

How to Explain Being Fired on a Cover Letter

by Ellie Williams

If you're looking for a job after having been fired, you're probably wondering when, how and whether to address that when applying for a new job. Your cover letter is the first impression you make on potential employers, and before you confess to being let go from your last job in your letter, you should consider how to frame your dismissal in a way that demonstrates to interviewers that you're still desirable as an employee.

Don't Mention the Termination Directly

In the Quintessential Resumes and Cover Letters article "No Need to Mention Layoff in Your Cover Letter," career coach Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D., warns job seekers against including any negative information in a cover letter. Instead, applicants should treat the cover letter as a marketing document, using it to highlight their relevant skills and experience and how they can contribute to the company's success. Never lie about being fired, but wait until a face-to-face interview to discuss it, when you'll have time to explain why you were let go. If an employer sees a mention of having been "let go" in your cover letter, he'll likely toss aside your letter before reading the rest of the sentence, Hansen says.

Focus on Why You're Looking for a New Job

Instead of dwelling on why you lost your previous job, emphasize your aspirations for the future. In your cover letter, mention that after spending five years as an assistant manager, for example, you're eager to use the skills you learned at your last job to move into a more senior position. Or, say that, after working for a small, locally owned business, you're looking forward to tackling greater responsibilities at a company that has offices across the country or around the world.

Highlight What You Learned and Accomplished in the Interim

If you've been out of work for a while since you were fired, use your cover letter to highlight any skills or experience you gained after leaving. If you used that time to volunteer, note that in your cover letter and explain how your volunteer experience

qualifies you for the job you're applying for. If you stayed at home with your children, mention that in your cover letter, recommends career coach Hallie Crawford, in the "Forbes" article "How to Deal With That Hole in Your Resume." Follow that by explaining how you used your organizational and administrative skills to run your household, Crawford says.

Addressing It During the Interview

Interviewers often ask applicants why they left their last jobs, and they may be even more likely to inquire if there's no mention in your cover letter of why you're looking for work. If you didn't discuss it in the letter, the employer won't think you were trying to be dishonest, so don't be afraid to elaborate on your termination once you meet with him. Wait until the interviewer asks why you left your last job, and then be honest about what happened. The interviewer might contact your previous boss, so it's in your best interest to be open about why you left.

Source: <https://work.chron.com/explain-being-fired-cover-letter-8089.html>