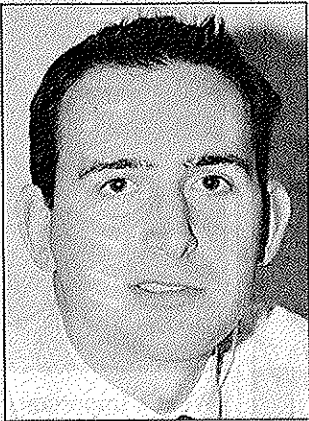


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Crème

How honest should I be about my career?



Careers expert David Morel

We put your dilemmas to a career expert, DAVID MOREL, the managing director of Tiger Recruitment in London

I am a PA in my early forties and have enjoyed a smooth career until two years ago when I went to work for a new employer who made me redundant after five months. Unfortunately, the same thing has just happened again. Neither redundancy was my fault. I am job hunting again, but what should I say about these?

It is important to point out that there are many candidates in a similar position. They, too, have good CVs with a good work history and solid careers, but have ultimately been affected by the downturn

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in the secretarial market since mid-2001. A number of candidates have been forced to temp or look at short and long-term fixed-term contracts, an option that many would have turned down five years ago.

When you are in an interview (whether with an agency or prospective employer), my advice is to be honest, straight down the line and explain your experiences fully, including what attracted you to each company, your job description there and why you were made redundant. Emphasise your career history before the past couple of years and make sure that you do your homework before an interview. Ideally, you don't want to be in

the same situation again and these three questions are always worth thinking about: Are they a big company? Do they have a good reputation? Why are they looking at taking on someone new?

Most prospective employers and agencies have seen CVs recently with similar work histories and are sympathetic to your situation — I can confidently say this shouldn't affect your future chances.

The good news is that the secretarial market has been picking up for the past six months. Stick in there, don't take what's happened personally and look forward to your next exciting opportunity.

■ *We welcome readers' questions for Career Clinic. E-mail your queries to creme@thetimes.co.uk*

dem can really clog things up. So, in Word, click Tools/Options/Save and make sure that the "Allow Fast Saves" box isn't checked. This option puts all changes made to a document in a heap at the top, leaving all the older versions below, so files become huge.

Chris Ward

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