

Ask the Career Coach: Relaunch Salary Expectations

What should you expect when negotiating salary when re-entering the job market?

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

What can I expect and how do I handle salary negotiations after being out of the market place for the last five years to raise my kids?

RC
Short Hills

The first matter is on career expectations. Are you ready and able to return to the job market full time? If yes, are you planning to return to the same field as before? What changes have happened in your field and within your functional expertise? And how do your skills relate to the current market demands? The answers to these questions will help calibrate your expectations.

If you are looking for a new career direction, you may need to set your salary expectations in line with this new industry or functional area. Consider what credentials are required. Do you need to consider additional training or certification?

Salaries are driven off market demand. If you left the market during a year of great demand for your skills, you were probably well compensated. Returning in this market may present lower compensation than anticipated. Re-entering the job market through a referral with strong skills on the same or similar career track typically will provide the potential for the highest compensation. Your field may have been substantially impacted by the economy, in which case it will be unrealistic to expect compensation levels similar to what you left. Positions at most mid- to large-size firms will have a predetermined salary range.

Some resources to consider when re-entering the job market are iRelaunch.com and the accompanying book "Back on the Career Track" by Vivian Steir Rabin and Carol Fishman Cohen. Another resource is [O*Net OnLine](#), which provides salary ranges for various career options. Both are excellent sites to explore career options.

About this column: "Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com. Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is www.ChenofskySinger.com.