



WOMEN BACK TO BUSINESS

In Switzerland, there is a shortage of skilled employees and management staff in many sectors. Highly qualified women returning to the labor market are a resource that has hardly been tapped to date.



BRINGING WOMEN BACK TO BUSINESS

In Switzerland a lack of skilled employees is evident across many sectors. However, despite these shortages in the labor market returning to work after a sizeable break can be difficult for many women, including academics. Understandably, companies want to manage the risks associated with staffing decisions and can be cautious when it comes to applications from women returning to work. In particular, they might focus too much on the missing and outdated technical, industry and market knowledge but overlook key qualifications still relevant from previous work experience and useful skills acquired during the break such as improved communication skills, a greater ability to deal with conflict as well as organizational and project management expertise. The economy misses out on valuable resources that could counteract the existing shortage of skilled employees.

SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO PROFESSIONAL LIFE

To build a bridge between companies

and well-qualified women returning to the workforce the University of St. Gallen has been offering the program "Women Back to Business" since 2008 which is specifically tailored for female academics. Through further management courses and the experience of an extensive accompanying program which includes coaching sessions, an internship and a final paper, women can return to professional life much better equipped. The program increases the likelihood of successful job applications by boosting self-confidence and providing a realistic assessment of each participant's skills and abilities. Confirmation of the successful impact can be seen in a recent external evaluation which showed that following the course, 75% of the participants found a satisfying employment. The majority of the participants are convinced that "Women Back to Business" made a significant contribution to their successful reintegration.

WOMEN BACK TO BUSINESS IN ENGLISH

Having had such a success with the German speaking program and run-

ning it for the 8th consecutive year it is with great pleasure to announce that the University of St. Gallen will soon offer "Women Back to Business" in English as well. It will start in spring 2016 and is tailored for female academics who feel more comfortable to attend the classes in English. These could be expat partners who would like to use their time in Switzerland and acquire a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) from a well-known University or women living permanently in Switzerland who would like to reenter the workforce in an international environment (e.g. after an assignment abroad). According to the German program the curriculum consists of general management modules and supporting sessions.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EMPLOYERS REQUIRED

In order to support successful career comebacks companies could usefully rethink their practices. Experienced women returning to work are looking for different jobs than younger graduates. Especially facts such as more flexibility in the workplace, a positive and supportive team and a motivating working environment are very important. If the return to work proves successful, the result is a win-win situation for employees and employers. After all, women returning to work often still have at least 20 years of professional life ahead of them – potential that can be realized and put to good use doing great work.

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