

Resumes & Cover Letters

Resume Preparation

Preparing to write a resume is an important step in the resume writing process. Taking some time initially to determine what should be included in a resume and how the data should be organized will help in developing an effective resume.

- Record all of the experiences that might be significant to be included in a resume.
- Determine which experiences relate the most to your career choice – These areas should be emphasized on the resume and other areas may be included if space allows.
- Since an employer usually spends about 45 seconds initially scanning a resume, it is essential that related skills are listed closer to the top of the resume.

RESUME WRITING

After determining the organization and content of your resume, focus on the actual writing of the resume. The following information will detail important aspects to include in typical sections found on a resume.

Suggested Resume Categories

You should select categories that highlight your skills for the specific situation.

Heading

- Identifying information should always go at the top of the resume.
- Includes your name, complete address, your email address, and your telephone number(s).
- You can also include your URL in the heading if appropriate.

Note: Remember to check your outgoing answering machine announcement. Make sure your outgoing announcement is courteous and professional.

Objective/Career Summary

- An **objective** should be specific, concise, and 1 to 2 lines in length.
- Include the type of positions, the industry area, and your personal qualifications.
- An objective should be used for clarification, especially if you are changing career fields.
- A **Career Summary** can be used by someone who has more extensive work experience.
- A Career summary identifies a career goal and summarizes previous work experiences, skill sets, and accomplishments.
- Career Summaries are usually bulleted or written as a brief paragraph.

Education

- Outline information in reverse chronological order (most recent educational experience first).
- Include the name of the school, location (city/state), your major and the dates you attended the school.
- Include your graduation date (or expected date) as well as the type of degree, certificate or diploma received.
- Once you are in college, you **do not** need to include your high school education.
- Include your Grade Point Average (GPA) on your resume if your GPA is 3.0 or higher.

Suggested Resume Categories (Cont.)

Skills

- Include computer (software and hardware), business-related skills, or language fluency.
- A **computer skills** section is essential on a resume.
- List the programs individually instead of as a package (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access instead of Microsoft Office).
- Any knowledge of foreign languages should be listed and broken down by level of oral and written skills and should be mentioned separately.

Experience/Internships

Your work history should be listed in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent experience first. Each experience should include the Position Title, Name of Employer, Location (City and State), Dates of Employment (Month and Year) and a Description (short action statements describing your duties).

Be specific in your descriptions. Describe the details or projects, reporting relationships and what you did. Recent graduates should describe participation in professional situations with appropriate descriptions such as **summer work, internship, freelance or part-time work**.

When describing a current job, action statements should be in the present tense while past positions should be described in the past tense. These descriptions are usually incomplete sentences that are bulleted to make them easy to read and always start with an action verb to provide an immediate idea of the types of skills being used. Qualify and quantify your accomplishments whenever possible. An example could be “recruited and trained five new employees”.

Activities/Honors/Professional Memberships

Activities, Honors, and Professional Memberships can be combined or listed separately. Items included in this area are usually listed on one line. If all activities and honors are connected to your current institution, you do not need to list it with the activity.

FORMATTING RESUMES

Paper

Resumes should be printed on high quality, letter size, cotton or linen/cotton paper a cream or white color works best. Cover letters and reference lists should also be printed on this paper.

Font and Margin Size

In order for a resume to be easy to read, font size should be between 11 and 12 with a fairly simple type of font. Some fonts you can use are Ariel, Verdana or Times New Roman. With the exception of your name, font size should be consistent throughout the resume. Margins should be at least .5 on the top and bottom and .7 on the left and right.

Length

Most resumes of entry-level graduates should be limited to one page. Accomplishments and work experiences need to be rather significant before expanding a resume to two pages.

Layout

The resume format should be consistent throughout the document. All dates, locations, job titles, etc. should be in the same position for each description. The layout should be easy to read and allow for

some spacing to ensure it is pleasing to the eye. Avoid using resume templates as it limits the editing, spacing, and font selections that may be used.

Different Versions

Create different versions of your resume emphasizing different skills and experiences if you are seeking employment in different types of fields. You also want to create different versions of your resume and cover letter to match each company you are applying to.

DO'S & DON'TS OF RESUME WRITING

Do's

- **Proofread** your resume and have 3 other people proofread it is well. Spell check cannot be relied upon and an error free resume is essential. Resumes with errors are likely to be dismissed by employers.
- **Verb tense** should be in present tense for any work or activity you are currently performing and in past tense for anything that you have completed.
- **Dates** listed should always include the year, and, if you desire, the month, but do not include the actual day. Dates should be written in the same format throughout the resume.
- **Work status** information such as citizenship, visa, or residency status may also be included on a resume.
- **Keep resume at one to two pages**, in length in order to describe your key highlights and accomplishments to show you are qualified.

Don'ts

- Street addresses, zip codes, supervisor names, and phone numbers are not necessary. **City and state** should be listed for each employer or school mentioned.
- **Age, sex, marital status, height, weight, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and personal photos** should never be included on a resume. The only personal information needed should be your name, address, phone, and e-mail.
- **Hobbies or interests** sections may be included on a resume if it relates to your field and space allows and should be a brief (2-4 items) list. Only list items related to your field of work or to the career area.
- **Salary information** should not be included on a resume. If an employer requests a "salary history" or "salary requirements," include a salary range that you are seeking in your cover letter.
- **Abbreviations** other than "GPA" should not be used on a resume. Acronyms may be used if the title is first written out in this manner: Oakland University (OU).
- **Parentheses** should be avoided. If the information is important enough to have on your resume, it does not need to be in parentheses.

ACTION VERBS FOR RESUMES

Describe your accomplishments using brief, short sentences. Each sentence should include action words and adjectives. Instead of saying “HTML Programming experience”, state it more clearly with “Created client websites using HTML programming”. Make sure your action words are in the proper tense based on your past and present jobs. Ex. Don’t use present tense action words for past jobs.

Management Skills

Analyzed
Assigned
Attained
Chaired
Confronted
Consolidated
Contracted
Coordinated
Delegated
Directed
Empowered
Executed
Improved
Increased
Mediated
Observed
Oversaw
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reviewed
Scheduled
Strengthened
Supervised

Communication Skills

Addressed
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Collaborated
Cooperated
Convinced
Corresponded
Directed
Drafted
Edited
Enlisted
Formulated
Influenced
Interpreted
Lectured
Moderated
Negotiated
Persuaded
Promoted
Publicized
Questioned
Reconciled
Recruited
Spoke
Translated

Research Skills

Abstracted
Acquired
Clarified
Collected
Critiqued
Diagnosed
Examined
Extracted
Identified
Inspected
Interpreted
Interviewed
Investigated
Obtained
Researched
Summarized
Surveyed
Systemized

Technical Skills

Assembled
Built
Designed
Endured
Engineered
Fabricated
Installed
Located
Maintained
Operated
Overhauled
Programmed
Remodeled
Repaired
Solved
Troubleshoot
Upgraded

Teaching Skills

Adapted
Advised
Applied
Clarified
Coached
Communicated
Coordinated
Demystified
Developed
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated
Explained
Facilitated
Guided

Informed
Instructed
Persuaded
Stimulated
Taught
Trained

Financial Skills

Administered
Allocated
Appraised
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Calculated
Computed
Developed
Forecasted
Managed
Marketed
Planned
Projected
Reasoned
Researched

Creative Skills

Acted
Conceptualized
Created
Customized
Decorated
Designed
Displayed
Drew
Established
Fashioned
Founded
Illustrated
Initiated
Instituted
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Originated
Performed
Revitalized
Shaped
Sketched

Helping skills

Assessed
Assisted
Clarified
Coached
Counseled

Demonstrated
Decided
Diagnosed
Educated
Empathized
Expedited
Familiarized
Guided
Motivated
Referred
Rehabilitated
Represented
Tested

Clerical/Detail Skills

Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Classified
Compiled
Dispatched
Entered
Entertained
Executed
Generated
Implemented
Inspected
Monitored
Operated
Organized
Prepared
Processed
Purchased
Recorded
Retrieved
Screened
Specified
Supported
Systematized
Tabulated
Validated

Accomplishments

Accepted
Achieved
Awarded
Expanded
Improved
Pioneered
Read
Reduced
Resolved
Sold
Transformed
Understood

DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESUMES

Chronological Resumes:

Work experience is organized with the most recent employer first, followed by the employment experience before that, and so on. This reverse chronological order helps the employer see the history of where you worked and is the most generally accepted resume type.

Functional Resumes:

Identify and emphasize key skill areas for a career field on the resume. A work or experience history is included, but descriptions of responsibilities and accomplishments are only listed if they fall into one of the key skill areas. A functional resume is usually used when a candidate makes a major career change, has very little related experience, or is reentering the workforce after an absence. This format is not used very often, as employers prefer reverse chronological resumes.

Combination Resumes:

The happy medium between the first two types. This type works well for someone who has been preparing for a particular career and has held recent positions which were related to the job which they are applying for.

Sending Resumes via Email:

Employers who take online applications through their web site often download the resumes into a software system that enables them to search resumes in a database. As a result, resumes need to be in a certain format in order to scan or download easily. When emailing an employer a resume, a scannable version should be included below the body text of your email (the cover/application letter) in addition to attaching a Microsoft Word version of your resume.

To create a resume that is easy to read in both a scanned and emailed format, follow these guidelines:

- Left justify all text in your resume, including your name and address, section headings and dates and location of employment. Do not use columns.
- Do not use text boxes, tables, lines, graphics, tabs, parentheses and brackets.
- **Bold** may be used but will not appear when the document is transferred into email. Do not use underlining or *italics*.
- Bullet points may not be used but should be replaced with a – or * sign. Do not allow Microsoft Word to automatically format these, as they need to be hand entered, not computer generated.
- Use CAPITALIZATION to make key items such as your name, section headings, and job titles stand out.
- Two page electronic versions of the resume do not need a heading on the 2nd page.
- Printed versions should be on plain, white, copy paper and should not be folded or stapled.

After completing this version of the resume, save it in a Microsoft Word file, cut and paste it into an email, and send it to yourself to ensure that it is easy to read.

Sample Reverse Chronological Resume

Recommended for current student or recent graduate

JOHN A. DOE

123 Main Street, # 4B
Rochester, MI 48309
248-555-4321 jadoe@email.com

OBJECTIVE

An accounting or finance internship or career related position utilizing my strong analytical skills

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science Degrees in Accounting and Finance May 2010

Oakland University, Rochester, MI

- Minor in Management Information Systems
- Accounting G.P.A.: 3.9, Finance G.P.A.: 3.7, Overall G.P.A. 3.8
- Financial Management Association and Oakland Accounting Students Information Society Member

Study Abroad Program in Spanish Culture and Language Studies Summer 2009

International University, Barcelona, Spain

RELATED COURSE PROJECTS

Small Business Accounting Software Project, Design of Computerized AIS Course

- Created a software package for a five person house cleaning company that tracks client billing as well as supply orders and inventory

Internal Auditing Strategies for Mid Size Companies, Auditing Course

- Developed a plan, methodology, and format for auditing a mid size firm

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Oakland Accounting Students Information Society, Rochester, MI September 2009 - Present

Vice-President

- Coordinate and schedule company participants in a career related speaker series
- Assist with special events such as the annual golf tournament and career fair
- Provide volunteer tax return assistance to low income individuals through the Accounting Aid Society

WORK EXPERIENCE

Acme Restaurant, Sterling Heights, MI June 2009 - Present

ABC Café & Bistro, Troy, MI

November 2008 – June 2009

Server/Bartender

- Balance cash drawers and collect payments on established tabs
- Promote daily specials through suggestive selling techniques
- Handle multiple customers in a fast-paced atmosphere and provided a high degree of customer service

Campus Recreation Center, Oakland University, Rochester, MI January 2008 – November 2008

Student Assistant

- Verified student and member status for admittance to facility
- Helped coordinate and promote special events
- Monitored facility and use of court time by groups
- Provided administrative assistance in the management office

COMPUTER & LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Microsoft Word, Excel, Access
- SPSS, Minitab
- Fluent in oral and written Spanish. Proficient in German

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Financed 75% of college tuition and expenses by working part- to full-time during school

Sample Reverse Chronological Resume

Recommended for IT/Technical positions and/or experienced professionals

Jane Doe

123 Main Street
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

248- 555-4321
jane@email.edu

CAREER SUMMARY

MBA candidate in information systems seeks a technical position in a corporate setting. Possess extensive technical support, web development, PC installation and networking, database and training experience. Skilled in project life cycle from system study, design, development documentation, through testing. Strong oral and written communication, analytical, and supervisory skills.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Operating Systems:

All Windows Platforms
Windows 98/NT/2007

Languages:

MS Access 2007
Informix SQL & Informix 4GL
JAVA
HTML
COBAL
VB 6.0

Software Tools:

MS FrontPage
MS Office 2007
Corel Office Suite
Crystal Reports
Lotus Notes

Specialty Areas:

Relational Databases and SQL
Web Page Development
Systems Training and Implementation

EXPERIENCE

Consultant, Computing Services Help Desk May 2008 - Present
Oakland University Rochester, MI

- Deliver technical support for student and faculty users on networked and remote computers
- Maintain Windows NT networked systems

Systems/Programmer Analyst Intern, MIS Department May 2006- May 2008
City of Acmeville Acmeville, MI

- Analyzed and designed a database of Records Management for city files
- Conducted Corel Office Suite training classes for over 20 staff members on a monthly basis
- Assisted Help Desk personnel with software technical support

Student Assistant, Undergraduate Admissions Office May 2004 - May 2006
Wayne State University Detroit, MI

- Worked with Student Information Systems software and helped research admission files
- Developed, modified, and maintained Access enrollment management databases
- Provided hardware and software support for end users
- Assisted with Web Page development for the department

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration Degree, May 2010, Oakland University, Rochester, MI
Management Information Systems Concentration, GPA: 3.2

Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) Certificate, June 2008, Acme Technology, Troy, MI

Bachelor of Science Degree in Business, December 2007, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
Computer Information Systems Major, GPA: 3.5

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Dean's List: College of Business, 2006-2007
- Data Processing Management Association, Vice President, 2010; Member, 2008-2010

Sample Chronological Resume

JANE A. DOE

123 University Drive ♦ Rochester, MI ♦ 48309 ♦ 248-555-1234 ♦ janeadoe@email.com

OBJECTIVE

A human resources position with a focus on training and development or recruiting

SKILLS

- Employee Training and Supervision
- Resume Screening and Application Processing
- Technical and Report Writing
- Presentation and Public Speaking

EDUCATION

Oakland University, Rochester, MI

Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Resource Development December 2010

Training and Development Specialization, Overall G.P.A.: 3.5, Major G.P.A.: 3.9

- Semester Commendations, 4 semesters; Dean's List, 2 semesters
- Jane Brown Leadership Scholarship

Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills, MI

Liberal Arts Coursework 2006-2007

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

ABC Corporation, Detroit, MI

Human Resource Intern September 2009 – December 2010

- Coordinated benefits information and conducted orientation meetings for new employees
- Revised and redesigned employee manual to reflect current company policy
- Assisted recruiter with resume review and applicant screening
- Updated applicant files and mail decision letters

Work and the Law Course, Oakland University, Rochester, MI

"Case Analysis of Employee Termination Due to Discrimination" October 2008

- Evaluated a court case involving employee termination based on sex discrimination
- Outlined disciplinary process followed by company and examined policies guiding practice
- Recommended correct procedures for terminating employees and designed a handbook detailing the information and providing guidance for use with employees

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

ACME Clothing Store, Troy, MI

Assistant Manger May 2005 - Present

- Supervise and train a staff of 10 on customer service techniques and product knowledge
- Maintain inventory levels and merchandised product to increase sales
- Earn or surpass projected sales totals on a regular basis

Sales Associate

September 2003 - April 2004

- Provided customer service and assistance in a retail-clothing store
- Awarded "Employee of the Month" twice

COMPUTER & LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint

ACTIVITIES

- Human Resource Development Student Association, Member
- Adams Road Shelter, Soup Kitchen Volunteer

Sample Functional Resume

Recommended for career changers and those with diverse experience

John Doe

123 Campus Drive
Rochester, MI 48309

248-555-1234
johndoe@email.edu

OBJECTIVE

A marketing or communications position with a public relations or advertising agency

EDUCATION

Oakland University, Rochester, MI

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication

May 2010

- Financed 50% of college tuition by working part to full-time while in school
- Related coursework: Marketing Strategy, Introduction to Advertising, and Persuasive Writing

SKILL AREAS

MARKETING/SALES

- Designed sales plans and target numbers for a department in a retail store
- Motivated staff through incentive programs and motivational techniques to achieve sales goals
- Merchandised displays and arrange floor to encourage sales of certain items and market product effectively to customers
- Promoted activities to students through print and direct mail advertising

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Created a comprehensive plan to maximize public awareness of non-profit agencies utilizing a low-budget, maximum visibility plan
- Detailed outreach resources and methodologies for partnering with corporations
- Utilized free advertising resources and community calendars to advertise programs and services
- Participated in high profile and one-on-one opportunities to broadcast information about the organization

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

- Provided high degree of customer service in a fast paced, retail environment
- Resolved customer satisfaction issues and problems quickly and effectively
- Met with prospective members and educated them on program offerings
- Trained staff in effective use of customer service skills

EXPERIENCE HISTORY

ABC Men's Sportswear, Troy, MI

Manager Trainee and Sales Associate

May 2009 - Present

Staffing Services, Pontiac, MI

Administrative Assistant for various Metro Detroit Companies

May 2008 – May 2009

Student Programming Board, Oakland University, Rochester, MI

Speaker and Road Trip Committee Member

May 2008 – May 2009

Volunteer Clubs of America, Rochester, MI

Volunteer Communications Internship

Spring 2008

Communication in Organizations Course, Oakland University, Rochester, MI

"Effective Communication Plans for Non-Profit Organizations"

Fall 2007

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Publisher, PowerPoint

Sample Combination Resume

Jane Doe

1234 Street Road • City, ST 48123 • (313) 000-0000 • mresearch@oakland.edu

- OBJECTIVE:** To utilize my professional training and experience within the field of psychology
- ABILITIES:** Proven experience in interpersonal communication and organizational skills; Leadership skills, training skills; Team oriented; Good utilization of software applications for statistical analysis and graphing procedures; Webpage development skills; Self-motivated and creative; Strong desire to learn; Achievement and goal oriented; Research skills.
- APPLICATIONS:** Proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Works; Notepad, WordPerfect
Experienced in Statistical Product & Service Solutions (SPSS), Print Shop
Familiar with Quicken, MS Access
- EDUCATION:** Bachelor of Arts – Psychology 05/10
Oakland University, Rochester, MI
3.30 G.P.A.
- LEADERSHIP:** Resident Assistant - *Oakland University, Rochester, MI* 8/09-5/10
 - Served as a leader, mentor, friend, and liaison to 40 freshman women
 - Promoted educational, personal, social and emotional growth through the development and presentation of activities and educational programs
 - Conducted individual and group counseling/mediation sessions when necessary
 - Developed strong teamwork skills with other R.A.s and professional staff
Front End Coordinator - *Publix Supermarket, Rochester, MI* 5/08-6/09
 - Supervised cashiers and front end personnel; assisted cashier training
 - Delegated store improvement tasks to all front end personnel
 - Authorized computer transactions not permitted by the cashiers
- WORK EXPERIENCE:** Operations Staff - *Publix Supermarket, Rochester, MI* 5/07-5/08
 - Developed good sense of responsibility including handling large sums of money
 - Utilized computer software to maintain orderly and correct financial records
 - Typed interoffice memos and various correspondences for sales managers
Customer Service Representative - *Publix Supermarket, Rochester, MI* 05/06-5/07
 - Processed large monetary transactions
 - Oversaw customer complaints, directed customers and filled special product requests
 - Handled calls in a fast-paced customer call center
 - Developed good interpersonal/communication skills
- VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:** Radiology/Imaging Center, *Helpful Hospital, Lansing, MI* Summer 2009
 - Received/guided patients to the radiology center and developed film
 - Assisted in comforting patients during imaging processes
Boys and Girls Club, Rochester, MI Summer 2008
 - Interacted with children in physical sports; aided students in homework completion
- PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:** Research Apprentice Program, *Oakwood Heath Systems* Summer 2008
 - Performed and presented research on a psychological disorder
Student Educational Enrichment Program (SEEP) Summer 2007
 - Completed a neuroanatomy course
 - Participated in labs in and studied an actual human brain
 - Analyzed and presented a case study on a patient

Sample Internship Resume

John Doe

35 Dusty Trail Dr., Rochester, MI 48202 - (313) 111-1111

sunnymcal@oakland.edu

Objective: Seeking an internship position in Electrical Engineering, beginning January 2011

Computer Skills:	Lotus Office Suite:	Macintosh:	Microsoft Office:	
	Lotus Word Pro Lotus 1-2-3 Lotus Presentation	HyperCard Claris Works	Word Excel Power Point	
	Adobe Photoshop 5.0	Word Perfect	C++	Netscape Navigator

Education: Oakland University, Rochester, MI
Bachelors of Science - Electrical Engineering
Expected Graduation May 2011
GPA 3.0

Relevant Course Work:

Intro to Abstract Mathematics	Virtual Instrumentation	Freshman Design
Differential Equations	Multi-Variate Calculus	Statistics
Introduction to Problem Solving	Professional Practices	Physics I & II
Engineering Economy	Electrical Fundamentals	

Related Projects:

Knot-Meter Project, Differential Equations Course Fall 2009
• Researched, designed, and created a knot-meter to measure the speed of a boat in knots per-hour

Safety Manual Design Project, Electrical Fundamentals Course Winter 2009
• Created and tested a manual designed to teach students the safe and proper operation of several laboratory machines, including a table saw, band saw, radial arm saw and drill press

Work Experience: Mucho Merchandise, Rochester, MI Intermittent August 2009 - Present
Customer Relations and Service/Sales Cashier/Multi-line Phone Operator
• Recognized for outstanding service and reliability, and cross-trained into several departments
• Trained new associates with an emphasis on customer service and safety
• Received, processed, and sent product shipments
• Proficiently assisted in managing and maintaining the warehouse
• Stocked floor while developing and collaborating with coworkers on floor plan

Gilbert Creative, Rochester, MI Summer 2009
Computer Graphics Artist and Multi-media collaborator
• Collaborated on projects for Coca-Cola, UPS, Mercer, USPS, and Derivion involving: Power Point Presentations; Interactive CD-ROMs; Computer Graphics

Activities/Interests: Baptist Church College Youth Group Worship Team
Sound Technician/Musician for Mercer University Baptist Student Union

Reference Sheet Guide

Definition:

A reference sheet is where an applicant can list their references in a grouped and formal manner. The reference sheet can help an applicant better develop their self-promotional package. It should list the person's name, relationship to you, title, company/employer, employer location, and contact information (email and phone).

Reference Sheet Tips:

- Make sure that the formatting of your information at the top of the sheet matches your cover letter and resume, i.e. a letterhead of sorts. This provides a consistent look to your whole application package
- Use references that can speak to your skills and abilities, supervisors, professors, subordinates, vendors, customers, prior employees, people you have worked with on a volunteer basis, etc.*
- Proofread your reference sheet carefully. Make sure you spell the person's name, job title and company correctly. Also remember to make sure their contact information is correct and up to date.
- Do not attach your reference sheet when you first submit your resume, but have the reference sheet ready if it is requested.
- Speak to your references ahead of time to check that they are comfortable with being a reference and so they know they might be contacted by a potential employer. Make sure that they are aware of the position you are applying for and what the requirements for the position are so that they can more accurately speak to your ability to perform them.
- 3-4 references are standard for a reference sheet.
- Never use family members as references. Also try and use contacts that are articulate and fairly easy to contact.**
- Choose references based on their knowledge of you, not on their prestige. Do not overuse references.**

**15 minute Cover Letter* by Michael Farr and Louise M. Kursmark

***Career Focus-A Personal Job Search Guide* by Helen Martucci Lamarre

Sample Reference Sheet

Career Services
275 W. Vandenberg Hall
Rochester, MI 48309
248.370.3250
careers@oakland.edu

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Mr. James Thompson
Current Employer
Executive Manager
ABC Distributors Inc.
Livonia MI, 48565
JT234@abc.com
(545)333-6589

Ms. Julia Rhodes
Former Supervisor
Floor Coordinator
XYZ Marketing Company
Westland MI, 48859
Juli432@hotmail.com
(316)255-9563

Prof. Julius Erving
Former Instructor
Professor of Accounting
University of Appalachia
Smithfield, W. Virginia, 56892
DrJ@uofa.edu
(789)321-6546

Cover Letters

Purpose of

A successful cover letter tells a prospective employer who you are, what you've accomplished, and why they should be interested in talking with you. It should be personal rather than mass generated, meaning that it should refer to a specific person at a specific company. When done right, a cover letter can encourage a prospective employer to read your resume and possibly even to contact you for an interview. You should not wait for the employer to get in touch with you, however. It usually takes a proactive response on your part to move the process forward to the next level and increase your odds of success. While a cover letter alone can't get you a job, it can definitely open doors for you.

Cover letters for internships

When applying for an internship (paid or unpaid), the guidelines for writing a cover letter are essentially the same, although the reader's expectations are a little different. The employer won't expect you to have as much experience in the field, for example, so it's okay to talk more about your academic background and campus activities. Also, since an internship is an opportunity for you to get exposure to and learn hands-on skills in a particular field or industry, it is fine to discuss your career goals and your own need for experience - something you wouldn't necessarily do in a letter for a regular job.

Tips for Effective Cover Letters

- Tailor your letters as much as possible to the target employer and the industry as a whole.
- Talk more about what you can do for the employer/position rather than what the employer can do for you.
- Convey focused career goals.
- Don't say anything negative or anything that you don't back up with evidence.
- Always be honest, but not necessarily too modest.
- Cut to the chase - don't ramble.
- Talk about problems you've solved or past accomplishments in other positions.
- Make your letter visually appealing.
- Limit to one page in length including 3-4 targeted paragraphs (focused on the employer's needs, not yours).
- Have others review your letter before sending it out. Many employers view the cover letter as an example of your written communication skills. Make sure it is also spell-checked and grammar-checked.
- Keep a record of all of the letters you send out along with a log of follow-up efforts.

**15 minute Cover Letter by Michael Farr and Louise M. Kursmark*

Cover Letter Template

Your Address (Same as on your Resume)
City, State, ZIP

Date

Name of Contact Person
Title
Organization
Street Address
City, State ZIP

Dear (Contact Person's Name):

Opening Paragraph: Why you are writing

- State why you are writing. Name the position or type of position for which you are applying
- Mention how you learned of the position
- Mention the name of any referring person
- Briefly describe why you are interested in this particular position

Body of the Letter: Sell yourself

- Briefly describe the skills and/or experiences you possess that fit the requirements of the position
- If you have related experiences, mention your qualifications and achievements
- This is your chance to give the reader more insight as to who you are as a person. Do not repeat your resume. This is the time to mention personal qualities or special experiences and motivators.

Closing Paragraph: Request an interview

- Directly, but politely, indicate your desire to further discuss your qualifications in an interview
- Make it easy for the reader to contact you by providing your phone number(s), email, and the best time to reach you
- Thank the contact person for his or her time and consideration

Sincerely,
(4 spaces)

Your Signature

Your typed name
(2 spaces)

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter

1245 Candlewood Lane
Rochester, MI 48076

April 17, 2008

Janice Smith
Smith Marketing Associates
125 Smith Blvd.
Rochester, MI 48095

Dear Ms. Smith:

I read about the position of Marketing Associate with great interest. In your advertisement you mention that you're looking for a candidate with excellent writing and public speaking skills as well as the ability to plan workshops. My writing skills and career-related experiences make me well qualified for the position.

As a sociology major, I've written 20 term papers over the past four years and have consistently received excellent grades and comments on my writing style. I also currently write articles for the university newspaper and have been editor for the past year. In terms of public speaking experience, as an intern for the Career Services office on campus I've facilitated information sessions to students interested in obtaining career-related experience. I'm also a tour guide for the Admissions Office. I'm excited at the thought of using similar skills for the Marketing Associate position.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I look forward to meeting with you to further discuss my qualifications and talk with you in detail about the position. Please feel free to call me at 248-555-5555 or email at doe@oakland.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Jane Doe

Enclosure