



RESUME GUIDELINES

2006 ~ 2008

Career & Transfer Center
Student Center Building
2nd Floor, Room 201

phone 914-606-6760

fax 914-606-6767

www.sunywcc.edu/ctcenter



State University of New York

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Resume Formats.....	3
What to Include in Your Resume.....	4
Identify Your Skills.....	7
Summary: Key Phrases.....	8
Action Verb List.....	9
Tips for an Effective Resume.....	10
Sample Resumes.....	11
Creating Electronic Resumes.....	17
Job References.....	20
Cover Letters.....	21
Cover Letter- Outline.....	24
Sample Cover Letters.....	25
Career & Transfer Center Resources.....	28
Web Resources.....	29
Career & Transfer Center Staff & Faculty.....	30

RESUME GUIDELINES...INTRODUCTION

Why a Well Written Resume Matters

The resume plays a vital role in obtaining a competitive internship, getting your first job after graduating college or winning a scholarship to continue your education. A well-developed resume should capture the attention of a prospective employer within 30 seconds?! That's how long it takes a reader to formulate a first impression – and that's how long you have to create an impact! A resume is your very own custom designed marketing tool. A high-quality resume will effectively communicate your qualifications and will determine your chances of being considered for an interview. It is highly unlikely that you will get a job offer from the resume alone, but it is an absolute necessity in order to conduct a successful job search.

What is a Resume?

A resume is a descriptive summary of your background, concisely written and attractively presented. It should clearly communicate a sense of purpose, professionalism and honesty. It should focus the reader on your strongest points, as well as your career goals. A resume works best if it is one page only. If, however, you have a long and varied work history, two pages may be acceptable.

Getting Started

Review your strengths, achievements, skills, work and/or volunteer experience, education, hobbies and interests. A systematic assessment of what you do well and enjoy doing, will help you develop a job objective and present your qualifications to an employer. Keep in mind that your strengths and abilities are what "sell" you.

GOOD LUCK!

Please note:

We strongly suggest that you have a career counselor review your resume draft. You can make an individual appointment and/or attend a resume-writing workshop. Call or stop by the Career & Transfer Center, Student Center, Room 201, (914) 606-6760.

RESUME FORMATS

There are three formats which are most commonly used: reverse-chronological, functional and combination. Select the format most appropriate for you:

Reverse-Chronological:

Your education and experience are listed chronologically, in reverse order; with the most recent date first. Titles and organizations are emphasized and responsibilities/accomplishments are described. Because it is simple, to the point and easy to read, many employers prefer this format. It is especially good for entry-level candidates. We recommend it for most candidates (See pages 11 & 12).

Functional:

This format highlights three or four major areas of skill and accomplishments. It allows you to organize your experience in an arrangement that best supports your objective. This gives you the flexibility to emphasize your skills and eliminate repetition of similar experiences. Someone who has very scattered or little work experience, or perhaps has been out of work for a long time, may choose this type of resume. This format doesn't include a specific work history or dates. Employers may become "suspicious" when dates are eliminated. If you feel this may be the best format for you, make sure to discuss it with a WCC Career Counselor.

Combination (Functional/Chronological):

This format details accomplishments under separate "skills" headings. Experience or "work history" is listed chronologically with either no description or a very brief one. This type of format combines elements of the functional model, as well as the chronological one. It includes the specific places you have worked as well as the dates you were employed, but does not highlight them.

(See page 13)

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR RESUME

The following headings are **standard** in most reverse-chronological resumes and **should be included only if they apply to you:**
(Be sure to **BOLD & CAPITALIZE** each heading.)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Include your name, address, phone number(s) and email address at the very top of the resume. Try not to include too many contact numbers and only include your email address **if you check it regularly**. Cell and Home Phone numbers need to have a professional message. Email needs to be professional.

OBJECTIVE

Although the objective is optional, it enables you to tell the employer what type of position you are seeking by stating your desires and qualifications in concise terms. It should be as specific as possible, brief and to the point. With today's technology, it's very easy to have several different resumes with different objectives, so you can tailor the resume to a specific position. Keep in mind, you need to let employers know what **you can do for them**, not what you want them to do for you. Don't be too vague! (An alternative is to avoid stating an objective on your resume and to include it in your cover letter).

SUMMARY

This section provides the employer with a sense of who you are as an individual...your personal attributes and strengths. Use "key phrases" to describe yourself. (See page 8) Ideally, the way you describe yourself should match the qualities needed by the employer. An excellent resource for learning about personal qualities for specific careers is the *DISCOVER* program. Ask a staff member in the Career & Transfer Center for information and a token to access this internet-based program.

SKILLS

This section should include items specific to the position sought such as:

- any computer knowledge you possess...hardware, software, special programs
- business machine expertise
- fluency in a foreign language
- ability to operate particular types of equipment

Use the worksheet on page six to help you with the summary and skills sections. A good resource for learning about the skills needed for specific positions is the Occupational Outlook Handbook, www.bls.gov/oco/ under the heading "Training, Other Qualifications and Advancement"

EDUCATION

Your most recent degree or educational experience should be listed first in this section. Indicate your degree (or expected degree), major, date or anticipated date of graduation (month and year) and overall G.P.A. or major G.P.A. if it is 3.0 or higher. If you attended another college or training institution for a year or more, this should be listed also. Each school should be a separate entry and any relevant information should be listed under the appropriate entry. Usually, once you are in college, there is no need to include your high school, unless:

- it is a well-known or special high school
- you are a very recent high school graduate with little to include on your resume
- you had career-related internships or received any special awards, honors or scholarships
- You were leader of a school club or member of a varsity team

Listing **Related Coursework** is an option if you do not have a great deal of experience related to your job objective and/or if the courses you list are directly related to your objective.

HONORS / ACHIEVEMENTS

If you have achieved any **academic honors or awards**, you should include them in a special section under education. Include scholarships, Dean's list, President's list or any other merit awards. You may also want to list any honors organization to which you belong such as Phi Theta Kappa, Alpha Beta Gamma, or Philosophia. You may also include information such as:

- percent of college tuition and/or expenses you earned
- worked part or full time while maintaining high GPA

EXPERIENCE

List the job title, dates of employment, name of organization and location (city & state) in reverse chronological order (begin with the most recent position). Include both paid and volunteer positions, internships, part & full time jobs. Quantify achievements whenever possible (i.e.: supervised eight cashiers; increased sales by 35% in first six

months of employment). Describe your responsibilities and accomplishments using action verbs. (See page 9)

(**Note:** If you have experience that specifically relates to the job you are seeking, you may put that experience under a separate heading titled **RELATED EXPERIENCE**).

ACTIVITIES

Indicate any campus and/or community organizations in which you have been active within the past few years. Include positions held and expand upon responsibilities when appropriate. You may also include hobbies or interests in this section if they are relevant to the position for which you are applying.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

List membership in any professional organizations relevant to your current position or career objective.

For example: American Management Association (AMA), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

**** A NOTE ABOUT FONT STYLE & SIZE ****

Choose a font style that you like, but make sure it is one that looks **professional**.

Suggested styles: Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond, Tahoma, Century Gothic

Suggested sizes: Depending upon the length of your resume, an **11 pt.** or **12 pt.** font size is preferable. However, if you have a lot of information to include and want keep the resume to one page, a **9** or **10 pt.** size is acceptable. If you have the space, you may want to put your name, address and/or headings in a larger font than the text, but not larger than 14.

IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

A skill is an ability you possess. You demonstrate your skills in the things you have accomplished. The key to a successful job campaign is being able to explain to a prospective employer what you do well. When writing your resume keep in mind the skills an employer might be looking for. Highlight the skills that best fit your job objective.

Skills can be divided into three key areas:

- A. **Transferable / Functional:** Skills that enable you to relate to people, data and/or things. For example:
 - Communication/selling
 - Management/supervisory
 - Analyzing
 - Counseling/Teaching
 - Organizational

- B. **Self-Management:** Skills related to the management of yourself in relation to others and/or the work environment. For example:
 - Coping with deadlines
 - Punctuality
 - Sense of humor
 - Loyalty
 - Attention to detail

- C. **Content Specific:** Skills that require specific training. For example:
 - Proficiency in specific computer programs
 - Accounting ability
 - Writing proposals
 - Teaching a specific subject area

Can you identify your skills? Make a list to help you when writing your resume:

Functional/Transferable: _____

Self-Management: _____

Content Specific: _____

SUMMARY: KEY PHRASES CAN BE POWERFUL

- Enthusiastic
- High energy level
- Thrive on working with people
- Unique ability to help others
- A quick learner with ability to adapt to new challenges
- Strong work ethic
- Able to communicate well with a wide range of personalities
- Skilled in developing rapport with all types of people
- Resourceful
- Can be counted on to get the job done
- Able to maintain focus and remain calm under demanding conditions
- Experienced troubleshooter
- Take pride in achieving best possible results
- Self-starter
- Highly motivated
- Goal oriented
- Ethics and character of highest caliber
- Detail oriented
- Flexible
- Ability to present products/ideas persuasively and build rapport
- Creative
- Attentive to the completion of precise tasks and projects
- Enjoy taking initiative beyond stated job
- Sensitive to needs of others
- Efficient and organized
- Challenged by new tasks
- Cooperative and dependable team player
- Enjoy facilitating others
- Work well with deadlines
- Excellent listener
- Optimistic
- Excellent problem solver
- Experienced in _____

**Ask two friends who know you well to give you 2-3 positive adjectives that describe you. (You may be very pleasantly surprised!)
See if they can be used as part of your "SUMMARY" Statement.**

USE ACTION VERBS TO DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCES

accomplished	demonstrated	justified	referred
achieved	designed		regulated
adapted	detailed	led	renovated
adjusted	developed		reported
administered	devised	maintained	researched
advanced	diagnosed	managed	resolved
advertised	directed	marketed	restored
advised	displayed	mastered	reviewed
analyzed	distributed	measured	revised
appraised	drafted	mediated	rotated
arranged		modeled	
assembled	earned	molded	scheduled
assessed	edited	monitored	screened
assigned	effected	motivated	serviced
assisted	empowered		set up
	encouraged	negotiated	simplified
balanced	enforced		sold
budgeted	established	observed	solicited
built	evaluated	operated	sorted
	examined	organized	submitted
calculated	expanded	outlined	supervised
catalogued	explained	overhauled	supplied
classified			supported
collected	facilitated	participated	surveyed
communicated	financed	performed	systematized
compared	founded	photographed	taught
compiled		planned	tested
composed	generated	played	trained
computed	grouped	prepared	translated
conducted	guided	presented	tutored
consolidated		produced	
constructed	handled	programmed	updated
consulted	headed	promoted	utilized
contracted		protected	
controlled	implemented	provided	verified
converted	improved	purchased	
coordinated	increased		wrote
correlated	indexed	qualified	
counseled	informed		
created	initiated	raised	
critiqued	inspected	recommended	
	installed	reconciled	
dealt	integrated	recorded	
decorated	interviewed	recruited	
defined	investigated	rectified	
delegated		reduced	

TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

- Keep the resume to **one page** unless you have ten or more years of professional experience
- Avoid abbreviations except for words such as Inc. or Corp. States may also be abbreviated, such as NY
- Use bulleted phrases, beginning with action verbs, to describe your responsibilities (see page 8)
- Be specific, clear and concise
- Do not repeat yourself
- Do not use personal pronouns (i.e.: I, we)
- Job descriptions should be achievement oriented (e.g. Extended customer base from 1,000 to 10,000) and those achievements should be quantified if possible.
- Identify your transferable skills (see page 6)
- List your most recent experience, not necessarily your entire employment history
- Begin with your most recent experience and work backwards
- Use indentation, underlining, bold and capitalization for emphasis
- Use 24 lb. bond white or ivory paper on a laser quality printer
- Proof for typos and then proof again! **Be sure to have your counselor proof it also**
- Do not include personal data such as height, weight, age, marital status, social security number, etc.
- Write in the present tense for current jobs and past tense for prior positions
- Avoid using extra words like "a", "the", etc. (Example: Reconciled cash drawer at close of day)
- Do not falsify or exaggerate information
- Do not try to cover every inch of the page. Leave some open space for notes to be made
- Be sure the phone number listed on your resume has a professional voice message and that your email is professional

VICTORIA M. SHAW

**12 Barger Street, #35
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549**

**(914) 666-1234
vickym@aol.com**

- OBJECTIVE** To obtain a position as a Human Resources Assistant utilizing my education and professional background.
- SUMMARY** Organized and efficient. Self-starter. Excellent communication skills. Professional phone manner. Goal oriented. Cooperative and dependable team player.
- COMPUTER SKILLS** Proficient in **MS Word**. Basic understanding of Excel and PowerPoint
- EDUCATION** **AAS in Business Administration** (Expected December, 2007)
SUNY Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY
GPA: 3.46
- RELATED EXPERIENCE** **Sales Representative/Stock Manager** (2002-Present)
The Gap, White Plains, NY
- As team member, increased retail sales volume by 15% in fiscal 2003
 - Train and supervise three sales and stock assistants
 - Maintain accurate stock records and manage inventory control daily
 - Develop and market sales promotions, media and display advertising
- Sales Representative** (Summers 2002 and 2001)
Electrolux and Wearever Companies, White Plains, NY
- Sold products door-to-door on a commission basis
 - Received “Highest Sales Volume” award both summers
- ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE** **Cashier/Stock Clerk** (2000 to 2001)
Grand Union, Mt. Kisco, NY (part-time)
- Camp Counselor** (Summers 1998 and 1999)
Camp Floridan, Putnam Valley, NY
- ACHIEVEMENTS** Work 22 hours per week while studying full time and maintaining a high GPA
Member, Alpha Beta Gamma, International Business Honor Society

ANDREW GARCIA
32 Park Place
Yonkers, NY 10701
(914) 376-4214
andyg@aol.com

- OBJECTIVE** Part time office assistant
- SUMMARY** Organized and efficient. Detail oriented. Highly motivated self-starter. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Professional phone manner.
- SKILLS** Proficient in MS Word and Excel. Fluent in Spanish
- EDUCATION** **AAS in Office Technologies** (Expected May, 2007)
SUNY Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY
Related Coursework:
Computer Information Systems Word Processing Applications
Financial Accounting Office Administration
Managerial Accounting Business communication
Business Organization & Management
- EXPERIENCE** **Receptionist/Clerical Assistant** (January–November, 2003)
Prudential Insurance, Inc., Valhalla, NY
- Answered multi-line telephone
 - Recorded messages and routed calls
 - Maintained appointment schedule for office of six
 - Greeted customers, answered questions and provided general company information
- Sales Associate** (October-December, 2002)
Macy's, White Plains, NY
(Seasonal temporary position)
- Provided courteous and efficient customer service
 - Maintained cash drawer
 - Assisted in assembling merchandise displays
- ACTIVITIES** Active member, WCC Office Technologies Club (Fall 2002-Present)
Member, Yonkers Softball League (1998-Present)

Emily Roberts

46 Hale Ave.
White Plains, NY 10605

(914) 428-1481
emily25@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE: Position in sales, marketing, promotion or public relations, utilizing strong verbal and written communication skills

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- ❖ Personable and persuasive; able to build rapport
- ❖ Enthusiastic and energetic; creative self-starter
- ❖ Effective working both independently and as a team member
- ❖ Highly organized and efficient; capable of multi-tasking

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

SALES/CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Successfully sold video-dating club memberships to men and women, including interviewing and screening selected prospects
- Sold hand crafted jewelry, advising customers on appropriate colors, designs and gift purchases
- Won award for raising the most amount of money for "Race for the Cure" walk-a-thon to fight breast cancer

PROMOTION/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Promoted a Bike-a-thon for Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, contacting potential sponsors, distributing flyers, greeting event participants, collecting contributions
- Wrote text of announcement advertising Transfer Day at WCC
- Assisted public relations speech writer in developing ideas to address students at local high schools

MARKETING/DISPLAY

- Designed and set up artistic displays at arts and crafts fairs
- Contracted with jewelry designer as sales rep to upscale department stores and boutiques
- Created brochure to promote various programs at WCC

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Public Relations Assistant, Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY 2001-Present
Volunteer Fundraiser, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, White Plains, NY 2000-Present
Sales Representative, Matchmakers Video Dating, Yonkers, NY 2000-2001
Marketing Assistant, Rags Ltd. Clothing & Jewelry Boutique, Mt. Kisco, NY 1998-1999

EDUCATION

Candidate for BS in Marketing, Pace University, Pleasantville, NY Present
AA Liberal Arts/Humanities, Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY May 2005

Maria Jones
427 Victory Ave.
Mt. Vernon, NY 10553
(914) 765-4693
Maria.jones@msn.com

Objective RN position in a Pediatric Unit of a major urban medical facility

Summary of Qualifications

Licensed RN (#4345932)
Experience with pediatric patients in a critical care unit
Empathetic, good listener, able to assess patient needs in a timely manner
Can monitor patients for basic functions such as blood pressure, IV, temperature,
Graduated second in a class of 35 nursing students
Recipient of Nursing Department Award for excellent patient relations skills

Education AAS, Nursing (expected May 2007)
SUNY/Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY
GPA 3.4 Honors Program Dean's List three semesters

Clinical Rotations

Pediatrics	Mt. Sinai Medical Center, NY, NY	Spring 2007
	▪ Worked in critical care/cancer unit	
Medical/Surgical	NY Hospital Medical Center, NY, NY	Fall 2005
OBGYN	Westchester Medical Center	Spring 2006
Psychiatric	St. Vincent's Hospital, Harrison, NY	Fall 2006
Geriatric	The Country House, Yorktown, NY	Spring 2007

Experience

Nurses Aide

Mt Vernon Hospital, Mt Vernon, NY Fall 2003-present

- Provided basic patient care to geriatric and pediatric units
- Assess patient needs and monitor vital signs (blood pressure, temp, pulse)
- Skilled at creating a comfortable environment for patients

Retail Sales Associate

Lord & Taylor, Scarsdale, NY Summer 2003

- Assisted customers with purchases in jewelry department
- Consistently exceeded sales quota, frequent recipient of the "Employee of the Month" award

- Ensured customer satisfaction through excellent customer service

Sample resume format, reverse chronological style, berling antuqua font, 12 pt

SARAH M. SMITH

235 Lake Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10709

Office (914) 765-2244
Home (914) 779-4567
Smith_321@yahoo.com

PROFILE

Experienced sales professional with in-depth knowledge of consumer services and the retail banking industry. Excellent team player who can develop and implement a market/sales strategy. Expertise in:

Prospecting	Direct Marketing
Service Delivery	Marketing Research
Consumer Behavior	Related Computer Technology

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Citibank NA

New York, NY
1999-present

Senior Manager, Gold Card Marketing (2000-present)

Responsible for managing a team of sales professionals in targeting new card services to preferred customers.

- Develop and execute telemarketing programs including direct mail and print ads
- Create and manage \$5 million sales budget Exceeded sales goals by 35% in first year
- Train and supervise a professional sales staff of three

Lead Salesperson, Platinum Card Marketing (1999-2000)

Responsible for managing and executing high quality, targeted direct mail programs and services for Citibank's preferred customers.

- Directed/coordinated activities of advertising agency, telemarketing firm and other vendors in implementation of sales programs
- Managed and trained a staff of seven sales professionals
- Exceeded sales targets for direct mail programs by 26%

Bank of New York

White Plains, NY
1997-99

Customer Service Representative

Provided information and services to current and potential bank customers

- Sold bank products/services
- Oversaw daily operations of retail branch including supervision of bank staff

EDUCATION

BS, Business Administration, SUNY Binghamton, GPA 3.7

AAS, Liberal Arts, SUNY Westchester Community College, GPA 4.0

Valerie Mitchell

92 Longview Road
White Plains, NY 11593

914-696-8270
vmitchell@msn.com

Summary

Current college student in Restaurant Management program A comprehensive culinary program which consists of a combination of classroom lecture, food lab and restaurant experience. Skilled in food ordering and preparation, restaurant management, staff supervision/training and menu planning

Relevant Experience

Assistant Cook, *Rock Grille*, New Rochelle, NY July 2004 – Present

Provide assistance to Head Chef in all aspects of meal preparation including salads, main entrées and desserts in a new upscale bistro type restaurant. Consistently follow safe and sanitary food procedures.

- Prepare vegetables, herbs and salads
- Coordinate meal orders, providing sides as needed
- Wash and clean food prep areas at end of shift

Westchester Community College *Café*, Valhalla, NY Spring 2005

As part of Restaurant Management program worked all aspects of the *Café* which serves lunch twice weekly to students, staff and faculty of WCC

- Create menus, order and prep food
- Hire and manage staff
- Bake breads/rolls and desserts
- Create cost controls which meet budgetary guidelines

Education

AAS, Restaurant Management expected May 2007
SUNY Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY
GPA 3.2 **Dean's List two semesters**

Related Courses

Principles of Food Prep/Lab	Basic Microbiology/Lab
Quantity Food Production/Lab	Menu Planning
Food Service Operations Management	Advanced Foods
Practicum: Kitchen & Dining Room Management	Practicum: Buffet Catering
Food/Beverage Purchasing & Cost Controls	Business Org. & Management

Certification in Food Safety/Handling Jan 2006
Member, Restaurant Management Club 2001-present
Volunteer, **Food PATCH**, local food pantry fundraising event Fall 2005

CREATING AND SENDING ELECTRONIC RESUMES

Creating a Text Resume

A text resume is simply a resume without any fancy formatting options such as bold, certain fonts, or symbols available with a standard Word processing program. This plain text format is popular when sending your resume via email because it is the most portable. It is viewable and printable on almost all types of computers and software.

If you already have your resume created with Word processing software you can turn it into a text resume by simply editing its format. Open your resume in your word-processing program and save it as a "text only" file. You will need to use the "SAVE AS" feature to add this version.

Sending Your Resume via Email

In today's high tech resume processing environment, it is important for all job seekers to have their resumes in an electronic format that can be submitted via the Internet. That can mean one of three options:

- Submit your resume via email
- Post your resume via an electronic form
- Post a web resume

There are different formats you can use depending on how you are applying. Remember, you will still need a formal hard copy to bring to the interview; so electronic resumes are not a substitute for the paper version.

Text Only Copy/Paste

The most consistent standard for sending your resume via email is to include it in the body of your email message. When applying via email, copy and paste your "text only" resume into the body of an email message. Insert your cover letter above the resume in the email message. It is useful to save your text only resume and cover letter that you can edit in the future, depending on the job.

Before sending to a potential employer, practice sending your resume this way to a friend who is using a different email program. You want to be sure that it appears in the format intended. Use the advertised job title in the subject line, citing any relevant job numbers as noted in the ad. This makes it easy to route your resume to the appropriate person.

Sending your Resume as an Attachment

If employers request that you send a resume as an email attachment, they will probably specify which formats are acceptable. For instance, they might request that you send the resume as a MS Word attachment. The advantage is that you will retain the formatting options from your original resume. If an employer specifies that you can attach a word-processed resume, simply attach the file to your email. Your cover letter will now become the body of the email and the resume is the attachment. If an employer does not specify how to send the resume and cover letter, your safe bet is the text only version. Many companies have their email set up so that attachments don't travel through their security system and potentially pass along a virus. They become encoded and appear as garble. Chances are that the person receiving it will not know how to decode it and will delete your email. To be on the safe side, embed your letter and resume into the text of the email and attach the formatted version as well.

Posting a Resume via Electronic Forms

A resume posted on the Web via an electronic form is stored into a database where thousands of employers and recruiters can retrieve and view it. If an employer is interested, they will contact you directly. Some sites allow you to post a resume via e-form by inputting text into specified fields manually and then submitting the information. Others allow you to copy and paste your existing text resume into the form. Once submitted, it is posted on that site for employers to search and review. In addition to posting, some sites will also allow you to send this posted resume to jobs listed on the site.

Whichever way and where you post your resume, be sure to check the overall reputation of the site carefully. Use criteria such as how much it costs (if anything), the ability to update and delete your resume at will and how long your resume will be stored on the site before it is automatically deleted to determine your selection of sites.

Points to Remember

The key is to be prepared to send your resume via any method that the employer requests. If the employer doesn't specify which type of resume to forward, use your best judgment. If you are applying for a position with an elementary school, it is probably best to mail your traditional cover letter and resume. If you were applying for an IT job, you would want to use some form of an electronic resume. Make your decision depending on the industry and size of the organization. You may want to inquire with the firm directly to find out which method to use.

Be aware that once your resume is posted, there is no telling who will read it, or where it will end up. Many sites offer different levels of confidentiality from which to choose. You might choose to post your resume without your contact information available to the viewer, or just your email address. Employers can search for your resume and contact you through the site rather than directly.

Remember... you will still need to have a traditional resume and cover letter.

JOB REFERENCES

Before a prospective employer will hire you, he or she will generally ask you to provide references from your former employers, professors and/or someone who can talk about your job or academic performance, skills, strengths and weaknesses, reliability, integrity and general character.

Who do you ask to be a reference? Start by making a list of all your prospective references. (Some employers will want both “professional” and “character” references.) You can include:

- **Supervisors or managers** from your present or former job (especially one that might be relevant to the position you are seeking)
- **Professors, teachers, counselors, coaches or others from your college or high school** that know you well
- **Present or former co-workers** (can include volunteer or community work)
- **Clergy**

For each potential reference, gather the following information:

- Name
- Title (if he/she has one)
- Company or School Address (unless home)
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- E-mail address

After completing your list of names, select those whom you think will be most willing to provide an excellent reference. Make sure to ***call all those you select and ask if it is okay to use them as a reference. Ask permission to include their address, phone number and email address.*** When a specific offer is on the horizon, let your references know the company’s name, how you would fit in the open position and that you’d like to use them as a reference. ***Do not give anyone’s name to a prospective employer before you check with the prospective reference.*** Speak with each reference and let him or her know what job you’re applying for and the qualities that the prospective employer is seeking. Ask your references whether they would enthusiastically recommend you. Make it clear that their reference might be critical to you getting the job!

COVER LETTERS

“A resume without a cover letter is like an unannounced salesperson showing up at your door. If you are going to let in a perfect stranger, you at least want to see their credentials. This is exactly what a cover letter does – it introduces you, a total stranger, to the reader. It must be compelling, personable, and brief. It needs to specifically relate to the position in question. Remember, you only have eight seconds to convince the reader to invite you in”.

Barbara B. Vinitsky and Janice Y. Benjamin, ***How to Become Happily Employed***

Content

Ugh! The dreaded cover letter. Hated more than the resume itself, yet an integral part of any serious job search. The cover letter answers the most important question on the hiring manager's mind: ***Why is this applicant the best-qualified candidate for the job?*** Therefore, a dynamically written cover letter needs to be part of every job search strategy.

The cover letter is your chance to sell yourself to a potential employer as the best candidate for a specific position and therefore is just as important as the resume. How well you write the letter will determine how effective your resume will be. A good cover letter will help you get an interview, a bad one will cause your resume to be virtually ignored.

The cover letter serves a different purpose from the resume and should not be used to repeat information from your resume, just introduce it. The resume is about you, your experience and your skills. The cover letter is about the type of position you are seeking, how you are qualified for that position and what you can do for the employer. The cover letter highlights the aspects of your background that are most useful to the potential employer; the skills, talents and experience the employer is seeking (so you will need to do some research before you write it). The cover letter can sometimes explain negative parts of your background in a positive way that your resume cannot, like large gaps in your employment history, changing the focus of your career or reentering the job market.

An effective cover letter should accomplish three things:

- Introduce you to the reader and explain your reason for writing
- Sell you to the prospective employer
- Indicate what you would like to happen next

Why am I writing?

The first paragraph needs to grab the reader's attention. Say why you are writing and sending your resume: State why you are interested in the firm and you can fill a need they have. If a mutual friend or associate referred you to the company, say so. The hiring manager may feel more obligated to respond to your letter. If you heard about the position through another means, be sure to say where/when/who. List the title of the position as well.

How am I qualified?

In the second paragraph, briefly **state the skills you bring to the position that would specifically meet the employer's needs**. Your resume will provide the details. State how you will use your talents and experience to benefit the position and the firm. The prospective employer is not that interested in how the position will benefit you. Think about answering the question: How can I help you?(the employer)

What steps will I take to follow up?

The closing paragraph should include a plan of what you hope will happen next (like an interview). Be clear about how you can be reached and how you will follow up (if you don't hear from them). Be assertive but polite.

Writing Tips

How you write your letter is as important as the message it contains. Often prospective employers use the letter as a measure of your writing and communication skills. Be sure to use correct grammar, spelling and vocabulary that reflect your style. Be natural; use simple uncomplicated language and sentence structure. Don't try to sound like someone else. (Don't take the chance of using words incorrectly!). Be specific and get to the point; be positive. Don't ever volunteer any negative information about yourself in the cover letter or the resume. Make sure every sentence has something to do with explaining your interest in the company, illustrating how you will fill their needs. Type the letter using the same font and paper as the resume for uniformity. Tell the employer how to reach you including a phone and email address (but be sure to check those messages at least two times per day). Check carefully for grammar and spelling mistakes, and then check again. Typos and grammatical errors say a lot about the kind of work you do. Don't depend on spell check; keep a dictionary handy for proper word usage and grammar reference.

Be sure to keep a copy for yourself of all the cover letters you send to employers and include them in your job search folder for future reference and follow up.

Emphasize your Transferable and Marketable Skills

Career experts consistently mention the following transferable skills as vital for new graduates:

- Communication skills (oral and written)
- Teamwork/group/interpersonal skills
- Leadership skills
- Work-ethic traits, such as drive, stamina, effort, self-motivation, diligence, ambition, initiative, reliability, positive attitude toward work, professional appearance, punctuality, ethical, flexibility, honesty
- Logic, intelligence, proficiency in field of study

These five skill clusters can be considered the most important in your first post-college job, and some or all of them will be required in just about any job in your career. It is therefore very important to show a prospective employer how you have them.

Consider transferable skills you've attained exclusively in the classroom:

- Ability to meet deadlines, thrive under deadline pressure
- Ability to handle multiple tasks
- Ability to achieve goals
- Ability to adapt
- Writing, speaking and listening skills
- Research skills
- Ability to work as part of a team

Format

As with a resume, there is no one "official format" for the cover letter, but here are some thoughts to keep in mind:

- Each cover letter is an original letter designed to target a specific position and/or firm. No photocopies, fill-ins or crossing out of a "canned" letter.
- Address the letter to a specific person. Make an effort to find out who will be making the hiring decision and address the letter to that person (using Mr. or Ms. for the salutation). Try to avoid an impersonal letter, but if necessary address the letter to "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Madam/Sir" or "Manager" followed by a colon.
- You may use bullets, indent or bold to emphasize and organize information, but be conservative.

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

(Include your contact information just as it appears on your resume)

VICTORIA M. SHAW

12 Barger Street, #35
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549

(914) 666-1234
vickym@aol.com

November 23, 2006 ← The date goes two spaces under your address

Emily Jones
Director of Human Resources
XYZ Corporation
1359 Fifth Avenue ← The full name, title, address of the intended recipient in block format
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Jones:

First Paragraph: say why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying and mention how you heard about the opening or firm.

Second/Third Paragraph: Here is an opportunity to state why you are interested in the position or firm and how you have the qualifications they are seeking. Review your past work, education and community experiences to generate statements of your ability to do the job they need. Don't restate your resume, write in a confident manner and remember that the reader will review your letter as an example of your writing skills.

Third/Fourth Paragraph: Refer the reader to your enclosed resume. Indicate your interest in meeting with the employer and state what you will do to initiate a meeting or how you can best be reached.

Sincerely,

Your Signature here ←

Your Name Typed here ←

Always sign and type your name at the closing

Sample Cover Letter

Joan Crawford

567 Pennsylvania Avenue
Mamaroneck, NY 10500
jcrawford@hotmail.com

April 25, 2007

Ms. Maria Jones, President
Systems R Us
555 First Avenue
Scarsdale, NY 10523

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am a recent graduate of the Westchester Community College associate degree program in Computer Information Systems, and seek employment in the IT field. I was attracted to your firm because of your recent innovations in systems design and your new web based customer service program. Enclosed is my résumé for your consideration.

My coursework at Westchester Community College introduced me to various programming languages, systems design and integration, as well as web development. As a result of this academic preparation, I developed an expertise in programming in C++ and designing websites using HTML. Through my internship at EBay, I assisted in the development of a web based purchasing site, developed and maintained a database of customers using MS Access, and learned the importance of working as part of a technical team.

I am excited about the possibility of joining your team of IT professionals. I work hard, am responsible and reliable and enjoy taking the initiative when appropriate. I was a good student, maintained a 3.2 GPA, and received a scholarship to continue my studies this fall.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my background would benefit your team. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan Crawford

(unsolicited letter/resume)

Sample Cover Letter

James Garner
2593 Center Street
Peekskill, NY 10566

March 22, 2007

Clark L. Johnson
Human Resources Director
First Bank of Boston
1137 Main Street
New Rochelle, NY 10642

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I recently learned of your need for a Portfolio Assistant through our Career Center on campus. I am very excited about this opportunity as I am a recent graduate and finance major at Westchester Community College.

In addition to my strong academic background in Finance and Accounting, I offer significant business experience having completed an internship with First Union Bank. Through my experience in a local retail store, I developed strong customer service and organizational skills and learned the importance of working as part of a team. As Vice President of the Delta Business Club, I developed leadership abilities, planned numerous campus events and organized a field trip to the Federal Reserve Bank in Manhattan. I consistently maintained a GPA of 3.0 and was invited for membership to the business honor society.

I am attracted to First Bank of Boston because of its recent growth and superior reputation as a leader in developing a global marketing strategy. Working as a Portfolio Assistant will allow me to use my strong analytical and research skills and assist customers in managing their investments.

I have enclosed my resume for your review and hope to be able to meet with you to discuss this opportunity. I will call to confirm your receipt of this letter next week and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely

James Garner

(Advertised position on campus)

Sample Cover Letter

Lori D. Harris

152-1 Safi Rd – Port Chester, NY 10555

(914) 673-0012
harris574@aol.com

November 3, 2006

Mr. Allan Smith, Manager
Liberty Travel Agency
30 Main Street
White Plains, NY 10701

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am seeking a position with your organization and have enclosed my resume for your review in light of your current need for Administrative Support. I have excellent qualifications for this position and would appreciate your careful consideration. I learned about this position through the *Journal News* dated 10/31/03.

My background is diverse and covers a variety of experience that would be directly transferable to this position. Highlights include:

- Experience in administrative support, cash handling, reception, and customer service
- AS degree in Business: Office Technologies with 3.2 GPA
- Computer literacy and familiarity with general office software
- Detail oriented; proof read to ensure accuracy
- Professional manner with good interpersonal and communication skills

(Try to avoid redundancy from the resume)

If you are looking for someone with my qualifications, I would be interested in meeting with you. I will call you next week to discuss that possibility. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lori D. Harris

(Advertised in newspaper)

Career & Transfer Center Print Resources Resume/Cover Letter

Bolles, Richard Nelson. *What Color is Your Parachute*, Berkeley CA: Ten Speed Press, 2003

Crispin, Gerry, Mehler, Mark. *CareerXRoads, Directory of Job, Resume and Career Management Sites on the Web*, Kendall Park, NJ: MMC Group, 2000

Dikel, Margaret Riley, Roehm, Frances and Oserman, Steve. *The Guide to Internet Job Searching, 1998 - 99 ed*, Lincolnwood, IL: VGM Career Horizons, 1998

Farr, Michael J., *America's Top Resumes for America's Top Jobs*, Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works, Inc., 1998

Hansen, Katherine, *Dynamic Cover Letters for New Graduates*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1998

Parker, Yana. *The Damn Good Resume Guide*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1996

Vault Guide to Resumes, Cover Letters & Interviewing, 2nd ed., New York, NY: Vault, Inc., 2002

Weddle, Peter, *Weddle's InfoNotes (WIN) Writing a Great Resume*, Stamford: CT, 2002

Whitcomb, Susan B., Kendall, Pat. *e Resumes*, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2002

Wolfinger, Anne. *The Quick Internet Guide to Career & Education Information*, Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works Inc., 2000

Additional Suggested Resources:

Kennedy, Joyce Lain, *Resumes for Dummies* (Dummies.com)

Resume Web Resources

Try these websites for information and articles about job search and preparing an effective resume.

www.jobhuntersbible.com

MonsterTRAK's Career Guide-

http://static.monstertrak.com/careerguide/inside_resume.html

The Riley Guide- <http://www.rileyguide.com/>

http://www.jobweb.com/Resumes_Interviews/default.htm

<http://www.weddles.com>

www.wetfeet.com

www.collegegrad.com

www.careerjournal.com/default.asp

www.quintcareers.com

www.careerbuilder.com

www.careerperfect.com

www.collegerecruiter.com

www.damngood.com

www.careercurrents.com

www.careerlab.com/letters/link002.htm

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com>

<http://susanireland.com/index.html>

<http://resumedoctor.com/default.asp>

Career & Transfer Center Staff/Faculty

Professional Staff

Gwendolyn Roundtree-Evans, Ed.D, Associate Professor
Coordinator of Transfer Services
(914) 606-6581
gwen.roundtree@sunywcc.edu

Susan Hacker, Associate Professor
Coordinator, Cooperative Education/Internship Program
(914) 606-6590
susan.hacker@sunywcc.edu

Marilyn Merker, Career Counselor
(914) 606-8574
marilyn.merker@sunywcc.edu

Support Staff

Maria Clarizio, Federal Work Study Coordinator
(914) 606-6763
maria.clarizio@sunywcc.edu

Joe Goldstein, Resource Library Technician
(914) 606-7865
joseph.goldstein@sunywcc.edu

Terry Leahy, Receptionist
(914) 606-6760
terry.leahy@sunywcc.edu

