

# Ask the Career Coach: Portfolio Career

Working a number of part-time engagements—common during these times—is called a portfolio career.

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I have been consulting since leaving my last job and trying to find another permanent position. How do you handle multiple consulting assignments since your last full time position on your resume?

M.D.  
Short Hills

The important thing about having a multiplicity of experience is to tie it together into a consistent story. This story may vary based on the career opportunities that you are pursuing.

The new term for working multiple part-time engagements is "portfolio career."

Part-time engagements may include a combination of part-time jobs, volunteer roles, freelancing, consulting, temping, interning and self employment that create a full-time equivalent position. Some individuals enjoy the flexibility and the use of their diverse skills. Most part-time opportunities do not offer benefits such as medical or paid time off.

When you work as an employee, this is considered a "regular" position. Companies typically no longer refer to a full-time employee as in a "permanent" position. The use of non-regular employment or a portfolio approach has grown considerably as employers remain cautious about "regular" hiring.

Many companies use non regular employment arrangements for the following:

- Select projects during a designated time period;
- During a start up project phase, a product launch, during a merger, acquisition or a divesture;
- And to try out a new position that a company is considering.

Consultants are generally professionals that have in-depth knowledge of a subject are brought in for their specific knowledge. Freelancing is the use of ones professional's skills for a specific project during a select time period. Temporary employees are typically paid through an agency that acts as your employer while the employee may be on site to work on a specific project or to fill a role for a specific timeframe. An internship allows you to learn on the job while working either part-time or full-time for a designated time period. Volunteer opportunities have become very popular during in this market while in a job search as it allows you to build your network, possibly learn a new industry and gain additional skills and knowledge.

Any and all of these work arrangements may be included in your resume. As you review the assignments you have taken since your last regular employment, identify what achievements you accomplished, what skills you have developed and what you can expand on in your resume. The portfolio career experience can enhance your summary section and be included in under professional experience as a consolidated group of assignments highlighting your achievements and new skills.

As a human resources professional and as an executive and career coach, I stress to my clients they need to manage their development plan for themselves. In today's market, knowing your competencies, knowing how to maintain your skills and when to retraining or develop new skills is important. Understanding one's industry, the market and relationships are the keys to success.

*"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to [CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com](mailto:CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com).*

*Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is [www.ChenofskySinger.com](http://www.ChenofskySinger.com).*