



LAI D OFF - DESCRIBING THE REASONS YOU'RE LOOKING

By: Michael Neece

Bart was an average employee at his company before being released suddenly without cause. His company was merged with a competitor and Bart found himself with a new manager. Even though he had a good record and positive performance reviews, he quickly found himself laid-off from the company.

The following article provides key strategies for responding to one of the most frequently asked interviewer questions, "Why did you leave (or seeking to leave) your company?"

Be Succinct

Describe the reason for your departure directly and succinctly. Do not go into great details unless they ask you for the details. The longer you speak on the subject the more suspicious the interviewer will become. For example: When first asked why he left his former company Bart could succinctly state, "My company merged with another firm and the new management wanted to bring in their own team. Prior to the merger I was a strong performer with positive performance reviews."

Provide References and Proof

Bart could then say he is happy to provide references from a former colleague and boss to verify his performance. Demonstrating a confidence and willingness to provide references to support your reasons for leaving is a powerful way to ensure you are believed.

Tell the Truth in Balance

If you are questioned further about the details, stay with the facts of what happened, what you did, how you felt and what you learned. Interviewers want to know that you were not the problem and to understand how you handled yourself. Don't just state the circumstances of your departure; also add any facts that positively reflect on your performance.

What Did You Learn

This is also an opportunity to describe what you learned and how you will handle things differently in the future. Describing what you learned demonstrates that you are a life-long learner and you look on the positive side of most scenarios.

Speak Positively

State the facts in a positive manner. Any negativity you express will only reflect negatively on you. If you're angry about the situation, you'll need to process that anger in another manner before you interview. Throwing light bulbs at the basement wall or hitting a punching bag might work. The interview is the last place to express anger about anything.



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Tell the Truth

Do not speculate on the motives or feeling of the other people involved in the events of your departure. Focus only on the facts of what happened and what you did.

Look Them in the Eye

Most of us instinctively sense deception. Look the interviewer in the eyes when responding. This will convey your confidence, communicate that this is the truth and that you have nothing to hide.

Practice and Conquer Your Fear

Write out your response and practice saying it. First, practice responding out loud to yourself and then practice saying it to another person. Ask a friend to practice interviewing with you. Ask them to ask you this question ("Why did you leave your last company?") and a couple other questions you fear most. Practice until you are comfortable with the words you say and how you deliver them.