

## Staying Professionally Relevant While Taking Time Off

Whether you are taking time off work to care for family members or pursue a hobby, or just down-sizing for a while, there are several things you can do to make sure that when you want to re-enter the workforce, you can do so easily.

1. **Volunteer.** Use the skills you learned while in the workforce to volunteer. Doing so will keep your skills honed and the experience can be used on your resume to fill-in those gaps.
2. **Continue to read Trade Journals.** Keep up on the latest news and trends in your industry.
3. **Maintain your network.** Keep in touch with former colleagues; sit on the board of a non-profit, join professional organizations. If available, join an on-line community for your field and contribute regularly. Join networking sites like LinkedIn.
4. **Continue your education.** Take a night class at a community college or an on-line class. Read blogs and newsletters for your industry.
5. **Let your former employer and others in your network know if you are available for part-time, telecommuting, or fill-in work.** Many employers don't want to hire a full-time person they have to pay benefits to, but would be willing to hire part-time or farm out projects to someone with the right qualifications.