

HOW TO EXPLAIN PREVIOUS JOB HOPPING

Summary: In this Q&A article, a person asks how he can explain to a pharmaceutical company his previous odd jobs that ended up not working out for him.



Question: I've been trying to get into pharmaceutical sales since I graduated from college two years ago. I used to work in an emergency room at night while in school, and from that experience, I developed a love of medicine. Once I got my degree, I knew I needed sales training and experience, so I started selling cars. What a mistake! Then I took a job selling copiers at a company with an excellent training program, but I thought their business practices were unethical, so I left to take my current job in advertising sales. I enjoy it, but I'd still prefer medical sales. How do I explain to pharmaceutical companies that I won't jump ship quickly when my background says the opposite? My attempts to land interviews in that field have been without success. What's your advice?

Answer: Pharmaceutical sales is one of the most competitive, demanding sales specialties. Compensation is high for salespeople who can communicate effectively with doctors, which includes explaining the clinical aspects of new drugs and staying abreast of developments in medical journals. Companies typically seek pre-med and medical school graduates for these positions. Annual salaries tend to average around \$80,000 per year. To break in, you'll need to develop a track record of success, which is your greatest roadblock now. Perhaps you should start by targeting opportunities in related fields, such as medical equipment or home health-care sales. As a larger number of medications are developed in the next few years, your skills will be needed, and you'll be better prepared.