

GET THE JOB

Do You Have a Resume Gap?

Resume gaps have always been around, often the result of sabbaticals, continuing education or pregnancy. As with many things, however, the pandemic supercharged this trend.

GROWING NUMBERS

Nearly 115 million jobs were lost in 2020 as a COVID-19 spread. In the U.S. alone, women's participation in the work force declined to 57%, the lowest since back in 1988. Reductions in working hours led to people applying for multiple jobs to replace lost income. (Entrepreneur magazine said the equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs were lost through these cuts alone.) The job market has bounced back. Still, in early 2022, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that about 3 million fewer people were employed compared with pre-pandemic numbers. Attempting to enter the workplace is always daunting, but in particular when asked to explain a break in employment. You'll need to control your personal narrative in order to overcome this



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so-called “red flag.”

COMING TO TERMS

Focus on overcoming the natural discomfort that comes

with talking about time spent out of work. Your uneasiness will translate in any interview, making for an awkward or tentative talk with a prospective

employer. That's not the way to land the job. Work through any residual anger, self doubt or resentment — in particular if the choice to leave a previ-

ous job wasn't yours. Come to terms with your life experience, and you'll be better able to explain an employment gap — and then move on.

DEVELOP A NARRATIVE

Interviewers are, by their very nature, inquisitive. They're going to notice a period of unemployment, and ask questions — perhaps even open-ended questions meant to allow you to speak extemporaneously about what happened. Practice your response, beginning with why you separated from the last company. Maintain a proper level of honesty, but create a response that allows you to smoothly move on to the next topic: Why you're a great candidate for this position.

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

Accept responsibility, if appropriate. But focus on highlighting things you did to grow personally and professionally in the interim. Employment gaps are often great opportunities to further your education, to become more involved with charitable or civic organizations, or to gain leadership and collaborative skills through parenting. Look to the future. Things that happened far away from any office can also form a foundation for what your career evolves into next.