

Q&A Column
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Email Subject Line: Making The Transition from Temp to Permanent

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Headline: Convincing Employers You Want Permanent, Not Temp

Summary:

Question: I have been working on a lot of temporary assignments through personnel agencies for some time now. But now I want a permanent job. How can I make it look as if I have not been jumping from job to job, and how do I convince employers I really do want permanent work?

Christine D, Ottawa, Ontario

[Landing Page copy](#)

Headline: Convincing Employers You Want Permanent, Not Temp

Dear Mark,

Question: I have been working on a lot of temporary assignments through personnel agencies for some time now. But now I want a permanent job. So when I send out my resumes I have listed some of the places that I have worked for, but some employers don't seem to believe that I really want a permanent job. How can I make it look as if I have not been jumping from job to job, even though that is what you get when you work for agencies. I don't know how to express this anymore, even in my cover letters.

Thank you!
Christine D, Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Christine,

No need to panic: there is at least one way to present your work history such that it shows continuity and progression, instead of reading like a job-hopping nightmare. I've provided an example below. The other issue is convincing employers of your sincerity in wanting a full-time job. Let's address this first.

To start with, you will want to have a credible explanation, somewhere near the beginning of your cover letter, for wanting to transition away from the world of temping. Legitimate rationales include, but are not limited to, the following:

- You required more flexibility earlier on to accommodate a life stage you were in that no longer applies (e.g. you were raising a young child, looking after an elderly parent, ill relative etc.)
- You wanted to have an opportunity to experience different working environments before making an informed choice about the kind of employer you would want to make a firm commitment to
- You've had a chance to hone a variety of skills you might not have been able to had you been locked in with one employer early on, however now you would like to put your broadened experience to good use in a long term role. (Mention here how you plan to keep your skills up to date by taking relevant courses, etc.)

Sound legit? Good. Now let's see how to portray your job history resume-wise. The fictional example below shows you how to bundle all of your temp assignments under a single, unified heading. This way you keep it clean, clear and easy to digest. Under the main heading "Work Experience," or "Employment History," you might have the following:

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Progressive Administrative Roles

2000 - Present

Have worked in numerous firms on temporary Administrative Assistant assignments to broaden my skills and experience base. Employers have included IBM, The Royal Bank, Ford Motor Company and Kellogg's Canada.

Key Achievements:

- Developed computerized filing system that was implemented in multiple departments, saving time and improving information retrievability by 25% (at The Royal Bank)
- Served as Executive Assistant to a Vice President of Marketing at Ford Motor Company. Was entrusted with high level confidential information and ensured that flight schedules, meeting plans and other time-critical elements were properly scheduled and distributed to those who needed to know.

See how it's done? You simply list each achievement, and which employer it took place in, under the single heading of "Progressive Administrative Roles." This way it is clear to the reader that from 2000 to present day you have had a series of related assignments – not just a bunch of jobs you couldn't seem to keep.

By mentioning in your cover letter your commitment to the long-term viability of the employer you're applying to, by showing why you're choosing to go full-time, and by cleaning up your resume as shown above, you stand a better chance of surmounting possible objections. Best of luck!