



Career Services Center

**CREATING A  
WINNING  
RESUME  
AND  
COVER LETTER**

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# SECTION 1: RESUME WRITING



Today's job market continues to be competitive. It's important for the job seeker to know the "why's" and "how's" of getting the job they want. Part of that requirement is putting together an exceptional, first-rate resume to get a foot in the door for an interview and to create an image in the employer's mind that says "I want to meet you."

## The resume serves several purposes:

- ✓ It is an **essential** part of every job search campaign.
- ✓ It is a written summary that gives an employer a preliminary impression of you (education, work experiences, interests, special skills and talents).
- ✓ It is a demonstration of how you communicate.
- ✓ It answers an employer's question of: what can you do for me and what are you like?
- ✓ It is used to secure job interviews.
- ✓ It is used by employers as a reference source for recalling and/or further evaluating your strengths and abilities, and comparing you to other candidates.
- ✓ Finally, your resume serves as an assessment of YOU and by putting it together it gives you an opportunity to see who you are in writing.

# CONTENTS OF A RESUME



**Always** include the following sections on your resume:

- ✓ **Heading:** Include your name, address, zip code, email address and telephone number with area code at the top of the page. Your name should be in a larger font size, and can be bold, but not so large and bold that it is too distracting. If you are moving soon, add a second or permanent address.
  - ✎ Career Services Tip: Always have a professional sounding email address. If your current email address is something like [hotchick69@hotmail.com](mailto:hotchick69@hotmail.com), or [Azpyro@yahoo.com](mailto:Azpyro@yahoo.com), whatever you do – don't put this on your resume! Open a new email account (yahoo, hotmail, gmail, etc.) with just your name. Something like [SarahJones@gmail.com](mailto:SarahJones@gmail.com), or [DWilson25@yahoo.com](mailto:DWilson25@yahoo.com), is much more appropriate.
- ✓ **Education:** List your degree(s), major(s), graduation date (month/year), and degree-granting institution including city and state. List your most recent degree and date of completion first. This is also a good place to list any certificates or minors you have received. If your graduation date is over one month in the future, indicate that the date is “projected.” *Do not list your high school unless it is your highest level of education.* GPA may be listed only if it is above a 3.0. You also may want to include some of the courses you have taken *if* they are specifically relevant to the types of jobs you are seeking.
- ✓ **Work Experience:** Include your job title, the name of your employer (company), city and state, followed by dates of employment (month & year). Next, describe your contribution to the company and/or responsibility assumed. Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible and use action verbs to begin your statements (*see action verb list on page 6*). Use a present verb tense only when describing a current position. This should not be just a list of your job duties, but instead should describe your accomplishments and results.
  - ✎ Do not include the personal pronouns “I” or “me” in this section or any other part of your resume. It is understood that the resume is about you – so you can omit all personal pronouns. For example, instead of, “I developed a training manual for all new employees,” simply say, “Developed a training manual for all new employees.”
  - ✎ If you do not have much work experience, or if your work experience is not related to the job you are applying for, you can also consider noting volunteer, internship, or class projects in this section. If you do so, title the section “Experience,” or “Related Experience,” instead of “Work Experience.”



**Sometimes** include the following sections in your resume.

*It is your choice & personal preference to list as much info as is appropriate to sell you to an employer:*

- **Objective:** The objective should be included in your resume, and come directly after the Heading, if you can be specific about the position and the field in which you are seeking employment. Otherwise, omit it. Also, do not include an objective that focuses only on what you want out of the job. For example, do not use an objective like, “To obtain a challenging position where there is room for growth.” But you could use an objective if it is specific and focuses on what you will bring to the job. For example, “To obtain an entry level management position where my proven decision making and management skills can be utilized to improve organization productivity.”
- **Summary of Qualifications/Profile:** This section should summarize the skills and experience you most want to present to a prospective employer. This section can be used instead of or along with an objective statement, but is not necessary to have. If it is used, it should come after the Heading or Objective. If you choose to have this section, it should generally be three to six phrases in bulleted form.
  - This section is a great place to customize your resume for the specific job you are applying for. If the job posting lists job duties, required skills, or minimum qualifications, list your related skills here. For example, an actual job posting for an Administrative Assistant lists these minimum qualifications: (1) Advanced secretarial or office assistant experience, (2) Knowledge of, and experience using Microsoft Office Suite software, and (3) Experience working with internal and external customers. If you are applying for this job, your Summary of Qualifications could look like:
    - Over 5 years experience as an Administrative Assistant
    - College coursework in, and proficiency in using Microsoft Office Suite software
    - Skilled in developing and maintaining positive internal and external customer relationshipsAn employer would most likely look at this resume and immediately know that you are qualified for the job. **Use this section well!**
- **Skills:** In this section inform the reader of any unique, relevant, or necessary skills that you have but are not reflected in the other sections of your resume. For example: foreign language (conversational, fluent, bilingual), computer applications, certifications, etc.
- **Volunteer/Community Service Experience:** If you did not include your volunteer experience above, you may include it here – especially if it is relevant to the job you are applying for, if you volunteered during gaps in employment, or if you don’t have extensive work history.
- **Activities, Honors and Awards:** This section would appear near the bottom of your resume and include college and/or community activities, offices held, scholarships and other related honors. Especially include this section if you have held a leadership role in any club or organization. Only include scholarships that are based on merit, not financial need.



**Never** include these items on your resume:

- × **References:** “Never” is probably too strong of a word for this advice – but we do recommend that you have references on a separate sheet of paper that matches the font/format of your resume and cover letter, but not on your resume. You also do not need to note on your resume that “References are available on request.” It is assumed that you have references – so you don’t need to note this. You should always secure the permission of anyone you choose to use as a reference before giving his/her name. Give your references a copy of your resume so he/she knows what to discuss with the potential employer. Good references might include professors, advisors or employers. Be sure to list your references in order of how well they know you and include their name, title, company, city, state, zip, phone, and email address if appropriate. Never use relatives for references.
- × **Personal Information:** Nowhere on your resume should you include marital status, children, social security number, physical characteristics, race or ethnicity, religion, etc – unless you are applying for an acting/modeling position that requires information about physical characteristics.
- × **Salary information or why you left previous jobs:** These items should never be on your resume.

# ACTION VERBS

Use a variety of these, or other, action verbs to describe your accomplishments on your resume.

|                    |              |                 |              |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Accomplished       | Contracted   | Influenced      | Purchased    |
| Accumulated        | Contributed  | Initiated       | Raised       |
| Achieved           | Controlled   | Innovated       | Recommended  |
| Acted              | Converted    | Installed       | Reconciled   |
| Acted as a liaison | Coordinated  | Instituted      | Recruited    |
| Adapted            | Counseled    | Integrated      | Reduced      |
| Administered       | Created      | Interfaced with | Reorganized  |
| Advanced           | Delegated    | Interviewed     | Repaired     |
| Advised            | Demonstrated | Introduced      | Reported     |
| Allocated          | Designed     | Invented        | Researched   |
| Analyzed           | Determined   | Investigated    | Resolved     |
| Applied            | Developed    | Launched        | Revised      |
| Appraised          | Diagnosed    | Lectured        | Scheduled    |
| Approved           | Directed     | Led             | Screened     |
| Arranged           | Discovered   | Maintained      | Secured      |
| Assembled          | Drafted      | Managed         | Served       |
| Assessed           | Edited       | Marketed        | Simplified   |
| Assisted           | Eliminated   | Mastered        | Sold         |
| Attained           | Encouraged   | Measured        | Solved       |
| Attended           | Engineered   | Mediated        | Spearheaded  |
| Authored           | Enhanced     | Modified        | Sponsored    |
| Authorized         | Equipped     | Monitored       | Strategized  |
| Balanced           | Established  | Motivated       | Streamlined  |
| Budgeted           | Evaluated    | Negotiated      | Strengthened |
| Built              | Excelled     | Operated        | Structured   |
| Changed            | Executed     | Organized       | Succeeded    |
| Clarified          | Exhibited    | Originated      | Supervised   |
| Coached            | Expanded     | Overcame        | Supplied     |
| Collaborated       | Expedited    | Overhauled      | Surpassed    |
| Collected          | Facilitated  | Oversaw         | Surveyed     |
| Combined           | Forecasted   | Performed       | Synthesized  |
| Communicated       | Formed       | Pioneered       | Systematized |
| Compiled           | Formulated   | Planned         | Tailored     |
| Completed          | Founded      | Prepared        | Taught       |
| Composed           | Gathered     | Presented       | Trained      |
| Computed           | Generated    | Presided        | Transformed  |
| Conceived          | Guided       | Procured        | Translated   |
| Conceptualized     | Handled      | Produced        | Troubleshoot |
| Concluded          | Headed       | Programmed      | United       |
| Conducted          | Hired        | Promoted        | Updated      |
| Consolidated       | Implemented  | Proposed        | Upgraded     |
| Constructed        | Improved     | Provided        | Verified     |
| Consulted          | Increased    | Published       | Wrote        |

# RESUME DO'S AND DON'TS SUMMARY

## Do

- ✓ **Have at least two other people review your resume.** Use Career Services Staff, family, and friends. Be open to their feedback and suggestions.
- ✓ **Keep your resume to 1 – 2 pages**, unless you have extensive work history. Remember, the purpose of a resume is to get you the interview, not to tell your entire life story.
- ✓ **Make it readable.** Margins can be as small as 0.5 inches and font can be 10pt if necessary – but it shouldn't be any smaller than this. If your resume is one page, but uses a small font and does not include much “white space”, you should probably go to two pages.
- ✓ **Give accurate and current contact information.** If you have a school and home address, give both. Make sure to give a phone number that will be answered.
- ✓ **Have a professional sounding email address.** Just your name is best – [JaneDoe@gmail.com](mailto:JaneDoe@gmail.com)
- ✓ **Highlight your work-related accomplishments, rather than just listing your work duties.** Instead of “Sold televisions,” try something like, “Built customer relationships and sold more than 20 televisions per month.”
- ✓ **Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible.** Instead of saying, “Recruited volunteers,” say, “Recruited more than 500 volunteers in one year.”
- ✓ **Use action verbs to convey your work experience.**
- ✓ **Include dates of employment on your resume.** Employers want to know when you worked at each place. And if you don't include them, employers may think you're hiding something.
- ✓ **Consider using bullets when listing duties or accomplishments.** Bulleted lists can make them easier to read.
- ✓ **Include volunteer experience** – especially if it is relevant to the job you want, or if you don't have a lot of paid work experience.
- ✓ **Print your resume on a conservative, professional paper.** Office supply stores have good selections of resume paper.
- ✓ **Have a list of professional references ready to give to an employer should they request it.** You do not need to include references on your resume, or note that you have them – just have them.
- ✓ **Include a cover letter with your resume.** See page 14 for more information on cover letters.

## Don't

- × **Have any errors on your resume!** No spelling errors, no grammatical errors, nothing. Use Spell Check and have at least two other people proofread your resume to look for errors.
- × **Give personal information** like marital status, social security number, physical characteristics, etc.
- × **Lie!** Employers most likely will check with previous employers regarding your past employment. If you lie on your resume and get caught, you won't get the job. Don't try to “beef up” your resume with lies or exaggerations, instead highlight your greatest skills and accomplishments.
- × **Write a vague, generic objective statement**, like “A job allowing me to use my skills and education in different areas.” If you use an objective, be specific and concise about the job you want.
- × **Include high school information** unless this is your highest level of education. If you have an Associate degree or higher you don't need to include that you have a high school diploma – it is understood.
- × **Use the personal pronouns “I” and “me.”** It is understood that the resume is about you.
- × **Include information about why you left previous jobs.** This should never be on your resume.
- × **Include salary information.**



# **RESUME TYPES & EXAMPLES:**

## **Chronological Resume**

On a chronological resume, work experience and employment history are listed under one section. They should appear in reverse chronological order with the most recent experience first. Each position listed should be complete with dates of employment, job title, company name, city and state, followed by a list of job accomplishments. The chronological resume should be a synopsis of your work history and should demonstrate progress with regard to your skill development.

*Basic components of a chronological resume:*

- Heading
- Specific Objective and/or Summary of Qualifications
- Education
- Employment History

*It is advantageous to use a chronological resume when:*

- You are a recent college graduate who is seeking employment in a specialized professional or technical field (such as education or engineering) and you have related work experience
- You are making a lateral or upward move within your same career field
- Your recent job history displays progress and/or your job titles are impressive
- You are a current student seeking an internship, Co-Op, or volunteer assignment

*It may not be advantageous to use a chronological resume when:*

- You are entering a new career field and have limited relevant experience in that field
- You have an inconsistent job history and/or you have changed jobs frequently
- You have voluntarily taken a break from the world-of-work (such as a homemaker) or you have an unwanted gap in your employment history due to work termination
- You are a graduate of a liberal arts degree program with limited related work experience
- You want to de-emphasize your age

# John Network

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Phoenix, AZ 85000  
602.555.2222  
[JohnNetwork99@mail.com](mailto:JohnNetwork99@mail.com)

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience installing and administering operating systems and hardware on Windows network
- Proven success in IT customer support and technical assistance
- Proficient in C++ and Java programming
- Team player with a strong work ethic and desire to contribute to the success of the organization

## EDUCATION

South Mountain Community College, Phoenix, AZ

- **A.A.S. in Computer Information Systems**, May 2008 GPA: 3.6/4.0
- Certificates of Completion in:  
**Microsoft Systems Administration** (May 2008)  
**Computer Programming and Analysis** (December 2007)

## RELATED COURSES

Windows Operating System  
Microcomputer Maintenance  
Adobe Photoshop

Linux Operating System  
C++  
Java Programming

## COMPUTER TRAINING/SKILLS

**Languages and Software:** C, C++, Java, HTML, Access, Word, Excel, Adobe Photoshop

**Operating Systems:** UNIX (Solaris, HP-UX), Windows 9x/NT/2000/XP/Vista, Mac OS

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**Technical Support Technician**, June 2007 – present  
**Initech Services, Phoenix, AZ**

- Provide internal customer support to quickly diagnose and troubleshoot computer hardware and network problems.
- Installed Windows Vista operating system for a department of 80 employees.
- Consistently respond to Help Desk requests within 48 hours, exceeding company expectations.

**Student Worker – College Work Study**, September 2005 – May 2007

**Computer Commons – South Mountain Community College, Phoenix, AZ**

- Assisted students with coursework in Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and Adobe Photoshop.
- Designed a marketing brochure to increase student usage of the Computer Commons. The number of students using the Commons rose by 28% after brochures were distributed.

**Sales Associate**, June 2004 – September 2005

**Office Supply Distributors**, Tempe, AZ

- Advised customers in computer accessories purchases.
- Maintained an organized and well-stocked computer accessories department.

## AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

**Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society**, South Mountain Community College, 2007 – 2008

**Volunteer**, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, 2007 – 2008

**Big Brother Volunteer**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona, 2005 – 2007

# RESUME TYPES & EXAMPLES:

## Functional Resume

The functional resume emphasizes your skills, abilities and credentials and displays them at the forefront of the presentation. Dates, job titles and places of employment are not the focus. It looks different than the chronological resume. Employment history is at the end of the resume. The functional resume's purpose centers on what you did rather than on where or when you did it. These skill areas do not correlate to any specified employer or course. This resume requires an objective that is clear and specific. The skill areas listed correlate with the objective.

*Basic components of a functional resume:*

- Heading
- Career objective, very specific, that corresponds with the skill areas that follow
- Sections of skill areas (usually at least three)
- Employment history with no job description
- Education history

*Advantages*

- Emphasis is on actual skills, not job titles
- When skills match the application's job description this resume makes a powerful presentation
- Good resume for certain new graduates, career changers or those with varied work history

*Disadvantages*

- Many employers dislike this format as they may be more familiar with the chronological resume and the "previous employment" style.
- Make sure that your employment history is at least listed in the functional resume but done so in a minimized fashion.
- The functional resume requires a good deal of research and thought to plan and write. A thorough knowledge of self is necessary to complete this resume.

# Susan Changer

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600 W. Jackson St. ♦ Phoenix, AZ 85000 ♦ (602) 555-2121 ♦ Email: [SChanger@mail.com](mailto:SChanger@mail.com)

**OBJECTIVE** A position in a school or social service agency that will allow me the opportunity to contribute my skills in language, early childhood development, and business.

**EDUCATION** **Certificate of Completion in Early Childhood Development**, May 2008  
South Mountain Community College, Phoenix, AZ (GPA 3.7)

**RELATED COURSES** Child Development Curriculum Planning for Diversity  
Language & Literacy for the Bilingual Child Physical Well-Being of the Young Child  
Discipline/Guidance of Child Groups Creative Activities for the Young Child

**SKILLS** **Teaching / Training**

- Completed a 160-hour internship at Child Care USA, developing curriculum and teaching creative play, healthy nutrition, and language skills for children aged 2 – 5
- Trained 60 employees in communication & conflict resolution skills
- Assisted with classes of 15 – 30 elementary aged children for 9 years

**Child Care**

- Demonstrated patience in working with children of all ages and development levels, including children with autism
- Initiated use of puppets and water/sand tables for 2- to 3-year olds, encouraging creative play and emphasizing hands-on learning
- Organized field trips for up to 20 preschool-aged children to the library, zoo, and children's theatre
- Designed and maintained a safe and nurturing environment for young children

**Language Skills**

- Fluent in English and Spanish
- Tutored Spanish language for high school students at the Boys & Girls Club

**Computer Skills**

- Software: Microsoft Office Suite – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Access, Outlook; Adobe Photoshop
- Hardware: Proficient in using both PC and Mac

**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE** **Early Childhood Education Intern**, Child Care USA, Phoenix, AZ (1/2008 – 5/2008)  
**Mortgage Loan Originator**, Mortgage Lending, Scottsdale, AZ (2/2002 – 7/2007)  
**Bank Teller**, Bank of Arizona, Phoenix, AZ (6/1999 – 2/2002)

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE** **Spanish Tutor**, Boys & Girls Club – South Mountain branch  
**Girl Scout Leader**, Girl Scouts Arizona Cactus-Pine Council  
**Classroom Assistant**, Jefferson Elementary School

# RESUME TYPES & EXAMPLES:

## Combination Resume

The combination resume is simply a way to blend both the styles of the chronological and functional resumes. In essence, it is the best of both worlds! It is a quick synopsis of your professional skills (the functional style) followed by your employment history (the chronological format). If you have a proven track record and are “upwardly mobile” in your career, this format may be ideal for you.

*Basic components of a combination resume:*

- Heading
- Specific objective and/or summary of qualifications
- Employment history
- Education

*Advantages*

- If you’ve had some work history that is directly related to your objective, but not enough to fill up one page, this format will add substance with the functional skills section
- If your former jobs are varied with regard to their job descriptions, this format will focus attention on your skills, abilities, credentials, qualifications, and/or accomplishments.
- If you’re a student and looking for your first “real job” this method may prove effective. It will allow you to focus on skills, accomplishments, and leadership ability but it will also allow you to state “indirect” and stable work experience that you may have had while you worked through college.
- This style tailors your skills to match the needs of the employer. Employers also like to see the work history so it will please them by offering both!
- It is a good format for students, career changers, military personnel transferring into civilian work, someone nearing retirement or perhaps someone who is re-entering the world of work.

*Disadvantages*

- Some employers want to *only* see your direct work experience and may prefer the chronological format; however, if you do not have a lot of relevant experience in your profession, a chronological format will not market yourself as well as this one might.
- This format is *not* preferred for someone who has absolutely no work experience. This candidate would be best suited to use a functional resume that highlights their transferable skills.

# JOSHUA HELPER

1234 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Tempe, AZ 85000

(480) 555-1234  
JoshuaHelper@mail.com

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## OBJECTIVE

A behavioral health or caseworker position in a social service agency or treatment center

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Skilled in crisis intervention and able to stay calm and focused in crisis situations
- Strong oral and written communication skills with the ability to quickly and correctly document patient behavior and interventions in paper or electronic form
- Experienced in conducting art therapy groups and one-on-one behavior management
- Knowledge of de-escalation techniques, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) methods, and DSM IV diagnoses
- Computer skills in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook
- Team-player with a positive attitude and committed to working hard with honesty and integrity

## EDUCATION

**Associate in Applied Science in Advanced Behavioral Health Sciences**  
South Mountain Community College, Phoenix, AZ (May 2008)

### Related Courses

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Group Dynamics              | Art Therapy              |
| Chemical Dependency         | Child & Family Advocacy  |
| Violence & Abuse Counseling | Developmental Psychology |

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

### **Mental Health Intern, Parker Treatment Center**

Phoenix, AZ, January 2008 – May 2008

- Assisted in conducting art therapy groups for patients aged 12 – 18 recovering from substance abuse disorders
- Ensured the wellbeing of newly admitted patients by following safety standards and notifying nursing staff of any changes in patient behavior
- Assured the quality of patient charts by accurately communicating behavior and progress

### **Hotline Assistant (Volunteer), Phoenix Community Crisis Center**

Phoenix, AZ, January 2007 – January 2008

- Advised callers in crisis situations and referred them to appropriate resources
- Trained six volunteers in counseling techniques and procedures
- Coordinated personnel scheduling

## OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

**Waiter**, Washington Steak House, Tempe, AZ September 2007 – present

**Sales Clerk**, Home Improvement Department Store, Phoenix, AZ June 2005 – August 2007

## SECTION 2: COVER LETTER WRITING



Here in the Career Services Center we often get asked, “Do I really need to write a cover letter?” And the answer, as you may expect, is: “Yes!” *Every job seeker must have a cover letter.* The only time not to send a cover letter is if you are specifically told to only send a resume without a cover letter – and this rarely happens. So get ready to write your cover letter.

### In your cover letter you will:

- ✓ **Introduce** yourself and clearly define “who” you are – a welder, teacher, sales manager, accountant, computer programmer, aerospace engineer, historian, chef, graphic designer, purchasing agent, security manager, or CEO.
- ✓ **Highlight** your most notable qualifications, experiences, credentials, skills, and achievements.
- ✓ **Identify** the value you can bring to the organization.
- ✓ **Capture** the reader’s interest in you, your resume, and your availability.
- ✓ **Motivate** the reader to call and offer you the opportunity for an interview.

### Top 10 Strategies for Writing Winning Cover Letters:

1. **Make it easy for someone to understand “who” you are.** Are you a sales representative, actuary, nurse, college professor, chemical engineer, restaurant manager, customer service agent, or architect? Be sure to clearly communicate that information at the beginning of your cover letter. Don’t make someone read three paragraphs to find this critical information. No one is going to take the time and energy to figure it out!
2. **Use a unique and professional format when writing and typing your cover letters.** Don’t fall into the trap of using cover letter formats that have been used for years and now appear worn out. Make your letters visually attractive and distinctive – not the overused “standard” formats.

3. **Highlight your most relevant qualifications.** Use your cover letters to highlight your skills, experiences, qualifications, honors, awards, and credentials that are directly relevant to the company's needs and the type of position and/or career path you are pursuing.
4. **Explain why you want to work for this company in particular.** Do you want to work for the company because of its reputation, financial standing, products, services, personnel, location, or market potential? Why *this* company? Everyone likes a good “pat on the back” for a job well done. Companies are no different. Tell them what they’re doing right that caught your attention.
5. **Let your personality speak through your words.** Use a few vivid details about your background to capture the reader’s interest.
6. **Always write to a specific individual rather than to a personnel or human resources office whenever possible.** If the job posting doesn’t list an individual’s name, consider calling the office to ask who the letter should be addressed to.
7. **Be sure that your cover letters are neat, clean, and well presented.** Remember, cover letters are business documents, not advertising materials. They should be attractive and relatively conservative, not “over-designed.”
8. **Double-check, triple-check, and then have someone else check your letter to be sure that it is error-free!** Remember, people don’t meet you; they meet a piece of paper. And that piece of paper – your cover letter – reflects the quality and caliber of the work you will do on their behalf. Even the smallest of errors is unacceptable.
9. **Keep you cover letters short!** Cover letters are not essays. We recommend a one-page letter in nearly all circumstances.
10. **Finish your letter with a strong closing which indicates the action you desire.** Take the initiative by requesting an interview and/or stating your intention to call in a week or two.



Below is a sample format for a cover letter. This is a good format to go by, but remember, this cover letter is by you and about you, so let it reflect you. Use this format as a guide, not as an unbendable rule.

Date

Mr./Ms. Recruiter's Name

Recruiter's Title

Company Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

**The opening paragraph should state why you are writing and how you became attracted to this particular company and position.** Mention specific characteristics of the company that have impressed you. Name the position for which you are applying. If you were referred, mention the source from which you learned of the opening.

**In the middle paragraph, draw attention to your qualifications and/or experiences that are relevant to the potential employer.** If you held a particular job or worked on special projects that directly related to the opening, highlight this experience. Convince your reader that this valuable experience makes you right for the job. Do not repeat the content of your resume, but fill in the blanks your resumes leaves open. If you have qualifications that are not noted on your resume, this is an ideal opportunity to discuss them.

**The closing paragraph indicates your desire for a personal interview.** Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help with a speedy response. It is also a good idea to follow up each resume and cover letter with a phone call. If you plan to do this, state in this paragraph when you will be calling the company. This closing paragraph should only be a couple of sentences and be assertive in getting you an interview.

Sincerely,

*(Your signature here)*

Your Name Typed

Encl. *(to indicate that your resume or additional materials are enclosed)*

# TIMOTHY SMITH

1111 North 1<sup>st</sup> Street • Phoenix, Arizona 85000 • (602) 555-0888 • TimothySmith222@mail.com

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May 20, 2008

Ms. Cynthia Catcher  
Human Resource Manager  
Marshall's Department Store  
300 East Arizona Mills Circle  
Tempe, AZ 85281

Dear Ms. Catcher:

I am responding to your advertisement for an Associate Manager Trainee, which appeared in the May 18<sup>th</sup> issue of the Arizona Republic. The position seems to be an excellent fit with my career goals, education and experience.

Currently, I am completing my associate degree in business at South Mountain Community College. My education has provided me with a broad knowledge of business, sales, and human resource issues. In addition, I have worked successfully in a number of part-time positions in the retail industry, and I am personally familiar with your Arizona Mills store. I would very much like to be a part of your team and believe that my education and experience could contribute to your organization. The enclosed resume provides further details about my education and work experience.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the position with you. I will call you next week to see if we can arrange an interview at your convenience. If you need to reach me before then, please call me at (602) 555-0888.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Timothy Smith*

Timothy Smith

Enclosure

# Anna M. Ramirez

425 Broad Street, Englewood, NJ 07053 • 201/555-1208 • Ramirez123@worldnet.att.net

August 20, 2008

Box J-7529  
Englewood Times  
75 Main Street  
Englewood, NJ 07053

Re: Job No. SAL-475  
Medical Sales

With regard to your current need for a dynamic sales professional, I am confident you will be interested in my relevant accomplishments and experience detailed in the enclosed resume.

You will note that my qualifications closely match your requirements:

| <u>You Require</u>                                 | <u>I Offer</u>  |
|--|---|
| ▪ 3 years of sales experience                      | ▪ 5 years as a top-performing sales professional – recognized as “number one” in total sales in the region for 5 consecutive years.   |
| ▪ Medical sales background                         | ▪ 5 years in sales of medical products to physicians, hospitals, long-term-care facilities, and emergency centers.  |
| ▪ Territory management ability                     | ▪ In my first year with Medi-Quick, I quickly familiarized myself with a new territory and increased sales 200%. Over the past 5 years, I have dedicated myself to new-account development and better coverage of my territory, and these efforts have paid off with significant increases in total territory sales.  |
| ▪ Relationship-building with health care providers | ▪ The key to successful selling lies in customer relationships. I am skilled at developing positive long-term relationships with physicians, medical office staff, and hospital administrators. I provide the support, follow-up, and dependability they need to feel comfortable and confident buying from me, and I rely on strong interpersonal and organizational skills to establish rapport and maintain effective contact. |

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss your current needs and what I have to offer. With proven sales skills and a superior performance record, I am confident of my ability to help your company achieve important sales goals.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anna M. Ramirez

enclosure

## **SECTION 3: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**



To conclude this packet and put everything together, we'll take an actual job posting excerpt at a retail coffee store (names and contact information changed) and write a cover letter, resume, and reference page to apply for the position.

### **Job Posting:**

#### **Assistant Store Manager**

##### Description

This could be just the place for your career in retail management to start. As an Assistant Store Manager, your CoffeeTime store will be an important part of the local community. You'll have your hands on your store's operations, including staffing, customer satisfaction, product quality, financial performance, security and safety.

##### Responsibilities and essential job functions include but are not limited to:

- Demonstrating a calm demeanor during periods of high volume and setting a positive example for the store team
- Displaying a "customer comes first" attitude and training others to develop this attitude
- Managing with integrity, honesty and knowledge
- Planning, communicating and delegating appropriate responsibilities to store employees
- Actively managing store employees by regularly conducting performance assessments, providing feedback, and setting challenging goals

##### Required Experience

- Progressively responsible retail experience (3 years)
- Supervision (1 year)

##### Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Ability to manage effectively in a fast-paced environment
- Knowledge of customer service techniques
- Strong problem-solving and team-building skills
- Strong leadership skills, with ability to coach and mentor others

##### Education

- College degree in business may substitute for a portion of required experience
- High school or GED

# Jane Latte

1111 E. Main Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85000

602.555.1111  
[JaneLatte10@mail.com](mailto:JaneLatte10@mail.com)

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May 20, 2008

Mr. Josh Beans  
CoffeeTime  
1111 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85000

Dear Mr. Beans:

Creating energetic and efficient team work environments is what I do best. Whether leading a retail team during the hectic holiday shopping season, or helping a group of students come to consensus, I love working with others and seeing people succeed. **I hope to bring my expertise and spirit of team-work to the Assistant Store Manager position at CoffeeTime.**

As a recent college graduate with an Associate in Business degree, I'm excited by the prospect of working for such a successful and well-respected company as CoffeeTime. In addition to my enthusiasm for your company and my degree, you will notice that my other qualifications closely match your requirements:

| You Require   | I Offer   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3 years of progressively responsible retail experience</li><li>1 year of supervision experience</li><li>Strong leadership skills, with ability to coach and mentor others</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>4 years of retail/restaurant experience – starting with a small frozen yogurt shop and progressing to a Team Leader position at a major retailer.</li><li>1 year as Team Sales Leader where I successfully supervise up to 8 employees at a time. As Team Sales Leader I have won the Employee of the Month award twice.</li><li>As the Vice President of the STEP (<u>S</u>tudents <u>T</u>ransfer with <u>E</u>ducational <u>P</u>reparation) Club, I was able to bring leadership to a group of 20 students and used my experience as a first generation college student to motivate and encourage others.</li></ul> |






I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications and can be reached at (602) 555-1111 to schedule an interview or for more information. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jane Latte

Enclosures

# Jane Latte

1111 E. Main Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85000

602.555.1111  
[JaneLatte10@mail.com](mailto:JaneLatte10@mail.com)

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- OBJECTIVE** A full-time Assistant Store Manager position at CoffeeTime
- SKILLS**
- Accomplished in providing customer service in a fast-paced environment
  - Highly organized and successful at prioritizing and completing tasks
  - Strong ability to lead and motivate others
  - Skilled in cash register operation and analyzing financial sales reports
- EDUCATION** **Associate in Business**, May 2008  
South Mountain Community College, Phoenix, AZ
- EXPERIENCE**
- Team Sales Leader**, American Teen Outfitters, Phoenix, AZ  
June 2007 – present
- Supervise up to 8 employees at a time in a high-volume retail setting
  - Delegate responsibilities and provide constructive feedback
  - Maintained a fun and efficient team environment during high-volume holiday shopping season
  - Promoted from Sales Associate to Team Sales Leader in less than one year
- Sales Associate**, American Teen Outfitters, Phoenix, AZ  
August 2006 – June 2007
- Sell quality clothing to a daily customer base of 150
  - Organize store merchandise to increase sales and customer accessibility
  - Manage cashiering activities in areas of purchasing, returns and exchanges
- Food Server**, Max's Family Restaurant, Phoenix, AZ  
May 2005 – October 2006
- Proficiently served up to 40 patrons per dinner shift
  - Trained and mentored six new servers in menu knowledge, customer service, and restaurant procedures
- Crew Member**, Silver Swirl Frozen Yogurt, Phoenix, AZ  
May 2004 – April 2005
- Enhanced customer satisfaction by suggesting yogurt flavors and toppings
  - Worked independently and successfully opened and closed store
- ACTIVITIES**
- Vice President**, STEP (Students Transfer with Educational Preparation) Club, 2007-2008  
STEP Club Member, 2005-2007  
St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance Volunteer, 2006-2008

# Jane Latte

1111 E. Main Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85000

602.555.1111  
[JaneLatte10@mail.com](mailto:JaneLatte10@mail.com)

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## Professional References:

### **Mike Smith**

Store Manager  
American Teen Outfitters  
1000 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85000  
(602) 555-4444  
[MSmith@AmericanTeen.com](mailto:MSmith@AmericanTeen.com)

### **Dr. Jane Jeans**

Associate Professor, Business  
South Mountain Community College  
7000 S. 24<sup>th</sup> St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85000  
(602) 555-3535  
[Jane.Jeans@SMCC.edu](mailto:Jane.Jeans@SMCC.edu)

### **Ms. Sylvia Smith**

STEP Program Coordinator  
South Mountain Community College  
7000 S. 24<sup>th</sup> St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85000  
(602) 555-9999  
[Sylvia.Smith@SMCC.edu](mailto:Sylvia.Smith@SMCC.edu)

# **RESUME & COVER LETTER RESOURCES**

Mesa Community College. Resume Writing & Cover Letter Guide. June 2005  
[http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/students/career/resumes/resume\\_booklet\\_04\\_06.pdf](http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/students/career/resumes/resume_booklet_04_06.pdf)

Monster Career Advice. <http://career-advice.monster.com/resume-tips/home.aspx>. 20 May 2008.

Enelow, Wendy S. & Kursmark, Louise M. Cover Letter Magic: Second Edition. Indiana: JIST Works, 2004.



## **Career Services Center**

7050 South 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85042

phone 602.243.8154 / fax 602.243.8383

[www.southmountaincc.edu/services/careers](http://www.southmountaincc.edu/services/careers)