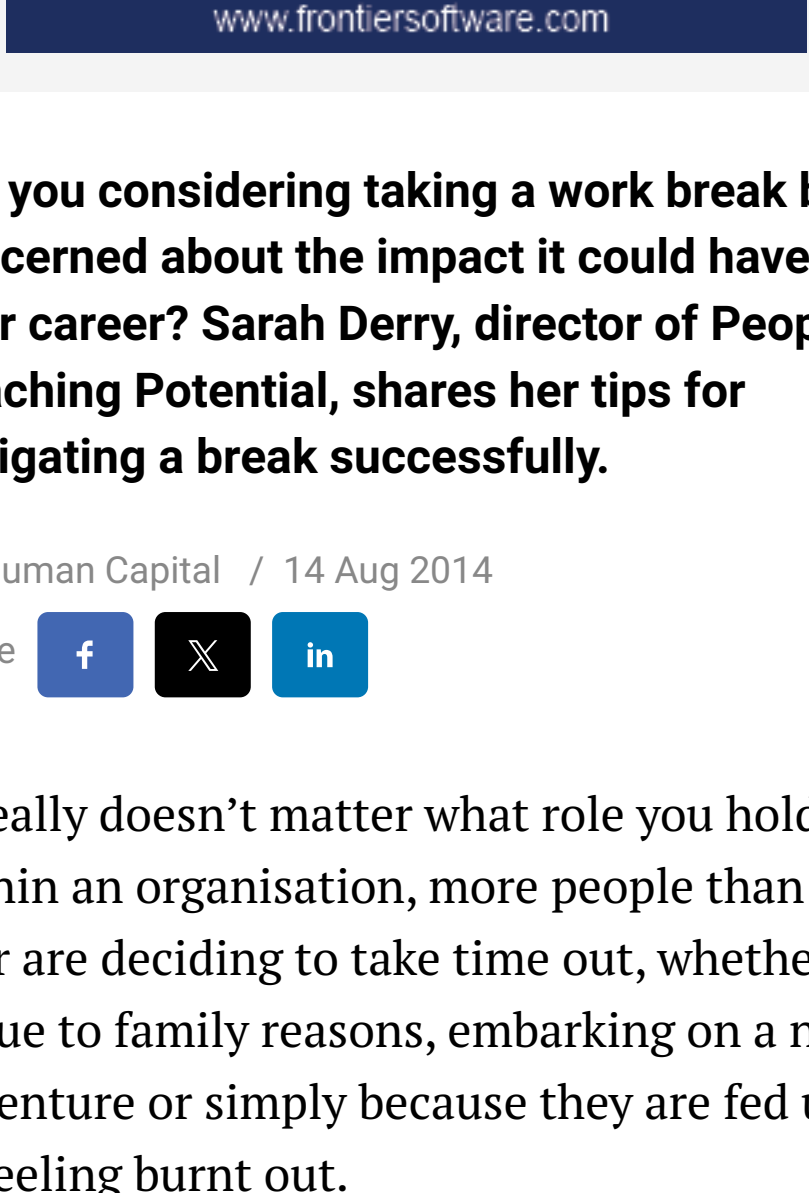


How to take a career break



Are you considering taking a work break but concerned about the impact it could have on your career? Sarah Derry, director of People Reaching Potential, shares her tips for navigating a break successfully.

BY Human Capital / 14 Aug 2014

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It really doesn't matter what role you hold within an organisation, more people than ever are deciding to take time out, whether it is due to family reasons, embarking on a new adventure or simply because they are fed up of feeling burnt out.

For many it is also an opportunity to reflect on past achievements and make decisions for the future. Whatever your reasons for considering a career break, it is a personal decision and one that should not be taken lightly.

If you are an executive, I am sure you are familiar with your staff taking career breaks, but is it such a wise idea for you to do the same? The good news is many organisations and recruiters stating that they are far more open to seeing c-suite resumes which include individuals taking some time out to walk the less trodden path.

Being an executive is a tough job, the pressure is high and the deadlines are tight. So how good would it feel if you decided to put your needs first instead of the needs of your organisation? What if taking a career break would actually lead you to becoming a more confident executive leader?

If you do decide to take the plunge, here are a few things to consider making sure your break works for you.

Start with a positive mindset. This is important. If you leave feeling confident about your decision, you will return to work confident in your role.

The pre-planning process is critical to ensure that you exit and return to work successfully. Be clear about what you hope to gain from your break and the results you want to see.

Negotiate strategies and deadlines for your return to work. This will give your organisations a sense of certainty. It may also be beneficial to come up with some ideas about how your responsibilities can be shared or filled while you are away. We all know things change, however it's important to give people comfort in your departure.

Make a list of pros and cons - it's old fashioned but it always helps me to feel more confident in my decision. Remember, if you feel confident about your decision, so will your organisation.

Talk about returning. Even if you are not sure that you will ultimately return to work, make sure you keep your plans focused on the idea of a return. This will also keep your mind open to returning and new opportunities.

Be transparent by informing your colleagues and employees when you plan to return to work and what you will be doing on your career break. Tell people you plan to return, when and what you will be doing

Stay in touch - make it your business to stay in touch with your manager and colleagues. This can be as simple as sending in a monthly email or turning up for an important board meeting.

Keep up to date while you are away. It's really important to keep your industry and company knowledge, skills and abilities up to date. This may mean doing some extra study, an online course, read business books, follow a blog or keep attending a networking group. Stay current, as it will pay off when you return or in your next career move.

In conclusion, invest in your career break by taking the time to plan, be clear about your reasons behind taking a career break and communicate while you are away. This will leave you in a good position on your return.

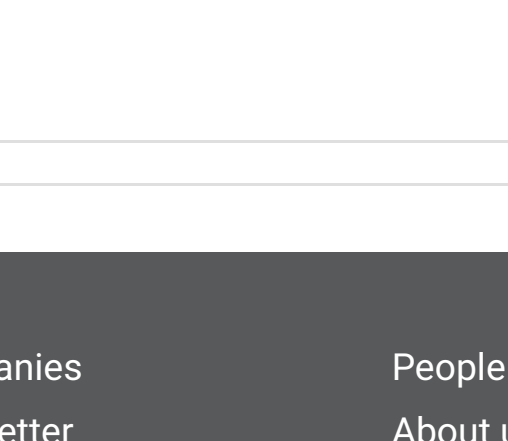
- Sarah Derry is the director of People Reaching Potential. For more information, please see www.peoplereachingpotential.com.au.

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