

BEST PRACTICES PRESENTATION

HOW DO I MANAGE HIGH NUMBER OF JOBS OR FREQUENT RECENT JOB CHANGES?

By: Kenneth Kirby

- First, if employed, reconsider whether a move is in your best interests. Consider how it might look to a future prospective employer were the job that you are considering moving to does not work out. Hindsight can be 20/20, painfully so.

If you are already in the position of having moved from job to job frequently, or, if you have a high number of jobs on your resume, consider the following strategies:

- Emphasize your skills. Consider placing your skills and accomplishments at the top of your resume, ahead of any chronological listing of positions you have held.
- If such exist, isolate, either in the middle of a cover letter (so as to give it less prominence) or at the interview, unusual circumstances beyond your control why you have moved frequently within the past 2 – 3 years. Ex., you were recruited by a partner or manager who subsequently left; company laid you off due to bad economy or insufficient work; company discontinued business. Be sure to indicate that quality of your work was high and did not contribute to company's problems or demise, if this is truthful.
- Concentrate on positive accomplishments for each of your employers.
- Emphasize breadth and depth of your experience; -- you're a "quick study" and will not require extensive training to "come up to speed." You can "hit the ground running" and contribute productively right away.
- Emphasize that you are a "team player." Point out the satisfaction you derive from helping others and the company succeed. If possible, provide an example or examples.
- If, in your past, you held positions for considerable lengths of time, highlight your accomplishments in those positions and identify the positive attributes of those employers that you see reflected in your prospective employer, and emphasize your intention/desire to remain with prospective employer for a long time.
- Depending on your salary requirements, point out how you, with your considerable experience and skills, can be a real hiring bargain.
- Do not list your chronological work history too far into the past, but, if possible, go far enough back in time to list a position that you held for a considerable length of time. E.g., 5 years or more.
- Showcase current or "cutting edge" knowledge.

- If necessary, be prepared to respond to questions about work history “gaps.” Volunteer activities can help here, as can identification of steps that you have taken to remain current in your field (e.g., attended seminars).
- Emphasize your enthusiasm for the position. If applicable, explain how the position aligns with your long-term goals. E.g., If in sales: “I’ve always wanted to obtain a sales position in [this prospective employer’s] industry [for this reason or these reason{s}, if you can identify such].”
- Do not criticize or “bad-mouth” former employer(s), no matter how deserving you might think them of such. Rather, if asked, identify neutral reason(s), not reflecting on your qualifications or performance, for the separation(s) between you and your former employer(s).
- Be genuine, positive and engaging. How you come across is even more critical when you are trying to overcome frequent job changes or a high number of prior jobs.
- Finally, network, network and network some more. If you know someone who can intervene on your behalf with the prospective employer and attest to your skills, accomplishments, qualifications or any other positive attributes that you will bring to the sought-after position, this can make all the difference.