

How to Explain the Employment Gap in Your Resume

By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office

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Question:

In 2007, I was laid off from an in-house position due to the sale of the corporation. It was difficult for me to find a li and I settled for a job that was not a good fit. I now have a year and one-half gap in my resume (except for a four stint as a document review attorney) and the aforementioned four month employment period that failed. I am inter advice on approaching this period of employment instability with a prospective employer. Is there a manner to tu tumultuous period into a positive? I realize not knowing me individually that it is difficult to individualize a succinct a my particular dilemma, but do you have any general advice on how to approach the formulation of a sustainable what appears as a weakness in my employment history?

Answer:

I'm sorry to learn that you are having so much trouble getting your career back on track. The only thing more stre looking for a new job is looking for a new job when you are unemployed. If I can reassure you with anything, I do that with perseverance, you can change this situation.

Learn More About This Video

It is not clear from your message what steps you have been taking to get yourself back on track. Now that you have been out of the job market for some time, you have some explaining to do before you even get to the question of whether you are qualified for a particular employer. You have the stigma of being unemployed and although this may have absolutely nothing to do with your [skills or your effort](#), potential employers will be more wary about hiring you. The good news is that there are ways to work around this stigma.

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

In particular, traditional methods of job hunting (i.e. responding to advertisements or attending job fairs) are going to be challenging. [While you can certainly explain the gap in your resume in a well-crafted cover letter](#), in all likelihood, networking is more likely to be successful for you.

To get started with networking, make a list of all the potential legal employers that you would like to meet and start with [people in your existing network](#) if they know anyone who works for any of these employers. They need not be lawyers themselves. [Good candidates for networking include former classmates or professors, family, friends or former work colleagues](#). When you contact these individuals, mention the individual you both know and ask if you can have a few minutes of their time to get their advice. [Do not ask them if the company is hiring.](#)

At the same time, [be on the lookout for temporary or part-time assignments](#); but if possible, try to take positions that are logically related to the work you ultimately want to do. Look for opportunities to do pro bono work in your practice or write an article on a subject that is relevant to your interests. Sign up for some CLE programs. If you take the time to do these things, you will meet more people who may be in a position to hire you or refer you to someone who can hire you; in addition, you will have more to talk about when you do go out on informational interviews (i.e. it is better if you can talk about a pro bono project than it is to talk about waiting tables at a local pizza restaurant-though don't hesitate to do that kind of work if you need the pay and can't find anything else.) Try to keep a positive attitude and your luck will change.

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