



Dealing with Dismissal

Being terminated diminishes self-confidence. Even though quite often the reason for dismissal is unrelated to performance, nonetheless, the terminated employee feels shame or anger (both destructive), is hesitant to launch a job search, and doesn't know where to turn for assistance.

No matter the reason, if the dismissed employee is to resurrect a career, a job search must be launched. But how does one overcome the distress that accompanies this unexpected and forced job search?

Is Lying Justified?

In life and love, small white lies may be justified. But when writing a resume or replying to interview questions, a lie has no colour, and no lie is justified. Discovered even years later, lying may be grounds for another dismissal. Best to avoid double-jeopardy!

Practice Admitting to the Situation with Honesty and Brevity

It is up to the job hunter to compose and practice delivering a statement or two explaining the circumstances that led to the dismissal. For example, "With a new director who was committed to rolling out his vision, my role was deemed redundant," or "The corporation decided to re-organize and several staff found themselves similarly laid off." While speaking, make sure your voice is calm, and that you convey no anger or depression, whether in your body language or vocal expression.

If the position was quite short-lived, and there is a reason for including the position on the resume (hence the need to address it), a short "It just didn't work out" may suffice.

Reframe the Experience

After sharing your prepared response to the "why did you leave your last employer" question, rather than dwell on the dismissal immediately refocus your attention on the position's positives. Enthusiastically share how you saved significant time by modernizing a form; how you implemented new customer service ideas that reduced complaints; how your engagement improved teamwork and morale ... all those juicy examples of how your performance improved productivity. And smile!

Dismissed For Cause

Again, no lying is justified. With the internet's social and business networking sites secrets aren't as easily kept as in the past. Take responsibility and then share your plan for fixing the issue that got you fired.

Erasing Doubts

In order to erase any lingering doubts, the job hunter must be prepared with strong responses that clearly communicate relevant skills. Address each hiring requirement with specific examples experience that communicate knowledge and skills, and prove your almost perfect match.

This is the time to take an extra step, for example, by preparing a leave-behind document, perhaps in a T-chart format, that reconfirms precisely how your experience matches the company's requirements.

One Last Word

The truth is, having been terminated isn't as big a deal as job hunters think. Dealing with it in an interview is more about your attitude than about the termination. Face it squarely and answer the question matter-of-factly. If you don't dwell on it, neither will the interviewer.