

The Confidence Gap Report

The truth about women
going back to work after
a career break

Commissioned by TechPixies with OnePoll
2019





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Introduction

Women Back at Work after a Career Break

It's challenging returning to the workplace after a career break, whether it's down to taking time off to have children, care for a relative, travel the world or due to bereavement. This report, commissioned by TechPixies, looks at the impact of a career break on women and how it affects their skills, confidence, earnings and job fulfilment and paves the way for a better understanding of women's needs both prior and during their return to the workplace.

Our research tells the story of women's experiences back at work after a career break and reveals the challenges they face from within themselves and externally from colleagues & employers once they are back at work. It clearly demonstrates there is work to be done across **three main areas**:



1 CONFIDENCE & DIGITAL SKILLS



2 EARNING POWER



3 JOB SATISFACTION





1 Impact on CONFIDENCE & DIGITAL SKILLS



CONFIDENCE

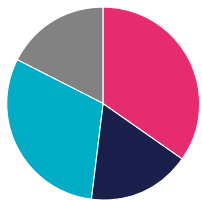
24%

women feel that a lack of confidence is their greatest stumbling block when returning to work

45%

women would feel less anxious at work if they could lose self-doubt about their ability

What is your greatest stumbling block when returning to work?



- 24% Lack of confidence
- 12% Lack of digital skills
- 21% Lack of flexible working roles
- 12% Childcare, commuting, costs etc.

LACK OF DIGITAL SKILLS

33%

women are anxious that colleagues are more up to speed with their digital skills

27%

women would feel less anxious at work if they could improve their digital skills

Our research shows that returning to work after a career break can be daunting for women, especially in a fast-moving digital world where even one year out can leave you feeling like you're lagging behind your colleagues.

Women returners feel anxious their digital skills are not up to scratch in comparison to their colleagues and this has a knock on effect on their confidence, with almost half experiencing self-doubt about their ability, which clearly holds them back from reaching their potential at work.

The only way women can turn this situation around for themselves is by making a conscious effort to improve their digital skills before they return to work and imbuing them with a much-needed self-confidence so they can trust in their ability to do the job well.

“Of all the things that concern women when returning to work, we know the number one issue is a lack of confidence. It is the biggest stumbling block and needs to be addressed; not only by up-skilling women digitally so they're ready for the workplace – which is crucial - but also by giving women life skills so they can take this digital know-how and use it to better their job satisfaction and ultimately increase their earning power.

Learning a new skill takes bravery but once achieved, it is a huge confidence boost and this is what we do at TechPixies: give women the practical skills they need which in turn boosts their confidence and ultimately empowers them in the workplace.

Joy Foster, founder of TechPixies

2 Impact on EARNING POWER

WHAT IS THE CAREER BREAK FALL OUT?

45% *women feel that taking a career break has damaged their career*

WOMEN ARE UNDERPAID

42% *women returning to work earned less than they were earning before*

37% *women now feel less confident about their long term earning potential and financial future after their career break*

EARNINGS DIFFERENCE AFTER RETURNING TO WORK

22% earned up to £10K less a year

16% earned between £10-£20K less a year

4% earned over £20K less a year

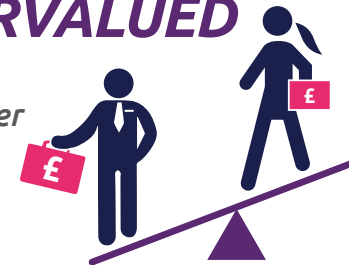
We know that women returning to work after a career break predominantly earn less than they did before they left work and this is an issue of great concern.

Not only does this cause strain on a woman's home and family life, especially if they are having to pay for childcare and commuting costs, but being paid less stymies ambition and makes women feel side lined and undervalued.

Earning parity is essential if the enormous amount of female talent in the UK workforce is to be retained and maximised after a career break.

WOMEN ARE UNDERVALUED

29% *women have felt sidelined or undervalued at work after taking their career break*



“ *This report reveals the true cost of women taking a career break and shows that not only does it hammer women's confidence but it has a devastating impact on their finances too, with almost half the women surveyed taking home less money than they did before their career break. Earning £10K less a year means losing £100K over 10 years – a substantial sum that women could be putting into their homes, their families or saving for their pensions and future. Women need to recognise the far-reaching consequences of taking a career break and invest in themselves and their future by up-skilling. This is how they can minimise the damage to their career and get back into fulfilling, well-paid jobs.* **”**

Joy Foster, founder of TechPixies



3 Impact on JOB SATISFACTION

Everybody wants job satisfaction, whether before or after a career break. If you're not happy at work and are simply going through the motions, it is highly likely you're less invested in the success of your business or workplace and this isn't good for anyone – employer or employee, client or patient.

While some women return to work and continue to have fulfilling and stimulating jobs, too many are just in it, 'as a means to an end' which inevitably lays waste to so much unharnessed female talent.

How would you describe your current work?
 Nearly half **47%** of women describe their current work as simply 'a means to an end', laying waste to so much unharnessed female talent.
27% fulfilling and stimulating

One in ten

10% women are doing work that they would describe as 'beneath their ability'



“ In this day and age, with technology, ready access to computers and the internet, everyone should aspire to do work that is fulfilling and stimulating. While it's good to hear that over a quarter of women find work fulfilling and stimulating, what about the rest? We live in a first world country in the 21st century where everyone has the ability and opportunity to better their chances of having a fulfilling career, especially now we can learn online and access education and skills from the comfort of our home. Finding work that is rewarding is not a pipe dream. It is a very achievable goal. ”

Joy Foster, founder of TechPixies

Conclusion: The way forward



BRIDGING THE SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE GAP

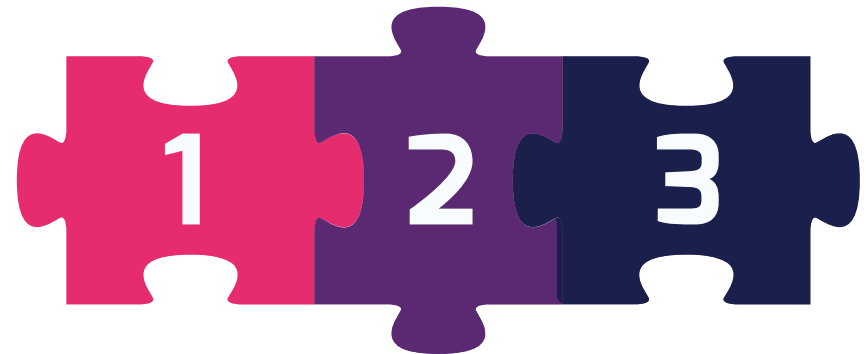
The workforce needs talented women and talented women need to work. The only way the two can work together in synchronicity is for women to return to work with confidence and armed with the right skills whether it's to go back to their old job, start a new job or even start their own business from their kitchen table.

Time out from work can set you back - that's a reality in today's working world. But if women can bridge the skills and confidence gap in the months or weeks before returning to work - or even when they're already back at work - there is little doubt they'll end up receiving the reward and recognition commensurate with their talent and contribution.

“ This report shows that confidence is a barrier to women returning to work and has a knock on effect on women's financial future and happiness at work. In this age of modern technology, this should not be the case and at TechPixies we are doing everything we can to combat this situation.

We know the key is for women to up-skill themselves for the workplace, giving them the necessary confidence to go after the opportunities they want which ultimately results in financial control and job satisfaction. ”

Joy Foster, founder of TechPixies



Education



Confidence



Satisfaction



Appendix

ABOUT THE SURVEY AND THE WOMEN WHO TOOK PART

The survey went to 1000 working women aged 34-54 from the UK during a two-week period in Oct/Nov 2018. Respondents were obtained through paid research (100%) with One Poll.



TYPE OF WORK



- 38%** worked in the public sector
- 48%** worked in the private sector
- 6%** worked in the third sector
- 8%** were self-employed/freelance



LENGTH OF CAREER BREAK



- 42%** career break between 0-1 years
- 40%** career break between 1-5 years
- 13%** career break between 5-10 years
- 5%** career break of over 10 years



TIME SINCE THEIR CAREER BREAK



- 12%** back at work in less than a year
- 45%** back at work between 1-5 years
- 21%** back at work between 5-10 years
- 21%** back to work over 10 years



TechPixies is an award-winning Social Enterprise which helps women upskill with modern technology and return to work. We teach courses online and face to face in Social Media, Digital Marketing and WordPress. We have a holistic approach which includes life coaching.

AWARDS



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