



Oliwia

Global Executive Recruiter

Addressing gaps in your resume

Let's start with being very clear, career gaps are normal and almost everyone in their employment history has at least one career gap in some part of their life. Depending on the retirement age in your country, our professional lives can usually last for about 40 to 50 years. One has to be extremely lucky to have a perfect continuity of work experiences throughout those years. Career gaps and sabbatical leave are the new norm and the good news is that the perception of your career gap is fully manageable with how you do your resume and how you explain those gaps during an interview.

Be Transparent

While career gaps are common these days, we have to be as transparent as we can during the interview, instead of feeling ashamed and not willing to elaborate more when asked. The basic ask of any interviewer is for their candidate to be truthful on what is written on the resume. You may be later accused of stating false information and lose the employment if you tried to hide them. Remember, many companies conduct background screening processes of every new hire, so it is highly probable, that someone will verify the periods of employment carefully at a later stage of the recruitment process. Your first to-do is to clearly note down all career gaps and be very specific about the start and end of an employment history. The timeline should be well-aligned between every employment or unemployment period. For example, if you have finished your contract with company A in June 2018, be precise what has been your professional status from July 2018 onwards.

Provide a brief explanation to each gap

Having noted down the career gaps and the period when they have occurred, think what was the context behind each gap. Have you been taking care of your family or have you spent a few months surfing in Australia? Have you been made redundant and struggling to find a new job? Or maybe you decided to simply

take some time off and focus on a side project? Each reason is equally fine, as long as it's true. Crafting your resume, explain briefly the reason behind each gap. There is no need to be more specific than giving a general statement. No one has the right to assess your life decisions, but equally no one is really interested in digging too deep when conducting a general review of your resume. A line of brief explanation is perfectly fine!

Attention, we have a “job hopper”

It may happen, that the recruiter or hiring manager will try to understand a broader context behind your career gaps. Don't take it personally, as they are not trying to assess your life decisions - they are just trying to understand whether you are a so-called “job hopper”. Job hoppers are people who change jobs way too frequently and do it without any significant reason. While there is no good answer to how long an employment period should be and there are plenty of justified reasons for leaving a job, you may already have a colleague who jumps between jobs without any plan or because they lack clear aspirations or the strength to withhold during a challenging project.

Typical “job hoppers” are a rare phenomenon, but companies are trying to keep safe from hiring these people. There are two major reasons for this, if you wonder. The first one is that every hire is a significant cost for the company, including the costs of a recruitment process, the costs of onboarding, training and resources etc. The second reason is that employment is a two way relationship - you get upskilled and gain new experiences, but the company also requires you to perform to help them reach their business goals. If someone stays in a role for a very short period of time, the investment made will not be beneficial to the organization. To make sure you are not classified as a “job hopper”, focus on transparency and frankness in explaining the general reasons for the career gaps in your resume.

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