

Reasons for leaving – the good, the bad and the ugly

More so than ever it is important that you have a 'good' and 'real' reason for leaving your job or moving on and not just one that sounds good. Companies today are keen to find out everything they can on candidates and some use third parties to 'dig' into your background. If you are reluctant to say why you are leaving or it doesn't sound plausible this will set the alarm bells ringing and your application may be downgraded.

It is always one of the first things that candidates get asked at interview; 'what is your reason for leaving/why did you leave', 'why would you move/be tempted out', 'what is missing in your work at the moment'. These questions are designed to find out what motivates you, whether you can work in the clients' environment and whether you are likely to leave in the future if similar circumstances arise and, importantly, whether the situation at the client is the same as where you are now.

Most people don't put why they are leaving, or have left, their current employer on their CV, covering letter or on-line Profile (LinkedIn) so you can assume that at some point you will be asked. So what do you say? This is where the fun starts for recruiters because, believe me, we have heard everything over the years from being rude about your employer to showing how good you think you are vs reality!

So what are some 'good' reasons for leaving?

- Redundancy
- Your company is relocating and you can't move
- Your company has merged/been acquired and you are surplus to requirements
- You are moving back to the area/country
- Your commute is currently two hours each way
- You are on a contract and this is permanent
- This role is a step up – ie: you want to be promoted
- This role is with the number one in your sector
- The role will use more of your core skills
- It is in an area you want to get into but your current employer is not

The 'bad' reasons for leaving

- Redundancy (you were the Sales Director and the company sank through lack of orders)
- 'I was headhunted' (more of that later)
- Higher salary (you think you are underpaid and an offer may get you a rise)
- You 'fancy a change' (undoubtedly not the real reason)
- Personal reasons (unspecified!)
- To go travelling around the world
- This is a lower level role but you want to go back to the coalface (you are a terrible manager or you are about to be fired)
- It's a lower salary but your lifestyle has changed so you don't need as much (you are about to be fired)



- 'I don't really want to move but I'm looking at opportunities' (all of the above plus you hate your boss)
- You've been there over twenty/thirty years and fancy a change (no you don't – something has happened to upset your comfortable existence, a new boss perhaps?)

And now for the 'ugly'

- 'I was headhunted' (so, if a stranger calls you up and says come join my company, you do, just walking out the door and leaving your employer in the lurch – even if you are approached you need a legitimate reason for moving, even if you weren't looking!)
- Personality clash with the new boss 'we didn't see eye to eye' (he made you accountable and do some work which you reacted against. How do we know you'll get on with your next boss?)
- You are in Sales and want to leave after 10 months as 'the company doesn't support the client' (we are all allowed one career mistake but if this is a recurring theme then perhaps it's your sales ability...)
- Anything that involves theft, bullying, fighting, racism, harassment, refusing to work longer hours...

So, what are you going to say...?

