

## A closer look at employment history, “sb.by”

**Minsk, Belarus** – It is said that you should change jobs every five to seven years – after working at the same job for too long, your productivity decreases sharply and passionate activity becomes workday routine. According to this theory, nothing short of dismissal will help you pull yourself together. However, although it is one thing to apply for a new position every decade or so, filling out your timesheets while jumping from office to office is something else entirely. The recruiter must carefully consider who they are looking at – is the candidate an experienced hard-working specialist, or a weak dilettante?



Vladimir has been job-hunting for almost a year. He says that this is because recruiters are suspicious about his employment record, which covers more than 20 positions. During his year of job-hunting, he sent out over 100 CVs, but received only five interviews – a 1:20 success rate. Why is this? Even at the early pre-interview stage, recruiters look at his complicated CV and assume the worst. However, Vladimir knows that his wealth of experience is a great asset; during his years of working for banks and distribution companies, his level of expertise has grown accordingly. Prospective employers do not need to explain their decisions to him, but in private

discussions they will let him know: “We would have taken you, but what if you decide to leave us in two years?”

[Lola Trapsh](#), head of the Belarus office of leading international Executive Search firm [Pedersen & Partners](#), believes that HR specialists should take a closer look at candidates like Vladimir. After all, their totality of experience is a solid grounding, even though it comes from many different places. Rather than casting their CVs aside, it is better to interview such candidates and have them tell you in their own words what caused such frequent job changes.

Lola Trapsh says: “I currently work mostly with top managers, so it has been a while since I have faced this issue – after all, it is fairly common and acceptable for top managers to “jump” from one place to another! In my experience, a recruiter should look carefully at a candidate with a complicated employment record. Firstly, you have to consider when the frequent job changes took place – was there an economic crisis? An experienced HR professional will also analyse the candidate’s previous employers – do they like to retain people, or are they “easy hire, easy fire”? In the current labour market, it can be quite an achievement to work continuously for two years in one place. Conversely, during growth periods, new options and opportunities constantly arise, and everything may depend on how a particular company handles these possibilities. Often, a company is not ready to gain and profit from the skill set of a motivated and dynamic employee. In these situations, the employee has nothing to gain by sitting still, and will move on to a place where his/her ambitions are more likely to be fulfilled. However, if an employee decides to change after 10-15 years at the same company, his next employer may have challenges in retaining him. This employee is likely to have a poor idea of what he wants, and may well change his mind again and leave after two or three years.”



In European countries, the concept of the “work record book” or record of employment simply does not exist. In Germany, an employee’s “work biography” is recorded by the pension fund, which holds all information about a person’s career – where they worked, when they worked and how much they earned.

For the older generation of Belarusians who were employed during the days of the Soviet Union, the work record book or record of employment is a document of extreme importance. Some see it as a record of achievements; flipping through the pages, you can track the candidate’s ascent up the corporate ladder, taking occasional breaks to catch his breath before reaching the summit. Others prefer to hide their career track from prying eyes; reprimands placed in the employment file, punitive discharges and other stigmata of conflicts and incompetence are reflected in its pages. In such a case, it might be better to omit this “book,” even if this reduces your chances of being hired. In some areas such as IT, the work record book is already considered an anachronism. The new generation of employees do not really need these books; they are essentially judged on the strength of their skills and abilities, rather than the notes and comments in the book.

Frequent job changes are common in the IT sector. For example, a new employee (such as a developer, tester or project manager) is launching a product and a standard three-month period will obviously not be enough – in fact, such a large project requires more than six months. The employee quits having only just integrated into the team, and the company loses a new employee and all the skills that s/he has been taught at the company’s expense. For this reason, the recruiter must be confident that the applicant is very serious about the job. An excessive number of entries in the work record book should not necessarily be interpreted to mean that the candidate does not fit.

Remember that we are currently in a period of flux and instability. Businesses and projects are closing; people become redundant or find themselves doing the tasks that they were not expecting to perform. It is therefore wise to talk to a candidate’s previous employers before making a hiring decision. In general, the Belarusian work record book is a formality for the official and legal process. If the recruiter needs to check an applicant’s details through other channels, does it still make sense to use the work record book at all?

The Russian labour market is about to abolish the work record book. Russian recruiters believe that this document is an unnecessary supplement to a CV – a chronology of all of the applicant’s experience and companies, but with no data as to the applicant’s skills and abilities, his aptitude for training or his willingness to accept responsibilities. But in 2016, is this really the only use for the traditional work record book?

**Svetlana Sharapova**, [rabota.tut.by](http://rabota.tut.by): “We live in a very dynamic world. 20-30 years ago, a person could stay in one company for the whole of his professional career, but nowadays this is a rarity. The fast pace of life accelerates the mobility of the labour market. When hiring, I would recommend paying attention to the structure of the applicant’s past experience rather than the number of entries. For example, project work involves temporary periods of employment lasting from one month to one year. If a person specialises in this type of work, constant changes of employer are to be expected. The same is true of Sales Managers, who are likely to hop from job to job as they sell different products within the same field.”



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