



TIM SCHULTZ

TIM'S SUCCESS STORY

RELAUNCH STATS

Length of Career Break  7 years

Nature of Career Break  Call to ministry and child care

Time to Relaunch  4 months

CAREER TRAJECTORY

Pre-Break Employer and Job Title

Merck
Senior Development Engineer

Career Break

Calvary Chapel
Assistant Minister

Current Employer and Job Title

Merck
Associate Director, Global Technical Operations

ABOUT

Tim's story begins with a career pivot to pursue a calling of servant leadership in his church and evolves into something much larger than he could have ever anticipated.

Soon after deciding to pause his career at Merck to support his family's church as a full-time pastor, Tim and his wife learn they are expecting their third child. This pregnancy, however, was not without complications. They learned their unborn baby daughter had very unexpectedly acquired congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV), the very condition that Merck—and Tim, in his current position within the company—was attempting to tackle in clinical trials.

Fortunately, Tim's story comes full circle as after several years of navigating life with a special needs child and serving a growing church, he realized there was still a passion in his heart for his previous work at Merck and resolved to relaunch back into the work he had started.

WE OFTEN SAY THAT FORMER COLLEAGUES HAVE A "FROZEN IN TIME" VIEW OF YOU. DID YOU FIND THIS TO BE TRUE?

I did! When I finally decided it was time to return to my scientific career, I felt I had unfinished business at Merck. So, I decided my first step should be to reach out to a former colleague and mentor via email; he wrote right back and gave me his cellphone number and told me to call him later that night. To be clear, I had prefaced my outreach to him with full transparency and indicated I was thinking about throwing my hat back into the ring at Merck.

That evening, about a minute into our call, he asked me, "so when do you want to start?" I was just blown away. This was such a confidence boost, and put the wind in my sails—especially since I felt rusty and lacked confidence regarding whether I could re-enter such a dynamic, ever-evolving work environment. Simply put, I was concerned that the pharma world had passed me by. But my colleague continued to encourage me by suggesting a job I should bid on and stating "look, Tim, we all know you and we all know the kind of work that you can do. You're one of us, and we'd love to have you back." And that meant more to me than he'd ever know.

WHAT ARE THE MOST TRANSFERABLE SKILLS YOU FEEL CARRIED WITH YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW FROM BOTH YOUR PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE AND FROM YOUR CAREER BREAK?

Although I had managed people prior to my career break from Merck, my time in a servant leadership role at the church really solidified the core tenants and characteristics of what it means to me to lead. Leadership is not about strapping all of the burdens to your back and forging ahead to have everyone get in line and follow you. That is not leadership. I feel like I learned the better meaning of leadership—one that requires you to serve FIRST. Have the mindset of a servant when you have the opportunity to lead others, and identifying the skills and strengths of others around you and elevating them, helping them shine and succeed...that brought true joy! And I feel like learning that "outside" of Merck really transferred with me when I re-entered a corporate environment. Most of all, I feel like I learned (the very humbling) lesson of what it means to truly listen..."be quick to listen, slow to speak..." As a leader, one of the greatest things you can do is truly listen to those around you—those whom you lead, your peers, and those in authority over you. The perspective you garner—as a true listener—is invaluable.

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