

4.7 Documenting Problems: Gaps, Short Stints, and Merging Companies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn to properly explain any time gaps in your résumé because recruiters have a trained eye and often notice gaps in employment and jobs of short duration.
2. Learn how to position companies that have merged with other companies.

Gaps

Recruiters carefully review résumés and will notice any gaps in either employment or education. While rare, any anomaly should be addressed. For example, perhaps a student was ill for half a semester and didn't graduate in the expected year. Perhaps they had an opportunity to live in another country for a prolonged period of time. A résumé will state the timeline, but the cover letter can be used for more of an explanation. It's best to consult a professional because this situation can be a bit of a minefield.

Short Stints

Recruiters appreciate longevity at a company. If you've worked two summers at the same company, that proves your worth to your employer because they rehired you. If you've jumped from one company to another in short periods of time, that can be considered a disadvantage.

Merging Companies

A list of the top one hundred companies today is vastly different from a list of the top one hundred companies from ten years ago. If you worked for a company that has now merged with another company and no longer has the same name, simply list the name of the new company and put the previous company's name in parentheses. Here is an example:

Pfizer (premerger Warner-Lambert), New York, New York

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Recruiters review a résumé in seven to ten seconds, yet are trained to identify gaps of any kind.
- Recruiters appreciate candidates who have repeat work experiences at a certain employer, such as working at one company for two consecutive summers.
- Companies often merge with other companies, so note the new name first and put the company's original name in parentheses.

EXERCISES

1. Review your résumé with a critical eye toward gaps of any kind: gaps in

employment and gaps in your educational experience.

2. Consider how you would explain any existing gaps to a recruiter.
3. Practice your explanation with a classmate and have them critique your response.
4. Meet with someone at your career service office for a mock interview, and have them specifically ask about any gaps in your résumé.
5. Seek out someone in the profession in which you are most interested, and ask if they are willing to review your résumé to help you improve it. It's very helpful to get an industry professional's advice.

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