

Should Jobs Held for a Short Duration Be Included on My Resume

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Question

Is it ok to leave a recent law firm job off my resume if I only worked there as an associate for about four months? I am concerned that it will look bad, and since it was only four months, I'd rather leave it off. What are your thoughts?(From R.K., Boston)

Answer

I wouldn't leave it off. While you are correct in being concerned about having a four-month associate stint on your **resume**, and giving the appearance that you are a "flight risk" to a future employer, the potential damage by leaving it off your resume will be much greater. [While it may take a bit of time before the potential employer finds out, you can be sure that this information will eventually be discovered.](#) Almost all law firms perform background and reference checks, and given that the legal community is still small (not to mention [Murphy's Law](#)), this type of information will invariably be found out. Additionally, by withholding this employment experience, there may be a conflict of interest caused by the work that you performed at the other firm.

- [See 6 Things Attorneys and Law Students Need to Remove from Their Resumes ASAP If They Want to Get Jobs with the Most Prestigious Law Firms](#) for more information.

By leaving a relevant position off your resume, you are essentially sending this message: ["I think it is acceptable to withhold relevant information if it will not benefit me."](#) By doing this, you cast doubt on everything you represent to the firm. The quickest way to undermine your relationship with a potential employer is by doing something that will cause them to doubt your sincerity or credibility. We have also seen attorneys get fired after a few days because pertinent information was not revealed in an interview.

[The best way to handle this situation is to include the job on your resume and be prepared with an appropriate explanation.](#) Also, depending on the particular situation, we sometimes suggest that [attorneys provide--on their resume--an explanation of why they left](#) (e.g., "Left firm due to decreased workflow stemming from unexpected loss of large client.") If everything else seems to be a fit, the short-term employment will often not be a deal breaker if you have a good explanation. Thus, it is best to come clean with who you are and your experience, and let the **law firm** decide how they want to progress. Plus, having come clean, [you'll do much better on the interviews because you won't be spending a lot of your psychic energy covering up a secret and battling that nagging feeling of being found out.](#)

Best of luck,

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