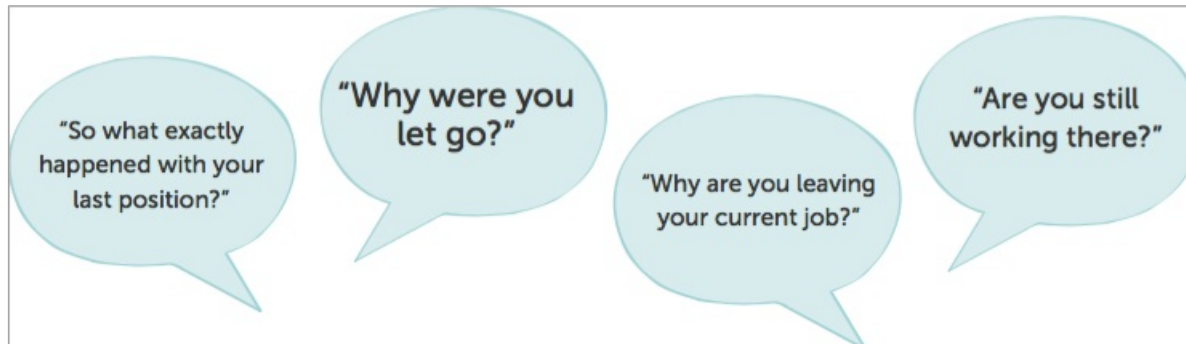


Crafting Your Exit Statement

Many job seekers struggle to address how and why they exited their last position; especially when they are still feeling uncomfortable about the separation. Easily address this question positively and effectively with these four steps.



1. SUMMARISE

Briefly describe the situation that caused your separation in one clean sentence. A lot of job seekers make the big mistake of sharing TMI (Too Much Information). Keep it quick, organisationally focused, and objective rather than too personal.

- » "ABC recently reorganised their entire company structure..."
- » "Last month, XYZ merged with LMN and they've been reorganising the company..."
- » "QRX decided they were going to outsource the SPROKET division..."

2. PROVE IT WASN'T PERFORMANCE BASED

Most layoffs are not a reflection on your performance, and with the frequency they happen in today's business climate, most employers understand. Keep things objective and put things into perspective with some stats to back up the scale and situation and drive home the point that it wasn't your performance.

- » "...and over 1,200 staff were cut during the transition. I happened to be one of those 1,200."
- » "...in the process of streamlining duplicate and management-level position, I was impacted as well as 25 of my colleagues."
- » "...so 200 of our jobs were cut and I'm now helping to transition the division to the new vendor."

3. MAKE IT POSITIVE

When discussing the situation, showing anger, sadness, or frustration will work against you; instead keep it light and forward focused.

- » *"I am actually really excited by the situation, because I can now explore opportunities with companies like yours, something I have thought about doing for a while."*
- » *"I have to say that I feel a bit blessed, because I was feeling stagnant being at the same company for so many years. I've been keeping an eye on your company for a while and I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to discuss this role with you."*
- » *"It's been an interesting and exciting transition though; I've been able to learn new skills, see how another organisation operates, and even made some time for professional development courses to improve my skill sets in the latest technologies. My interest in <skill> is what brought me to your company, as I see you're working on a*

lot of interesting products in that space."

4. PRACTICE

The only way to get comfortable when delivering your Exit Statement is to practice. Start by practicing in front of a mirror or with your family. Then move to having networking meetings with close professional contacts and friends, and meet with staffing agency recruiters if appropriate. The bonus: this is GREAT networking to enhance your visibility in the hidden job market!

EXIT STATEMENT EXAMPLES

"Last year was really challenging for our industry, and senior management decided to reorganise to become leaner. Many great people were let go, and although I was kept on to help with the new transition, my job was also one of the ones cut. Working at ABC really helped me to hone my skills in operations management, outsourcing, and process improvement, which I believe sound like they would be a great fit for your company based on the job description."

"QRX recently reorganised following the merger with XYZ and my position was moved to XYZ's corporate headquarters in Mumbai. I was given the opportunity to relocate with my job, but I love it here in Bangalore. I decided to explore new opportunities with exciting companies like yours here at home, and now that I'm here, I'm really happy I did."

Special Situations

WHAT IF IT WAS PERFORMANCE BASED? If you're aware that there was a performance issue that contributed to you being let go, it's sometimes best to be honest. Display maturity by taking responsibility for your performance. Discuss what you've learned and how that has improved your attitude and approach to work in the future. It may be that you decided the type of job you were in was not a fit for you. For example, if a sales role wasn't a fit and you were much better at account management or client services.

WHAT IF IT WAS RELATIONSHIP BASED? Many times when a company reorganises, there are several shifts in management that cause personality conflicts. If this happened to you it's best to remain positive and not bad-mouth your former boss. You may briefly mention a large shift in corporate culture and management styles across the organisation that added to your interest in seeking a new role, but be prepared to answer direct follow-up questions.

NEXT STEPS

- » Decide what the "story" is going to be behind your exit statement.
- » Craft your exit statement.
- » Ask for feedback and practice delivering your exit statement with several people.