

OVERCOMING HIRING OBJECTIONS

When job searching, how you present yourself on your resume or during an interview could cause some preconceived notions with employers regarding your candidacy. Is there information you are providing that might raise some hiring objections? How can you overcome these objections to receive an interview and ultimately a job offer?

This guide covers some common hiring objections you might encounter and strategies for addressing them on your resume and during the interview.

- [The Boot Camp Stereotype](#)
- [Ageism](#)
- [Lacking career-related experience](#)
- [Employment Gaps](#)
- [Job Hopping](#)
- [Drastic switch in career paths](#)

It's also important to remember that networking is a critical part of any successful job search. When you network and hold face-to-face meetings with other professionals, your in-person impression speaks volumes about your potential and can help downplay any objections.

The Boot Camp Stereotype:

Boot camps are still relatively new in the education and workplace settings. Some employers may question the quality of a program where technical skills and concepts are taught within three to six months. They may be leery of choosing bootcamp graduates over candidates who have earned more traditional computer science degrees.

Overcoming the objection on your resume

- Specify your coding skills and applications. Employers screen for these keywords.
- Appropriately list your bootcamp as affiliated with the partnering college or university.
- Reiterate your relevant experience in the cover letter that accompanies the resume.

Overcoming the objection during an interview

- Discuss and provide examples of the technical skills you have acquired.
- Highlight your boot camp's unique approach to teaching computer science fundamentals alongside technical skills.

OVERCOMING HIRING OBJECTIONS

- Share insight that your boot camp's curriculum is structured and adapted based on feedback from college and university faculty and industry experts.
- Use specific examples to connect your background (skills learned in boot camp or developed elsewhere) to the position.

Ageism:

Ageism is an ongoing challenge for mature job seekers in practically every work environment and the tech industry is no exception. People of different ages with different backgrounds are pursuing tech positions. While age should not be a factor, the reality is some employers may erroneously mistake a person's age as a reason to dismiss the potential contributions they could make to the position and the company.

Overcoming the objection on your resume

- Emphasize the skills you've acquired in your boot camp experience. Relevant tech skills and experience should be listed first on the resume.
- Avoid using phrases like "over 10 years of experience," that could indicate your age.
- Don't list experience more than 10 years old.
- Consider omitting older dates on your resume from education or employment.

Overcoming the objection during an interview

- Emphasize what you can do, not what you have done. Avoid saying "in my previous work I did (fill in the blank)." Rather, say "I have experience with (fill in blank) and it's why I can begin to make an immediate impact in this role."
- Use your boot camp portfolio to demonstrate the skills you have acquired.
- Tell an employer why you chose this technical route at this stage in your career development. Don't say "because I was downsized and needed a job quickly."
- Show energy and enthusiasm in the interview.
- Don't make jokes about your age.
- Dress appropriately (updated suit or other professional dress).

OVERCOMING HIRING OBJECTIONS

Lacking career-related experience:

It's the age-old problem. How do you get experience for positions that require prior experience? Especially if you are a recent college graduate with little work experience or are switching to the tech field from a very different industry. The keys are emphasizing the experience you do have and looking at your background through a new lense, where you might discover you have related experience after all.

Overcoming the objection on your resume

- Make sure your resume highlights your boot camp skills.
- List your specific technical knowledge and skills. These become keywords employers screen for when reviewing resumes.
- Don't limit "career-related" to only paid positions. Did you design your own website or app or volunteer to create a community group's website? These count as career-related experience, so list them accordingly.
- State in your resume that you are an enthusiastic quick learner. Refer to past examples that demonstrate this fact. This might get your resume to the "under qualified but trainable" stack.

Overcoming the objection during an interview

- Explain that completing the Boot Camp demonstrates you can learn new skills quickly and efficiently.
- Talk about personal projects that demonstrate your passion for learning.
- Make a list of the skills (transferrable and technical) that you've developed through your education, work experience and elsewhere (volunteering).
- Review your skills set against the skills listed in the job posting. You'll be surprised to find many similarities.
- Think of your boot camp as experience. Experience doesn't just come from jobs.

Note: Don't dismiss the idea of completing an internship. It can provide the work experience you're looking for, and even open doors to full-time opportunities with the company.

OVERCOMING HIRING OBJECTIONS

Employment gaps:

Employment gaps occur for a variety of reasons, from being downsized, unemployed or ill to choosing a different path like pursuing education, becoming a stay-at-home-parent or caring for a family member. Be prepared to address the employment gaps honestly and positively, and refocus the employer on why you are a good fit for the position.

Overcoming the objection on your resume

- Don't stretch dates to hide gaps. Honesty is important throughout the job search.
- Don't worry about employment gaps that occurred more than 10 years ago. This information should not be listed on the resume because it is dated.
- Use a resume format that highlights skills and downplays how dates are presented.
- List education even if you did not complete a degree. If a two year employment gap occurred because you were taking classes, include this information on the resume. Example:
University of Arizona (2015-2017)
Completed 60 credit hours in general education courses and English major classes.
- Include any volunteer, freelancing or other experience that could account for gaps.
- Address gaps upfront. If an employment gap is glaringly apparent, consider briefly mentioning it in a cover letter.

Overcoming the objection during an interview

- Be honest. If an employer asks about your gaps, answer the questions truthfully.
- Keep emotions in check. Now is not the time to air frustrations about being downsized or share details of caring for a family member. Quickly address the reason for the gap and immediately switch the conversation to how you are focused for employment at this time.

Example

"From 2007 until 2016 I chose the role of stay-at-home-parent to concentrate on raising my children. The decision best suited our family at the time and gave me the chance to evaluate my professional development which led me to pursue a career in web design. I'm eager to be here today to discuss the experience gained through the Boot Camp program I completed at Rutgers and how my skills match your needs."

- Discuss projects, roles or initiatives you did during the employment hiatus. Volunteering, coursework, part-time roles and freelancing are all examples.

OVERCOMING HIRING OBJECTIONS

- Highlight your portfolio as testimony to the skills you've developed.
- Ask the employer what concerns they have about your background. Doing so opens the door to address the employment gap topic upfront.

Job Hopping:

Having many different jobs in a short amount of time can raise red flags. Why does this applicant leave a job after a short amount of time? Was the person fired? Did the job prove too difficult? Is the applicant always looking for a better job? Interviewing, hiring and training new employees takes time and money. An employer wants to know that if you are offered the job, you plan to commit to the role and the company. Listing many jobs that were held for short time periods may raise concerns regarding this commitment.

Overcoming the objection on your resume

- List multiple roles held at one company as one entry under the company name.
- Organize temporary roles as one entry under the placement agency through which you found the jobs.
- Focus your resume on your technical skills. They should be the centerpiece of the resume. Unrelated work experience occupies a small amount of space.
- Omit positions held for very short time periods (a few weeks or a couple of months).
- Only list jobs held within the past 10 years.

Overcoming the objection during an interview

- Emphasize your transferable skills.
- Focus the employer's attention on the technical skills you have developed.
- Directly answer any questions regarding the perceived excessive work experience.
- Briefly explain extenuating circumstances that caused you to leave a job prematurely.
- Don't dwell on a negative experience, but rather begin with a phrase such as "It became clear the role was not a good fit and the best decision was to part ways." Refocus on why the current role for which you're interviewing is a good fit.
- Make reference to your list of references and attest to their ability to confirm your skills and qualifications.

OVERCOMING HIRING OBJECTIONS

Drastic switch in careers:

Are you serious about your interest in the tech industry or are you pursuing the profession because of its headline prominence, promise of lucrative salaries or other buzz topics? If your previous work experience or studies are in fields completely unrelated to technology, employers might wonder how serious you are about committing to the industry.

Overcoming the objection on your resume

- Showcase the technical skills you've learned.
- Create a Career Summary/Profile section that presents yourself as someone in the industry, referring to yourself as a coder or web developer, rather than a student.
- Show your tech interest is sincere by listing personal tech experience (designing your own website or app, for example).
- List your non-technology work experience further down the resume.

Overcoming the objection during an interview

- Tell a concise story that clearly explains your professional interest in the tech industry.
- Develop a perfect pitch speech that highlights your skills and qualifications.
- Mention transferrable skills you learned in your non-technical jobs that will enhance your candidacy for the position.
- Ask questions that show you have done your research about the industry and company and are ready to commit both.
- Showcase your portfolio as examples of your work.