



CATHY TANELLI

CATHY'S SUCCESS STORY

ABOUT

Cathy's story is unique in that she has had not one, but two career breaks over her career!

Cathy graduated with a liberal arts degree from SMU. She began her career in sales and marketing and was the company's leading brokerage sales rep for multiple years. After an invitation to participate in and then lead a multi-million dollar business process re-engineering project, she was promoted to manage a branch office and was sponsored for the Executive MBA at Vanderbilt University. After obtaining her MBA, Cathy primarily focused on project and program management, including chief of staff positions. Cathy is now part of the team supporting Office of the US Chair at Deloitte.

CAREER TRAJECTORY & RELAUNCH STATS

Pre-Break Employer and Job Title

MetLife
Director eBusiness

First Career Break



Length: 3.5 years



Nature: Partner's expat assignment



Time to Relaunch: 1.5 years

Employer and Job Title at Point of 1st Relaunch

Citigroup
Senior Vice President

Second Career Break



Length: 2.5 years



Nature: Partner's domestic transfer & decision to build a dream home



Time to Relaunch: less than 1 year*

Employer and Job Title at Point of 2nd Relaunch

*6-month contract
Barclay's (via an agency) initially, then
VP Strategic Projects
Edison Properties

Current Employer and Job Title

Deloitte
Senior Manager, Office of the Chair

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU COULD CHANGE ABOUT HOW CAREER BREAKS ARE SOMETIMES PERCEIVED

It was a very interesting evolution between my first and second career break. Even before my first break started, I was focused on repatriation. I felt I needed to fill my time with constructive activities that could explain away the gap. The second time, I didn't feel I had to "cover." I would hope that now, we can be less apologetic about our career breaks and capable of saying, "this is what I did, this is why I did it, this is what I gained from it, and look at all I have to offer."

AS SOMEONE IN A SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIP, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHERS NAVIGATING THE WORKFORCE WHO MAY FACE ANTIQUATED ASSUMPTIONS?

First of all, despite the anxiety that I might have felt at different times while relaunching, I never chose to work for a company whose values I didn't share. If there were any red flags that went off in the process where I felt like I couldn't be who I was, there was no way I was going to work for that company. If I have to twist myself into a pretzel to get the job, I'm going to be so contorted in the role that I won't be happy and I won't do my best work.

WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST HELPFUL IN YOUR RELAUNCH?

While I didn't come through the Deloitte Encore program, I've seen the merits and the success of the program firsthand. I carry with me and pay forward everything I learned from this type of program. Also most helpful to me were the people in my network and the people in theirs. People want to help, but often don't know how they can be helpful. So I learned that if I found an open role, I could go to my network to ask, "Hey, do you know the hiring manager?" or "Can you help me figure out who to contact?" It always makes me feel good to help people, and as my mother said, "Let other people help you and feel good, too."

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