



VADA RAE MARYOL

VADA'S SUCCESS STORY

RELAUNCH STATS

Length of
Career
Break  10
years

Nature of
Career
Break  Divorce,
Covid

Time to
Relaunch  2
years

CAREER TRAJECTORY

Pre-Break Employer
and Job Title

Tia Sophia Family Restaurant
Operations/Compliance
Manager

Employer and Job Title
at Point of Relaunch

Costco
Shift Lead

Current Employer
and Job Title

N3B Los Alamos
Environmental Scientist

ABOUT

Vada relaunched in a full time position as an Environmental Scientist after 10 years. After selling her part of the business she owned with her then husband, she was clueless on her next steps. She decided to get back to engineering support that led her to pursuing a Masters in Environmental Science. Simultaneously, she found the Project Management Institute and volunteered with her local chapter. She joined Toastmasters International to work on her public speaking and leadership skills. She even took a part time position in food sales. Most importantly she networked within the hazardous waste management industry and made friends. Thanks to one of those referrals, Vada relaunched into her dream job as an Environmental Scientist at N3B Los Alamos

Her advice is to think of networking as making friends. One does not need a huge network, but a network of high quality people who will support you on your journey.

WHAT WAS THE MOST SURPRISING PART OF RELAUNCHING FOR YOU?

Honestly, how easy it really was. I say that in retrospect but one reason why it was easy was the fact that I took time. I took baby steps, even a place holder job. While transitioning from the restaurant job followed by the break and the master's degree, I took up a physically demanding job at Costco. I worked almost full-time then [close to 30- 35 hours a week], even though it was classified as a part-time job. Taking that job, outside my comfort zone, got me in that mindset of thinking professionally and having a more rigid schedule.

But it was hard! It was physically demanding, because I had to stand for 6 or 8 hours selling products. It used a different skillset, made me talk to people. In some ways, it gave me the confidence because I had to meet daily sales goals. A small bonus was based off of it and achieving that gave me the much needed validation.

P.S.- I also tried to sell art. I quickly realized that I am much better at selling food and buying art. Fall down seven times, stand up eight!

WALK US THROUGH YOUR RELAUNCH JOURNEY..

While going through that whole divorce process, I was really forced to examine my life and assess what's working/not working, what was I happy doing before I was married and in the early part of our marriage? And it came back to me having a more technical career. I always wanted to go to graduate school so I pursued a Masters in Environmental Engineering and life came full circle for me. My first job right out of college, more than 20 years ago was in quality control analysis on high capacity data storage media. My current hiring manager did not care about the career break but was focused on that job and the skills I learned then. The academic updating coupled with the ability to work through large data sets complemented perfectly and I was hired on the spot! I might have missed some major opportunities in my life as I never had a mentor who could guide me. I was literally the first person in my family to go to college. However thanks to the transferable skills I was carrying and my ability to showcase them at the right time, it all fell into place and I landed my dream job. I could not be more happier!

*To read Vada's full success story, visit
[iRelaunch's Success Story Archive!](#)*