



SEARCH: All | Jobs | Articles | Companies (advanced job search) GO

Sign up! Connect Log in to FINS

Excel at the Job

Get The Job Dec 02 2010 Like 3

Explaining an Employment Gap in an Interview

By Kelly Eggers



Having a gap between jobs on your resume used to be a serious detractor to your application. However, times have changed, and in a post-recession world, interrupted employment is commonplace for job seekers -- particularly for those in the layoff-stricken finance sector.

Just because it's a reality, however, doesn't mean you're off the hook. You need to be prepared for the questions you'll receive during an interview, whether the respite was a result of layoffs or poor performance.

We spoke with New York finance career coach and author of The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide Roy Cohen to get some of his suggestions on how to handle the situation gracefully:

Morning Coffee Newsletter Sign up for the latest in finance career news. Includes Print and social media icons.

Don't Bring It Up

"If it's not addressed [by the interviewer], it's not typically an issue," says Cohen. Be wary, however, if it appears to be a total non-issue for the interviewer. "If they don't ask about it, it's not a good sign for the interview," says Cohen. "It says something about their interest in you."

Break It Down

If you've had a long gap between jobs, you should break that period into chunks. "Deconstruct for your audience how you've used that time," says Cohen. Having a story for each of those periods of time will make it clear that you didn't spend months upon months twiddling your thumbs.

Be Honest

While choice wording can help take attention away from an employment hiatus, there's no room for dishonesty when you're a job-seeker. You'll shred your credibility before you even get through the door -- so whether they're little and white or big and bold-faced, leave any and all lies at home.

Have Something to Say

This isn't just about preparing for the interview. Do something while you're out of work to build



MOST Popular

- Career Strategies
1 Kissing up Like a Pro: A New Study Says How to Do It Right
2 Eloquence in an Interview Is Better Than Accuracy, Says Study
3 Command a Room: Six Tips From a Wall Street Executive Coach
4 Posing For Power: Why Body Language Matters in the Office

Finance Career News

- 1 Turkey, Gravy, Networking: How Savvy Job-Hunters Spend the Holiday
2 Obama's Pay-Freeze Proposal Could Ice Regulator Recruiting
3 Posing For Power: Why Body Language Matters in the Office
4 Goldman Appoints Less Than 20% Women for 2011 Partner Class

TOP Finance Jobs

- Most Viewed Jobs
1 Finance jobs - Sr Director, International Business, Sunnyvale, CA - Yahoo Inc. - FINS.com
2 Finance jobs - Financial Analyst Intern (Under-Grad) (Pipeline), - Hewlett-Packard Co. - FINS.com
3 Finance jobs - Financial Analyst II (New Graduate

your **career capital**. And, besides, you'll have more to say during the interview.

-- Travel, especially if you travel to places relevant to your business. If you're a **wealth manager** out of work, for example, traveling to a hotspot like Asia to attend a finance professionals' conference shows you're keeping tabs on industry developments.

-- Take classes, whether they're personal or professional. Use the time to brush up on your **certifications**, or add some new, relevant ones to your repertoire. Or, if you're so inclined, learn a new language -- that can open up new job opportunities that you might not have been qualified for previously.

-- Volunteer at a non-profit. No, it's not paid, but balancing the books or consulting for a struggling foundation has a number of bonuses -- the good karma only being one of them.

Write to [Kelly Eggers](#)

Related: [Explaining Employment Gaps on Your Resume](#)

Play the new finance career game from FINS!

SIGN OR DECLINE

You just got an offer for your dream job,
BUT...
everyone in the office has a nickname,
and yours will be "Coco".



FINS combines great [financial jobs](#), [career news and advice](#), [company research](#), and a [professional resume](#) service. FINS is brought to you by **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**.

More Finance Career News and Advice

[Bull Bear Report](#) 1 hour ago

Brown Defection Signals Rise of the Independent Firm

Michael Brown is leaving BofA for an independent advisor firm.



[Morning Coffee](#) 5 hours ago

More Big Bonus Taxes

London bankers to get hammered again ([Press Association](#)), the best recommendation ([FINS](#)), healthy M&A ([Bloomberg](#)) and more. For more news you need to know throughout the day, follow FINSider on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!



[Bull Bear Report](#) Dec 03 2010

Overhauled Ally Financial Revs Up Hiring

The firm once known as GMAC is a lot smaller these days, but it's also powering out profits and preparing for an IPO. It is on the hunt for at least 214 people to help it lock down more of the auto-financing market.



[Bull Bear Report](#) Dec 03 2010

Recommendation Letters with the Wrong Adjectives Can Kill Your Job Application

Communal adjectives like "helpful" and "nurturing" dented candidates' chances of getting a job. Have your recommender stick to adjectives like "assertive"



with BS/BA (Pipeline), - Hewlett-Packard Co. - FINS.com

4 Finance jobs - COMPASS Migrations Financial Analyst, - Hewlett-Packard Co. - FINS.com

Featured Jobs

Product Specialist, Calamos Investments Naperville, IL,US

Financial Advisor, Ameriprise Financial Houston, TX,US; Salt Lake City, UT,US; Charleston, WV,US

Investment Analyst - Alternative Investments Group/Strategic Advisors, Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. Boston, MA,US; New York, NY,US

Business Support Analyst(Analysis and Reporting), Hewlett-Packard Co. Plano, TX,US

Jobs of the Week

Finance and accounting jobs featured in **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**.

[Find a Great Job →](#)