

Part 2: Addressing Work Gaps In Your Cover Letter

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Last week I focused on [how to handle work gaps in your resume](#). This week I tackle the topic of ways to address gaps in cover letters. As I mentioned in my previous blog, having a gap in your work history isn't as big of a deal as most people would think. But if you feel that you won't get called for an interview if you don't provide an explanation in your cover letter, then here are a few examples to use as guides:

Stay-at-home mom, returning to work

"As you will see from my enclosed resume, I have a Master's degree in Education and spent eight years as a third grade teacher in the XYZ School District. After taking a six-year leave from teaching to raise our children, I went back to work last year as a substitute teacher. I am excited to pursue this full-time teaching job in..."

Obtaining a job after a layoff

"After five years working as a business analyst for ABC Company, my position was eliminated due to corporate downsizing. After the layoff, I used my time away from work to obtain my CPA certification and took classes to increase my computer skills. My goal is to use my experience as an analyst and the knowledge I gained through my CPA program to obtain the position of TBD in the Accounting and Finance department at..."

Obtaining a job after taking time off for college

"With seven years of experience in marketing, I took time out of my career to go back to school full time and completed my MBA in Marketing at the University of XXX. While in school, I worked as a paid intern for two companies in the area of product management – and ended up finding my career passion. I look forward to being able to use the knowledge and skills I've learned by applying them to the newly created position of Product Manager, XYZ product line, for Acme, Incorporated..."

Remember, while employment gaps might have been seen as unusual in the past, gaps are now fairly common (especially due to the recession and downsizing layoffs). What matters more is how you explain the gap. Think through the best ways to address any work gaps, especially in your customized cover letters. Then show up at job interviews prepared to discuss what you did and what you accomplished during your time away from work.

~ Lisa Quast, author of the recently released book, *Secrets of a Hiring Manager Turned Career Coach: A Foolproof Guide to Getting the Job You Want. Every Time.* Join me on Twitter @careerwomaninc

