

RESUMES, COVER LETTERS, AND INTERVIEWS: HOW SHARP ARE YOUR TOOLS?

College of Arts & Sciences Career Night

TODAY'S TOPICS

- Resume ★
- Cover Letter
- Networking ★
- Job Search
- Interviewing

RESUMES

WHAT IS A RESUME?

- A summary of your qualifications
 - Education
 - Experiences (all types!!!)
 - Skills
- Marketing tool → an advertisement on you!
 - Know your audience
 - Be prepared to spend ample time preparing resume

HOW IS A RESUME USED?

- Most often used when applying for employment
- Can be used to apply for a co-op or internship or summer position, graduate or professional school or leadership positions in particular organizations
- A screening tool – the 10-20 second scan
- Resume → Interview → References → Job Offer

FORMATS

- Reverse Chronological Format
 - ▣ Emphasizes work experience history around dates
 - ▣ Highlights career progression
 - ▣ This is what employers prefer
- Functional / Skills-Based Format
 - ▣ Organizes information around functional headings which highlight skills & abilities

STYLE & APPEARANCE

- Stick to 10-12 font size
- Times New Roman and Arial are standard fonts
- Use **bolding**, *italics*, all CAPS, underlining, etc.
- Use lines to separate heading/sections
- Use bulleted statements with action-oriented verbs
- ½-1-inch margins all 4 sides are standard
- Balance white space and text
- Use the same neutral paper for resume, cover letter and references.

WRITING TIPS

- Spend ample time preparing your resume/CV
- Be prepared to write and rewrite
- One-page resume is usually sufficient, CV's are two or more pages
- Custom design resume/CV for each position
- Catch your reader's eye
- Accentuate the positive
- Do not include personal information on resume
- Use action-oriented verbs and quantify when possible

□ accommodated	□ demonstrated	□ handled	□ marketed
□ accomplished	□ earned	□ hired	□ organized
□ assigned	□ edited	□ honored	□ participated
□ assisted	□ enhanced	□ identified	□ processed
□ boosted	□ established	□ illustrated	□ raised
□ broadened	□ exceeded	□ implemented	□ recommended
Examples of Action Verbs			
□ chaired	□ formulated	□ learned	□ trained
□ coordinated	□ founded	□ lectured	□ utilized
□ created	□ gained	□ listened	□ volunteered
□ decided	□ generated	□ made	□ won
□ defined	□ governed	□ maintained	□ worked
□ delegated	□ grouped	□ managed	□ wrote

THE BASICS OF RESUME CONTENT

- Categories used will vary based on your qualifications and/or intended goal
- Consider several versions of resume for different targets
- Describe more than duties/tasks performed
 - indicate skills developed/demonstrated
 - indicate value added – accomplishments

RESUME CONTENT-HEADING

- Cap the top of your resume with:
 - Full name (can put nickname in parenthesis if you wish)
 - Complete address (may include both permanent and present address)
 - Phone number (can list work/cell phone number - designate each with an "C" "H" or "W")
 - E-mail address

EXAMPLE HEADINGS

<p>Cecilia X. Sample 222 Strawberry Lane Columbia, South Carolina 29208 803.777.3972 c.xsample@mailbox.sc.edu</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; transform: rotate(-15deg);">Good</p>	<p>Cecilia X. Sample 222 Strawberry Lane <u>Columbia, S.C. 29208</u> 803.777.3972 sexiicc@hotmail.com</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; transform: rotate(-15deg);">Bad</p>
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RESUME CONTENT-OBJECTIVE

- The objective is an **optional** category that indicates the type of work you are seeking
- Employers prefer objectives that are specific and concise
- If you know the exact position you are pursuing or field that you are considering, you may include an objective *[Otherwise, you may omit this category]*

EXAMPLE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE

An internship in computer programming.

OR

A management training position at Bank of America.

Good

OBJECTIVE

An internship utilizing my skills and training.

OR

A position in financial services where I can learn and progress in my career.

Bad

RESUME CONTENT-EDUCATION

- Degrees should be listed in reverse chronology
Include only those schools in which you earned a degree
- Names and locations of schools or programs
- Graduation date
- Degrees or certificates
- Major, minor or cognate
- Grade point average (if 3.0 or above)
- Awards/Honors/Scholarships (consider a separate section if more than 3)
- Study abroad experiences

EXAMPLE OF EDUCATION

University of South Carolina Honors College; Columbia, SC
Bachelor of Science, May 2010

Major: Mathematics,

Minor: Computer Science

GPA: 3.83

Magna cum laude with honors

Intensive mathematics track requiring extra upper level math courses

University of South Carolina Honors College; Columbia, SC
Greece/Turkey Maymester Study Abroad May 2008

Studied the history of Greece and Turkey while traveling throughout those nations

RESUME CONTENT-RELATED COURSEWORK

- This category is optional and can also be part of the Education section
- Mainly used when you are lacking related experience but want to demonstrate specific knowledge
- List the titles of courses you've taken that relate to the position for which you are applying

RELATED COURSEWORK:

Ordinary Differential Equations	Theory of Computation
Statistics	Programming Language Structures
Vector Analysis II	Digital Logic Design
Vector Calculus	Computer Architecture

RESUME CONTENT-EXPERIENCE

- Include full-time and part-time jobs, summer positions, volunteer work, military service, internships, self-employment, research projects, and even activities if they are directly related to the position
- In some cases you may wish to divide this category into two sections: one called *Related Experience* and one called *Additional Experience*

EXAMPLE OF EXPERIENCE (*continued*)

- Include:
 - Employer name
 - City/State of the employer
 - Your job title
 - Dates of employment
 - Bulleted descriptions of your responsibilities

EXPERIENCE

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC
Summer Pre-Graduate Researcher
 May 2009 – July 2009

- Designed and conceptualized study of adolescent peer relations and identity development
- Analyzed and interpreted large-scale survey data
- Submitted results for presentation at the Society for Research on Child Development

RESUME CONTENT-ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES

- Honors, Activities, Research, Professional Affiliations
 - You may specifically want to list:
 - Activities or leadership positions that demonstrate job related skills
 - Honors or awards (Scholarships may or may not be relevant)

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES *(continued)*

- SKILLS
 - ❑ We recommend a separate section listing computer skills. Be specific, listing product names and version numbers if possible
 - ❑ Students seeking technology positions specifically should break this list down into subcategories such as programming languages, hardware, software, operating systems, databases, peripherals, etc
 - ❑ If you speak more than one language, you should also list them here, indicating your level of proficiency in each

RESUMES TIPS

- Employers only look at a resume for 10-20 seconds, make sure they get what you want them to from that glance!
- The resume is not to get you a job-it is to get you an interview

COVER LETTERS

TYPES OF COVER LETTERS

- There are three general types of cover letters:
 - ❑ The **application letter** which responds to a known job opening
 - ❑ The **prospecting letter** which inquires about possible positions
 - ❑ The **networking letter** which requests information and assistance in your job search

APPLICATION -COVER LETTER

- Should be specific to the position
- Explain the reasons for your interest in the organization and in the job you are applying for
- Explains how your skills relate to the criteria listed in the job posting

PROSPECTING -COVER LETTER

- Sent to prospective employers that may be hiring, but, haven't listed a specific job opening to apply for. Should contain information on:
 - Why the company interests you
 - Why your skills and experience would be an asset to the company
 - How you will follow-up and where you can be reached

NETWORKING –COVER LETTER

- Used to set up an informational interview
- Make your request clear
- Why the career interests you and what you expect to ascertain
- How much time are you requesting (20 minutes is typical)
- How you will follow-up and where you can be reached

FORMAT OF A COVER LETTER

- Use your resume heading as a letterhead
- Three basic paragraphs:
 1. Why are you writing to them and who are you?
 2. Why are you the best fit for their organization and this position?
 3. How will you follow up with them from here?

INTERNET APPLICATION TIPS

- Thoroughly read job description
- Use key words from the description in cover letter and resume



REFERENCE TIPS

- Choose references carefully
- Ask references
- Gather accurate contact information
- Prepare references
- Keep references informed
- Thank references

NETWORKING

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

- "A supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest."

[Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006]



WHAT IS THE CAREER RELATED DEFINITION OF NETWORKING?

- The process of interacting with individuals:
 - ❑ have positions or work for organizations similar to those that interest you
 - ❑ who are willing to share information about their position or organization
 - ❑ provide names of others who have positions or work for organizations similar to those that interest you



WHY SHOULD I NETWORK?

- The more people you know, the more resources you have for information or opportunities that might interest you, career related or otherwise
- **Career related purposes:**
 - ❑ Learn more about careers in general
 - ❑ Establish relationships that could indirectly result in a job lead
 - ❑ Career Management

WHY SHOULD I NETWORK? *(continued)*

- 80% of job vacancies are never advertised externally
- Most employers would prefer to hire a person referred by a colleague, peer or friend and believe they will be exposed to a higher quality candidate in this manner
- The overall time needed to find a job can be drastically reduced
 - ❑ 6-9 months without networking
 - ❑ 4-6 months if networking

WHY SHOULD I NETWORK? *(continued)*

- The referral process can put you in contact with key people you might otherwise never meet
- You can learn more about your field of interest and occupations within it, as well as specific organizations

WHEN TO START?

- Build it before you need it
- It is never too late, *but the sooner the better*
- The earlier you begin the more resources and information you will have to call on when looking for a job
- Starting the process early allows you to use information and resources as additional help in choosing a major or career path



WHERE TO NETWORK?

- One on one meetings
- Informational meetings
- Professional groups/associations
- Training
- Social/recreational/community settings
- Serendipity

WHO DO YOU WANT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR NETWORK?

- Generate a list of companies you would be interested in learning more about
- Generate a list of types of positions you think you would enjoy
- **Brainstorm, Categorize,** and then **Prioritize** the names of people you think can put you in touch with someone in those companies or positions

WHO DO YOU WANT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR NETWORK? (continued)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ List 100 People you know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Professional colleagues □ Classmates □ Ex-employers □ Ex-co-workers □ Doctors □ Dentists □ Clergymen □ Salesmen, customers □ Pharmacist □ Banker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Hairdressers □ Barber □ PTA □ Bartenders □ Policemen □ Insurance agents □ Faculty □ Relatives and neighbors □ Postman □ Fraternity-sorority members □ Small business owner |
|--|--|

DEFINE YOUR PERSONAL BENEFITS

- Clarify your goals
- Know why you are networking and be prepared to be honest about that with the people with whom you network
- Research the contact's organization as much as you can prior to meeting or initial phone call

SELF INTRODUCTION

- Always have a self introduction in your pocket!
 - ❑ A self introduction is a short (15-30 second) sound bite that briefly and memorably introduces you
 - ❑ It highlights your uniqueness
 - ❑ It focuses on the benefits you provide
 - ❑ It is delivered effortlessly
 - ❑ Tailored to the meeting/event



SELF INTRODUCTION (*continued*)

- KNOW YOURSELF
 - ❑ What are your key strengths?
 - ❑ What comes to mind to describe you?
 - ❑ What is it you are trying to 'sell' or let others know about you?
 - ❑ Are you interested in the company or industry the person represents? Why or Why Not?

JOB SEARCH


FACTORS TO CONSIDER ABOUT THE JOB SEARCH

- What is the average length of typical job search?
- What is the distinction between strategies and resources?
- What is the most effective job search strategy?
- What is the difference between a job and a career?
- What is the distinction between preparation and implementation?
- What does taking ownership for process mean?

JOB SEARCH STEPS

- | | |
|---|--|
| □ <i>Step 1:</i> Know Yourself & What You Have To Offer | □ <i>Step 4:</i> Create Resume & Letters, Prepare For Interviews |
| □ <i>Step 2:</i> Define Desired Job Task & Employer Targets | □ <i>Step 5:</i> Initiate Your Search |
| □ <i>Step 3:</i> Learn More About Potential Jobs/Employers | □ <i>Step 6:</i> Follow Up |
| | □ <i>Step 7:</i> Stay Focused & Monitor Your Progress |
| | □ <i>Step 8:</i> Evaluate & Negotiate Offers |

DEVELOPING A JOB SEARCH PLAN

- Interactive tip sheet available on Career Center website - use online for instant access to online resources www.sc.edu/career
- An *effective* job search plan consists of completing all steps
- Secret of Job Search Success 
 - Saturday, October 17
 - Saturday, November 21

INTERVIEWING

General Interviewing tips

- **Before the Interview**
 - Conduct employer research
 - Prepare for questions in advance
 - Practice
- **At the Interview**
 - Appropriate Dress
 - Remember nonverbal communication
 - Be attentive and positive
- **After the Interview**
 - Thank interviewer(s) - firm hand shake and smile
 - Send a thank-you note (within 24 hours)
 - Follow up appropriately by providing credentials, references, transcripts or samples of work

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – CONT.

■ Behavioral Interview Questions

- Previous behavior ----> future performance
- Provide specific/concrete examples
- Use the STAR method
 - Situation
 - Task
 - Action
 - Results

CAREER CENTER RESOURCES

- Resume Critiques - On-Call Counseling from 1-4pm, Monday-Friday
- Resume & Cover Letter Writing Books, and web resources (www.sc.edu/career)
- Workshops
- Small Groups
- Optimal Resume

QUESTIONS

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*THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THIS
WORKSHOP!*