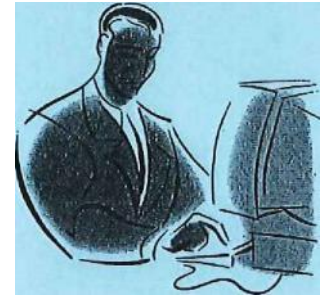


Career Development Workshop #2

Creating a Strong:

- ✓ Cover Letter
- ✓ Resume
- ✓ Reference List



St. Vincent's College
College Library Resource Center
(203) 576-5869
svclibrarian@stvincentscollege.edu

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Cover Letters- Guidelines for Success

Always submit a cover letter with your resume. Without a cover letter, employers will have no idea what position you are applying for. Your resume could end up in a large pile or worse- the recycling bin.

Your font style should match on your cover letter, resume, and references- this will give your overall presentation a clean look. .

- ✓ **Always include important information-** your name, address, telephone number, and email address should be clearly visible on each cover letter you write. Employers will be unable to contact you without this information. Make sure to clearly state what position you are applying for in the first paragraph of your letter- there may be many job openings at the same place.
- ✓ **Make it Personal-** make sure that you address each letter to the *specific* person that is responsible for hiring. If you are unsure who to address in the letter, call the company and ask for a contact name. Make sure you verify the proper spelling of the contact person's name.
- ✓ **Make each letter you send unique-** cover letters should NOT be generic. Employers ask for different skills and requirements, so your letters should reflect these differences. Do your research on the company before you write a letter. This will show that you know about the company that you are applying to, and will make a big difference.
- ✓ **Start strong-** most employers skim cover letters for a few key words and phrases. Make your letter stand out with an interesting sentence that will have employers WANT to read the rest of your letter.
- ✓ **Are you saying "I" too much?** Do not begin all of your sentences with "I". This makes for a very boring read that employers may pass over. Try rephrasing a sentence, from "I have had experience in" to "my experiences include..."
- ✓ **Make connections** between your skill set and the job requirements. How will your skills help you to successfully do the job that you are applying for?
- ✓ **Be brief-** cover letters should be no longer than one page. Any more and you may lose the attention of future employers,
- ✓ **Follow up!** At the end of your letter, let the employer know that you will be calling to check on the progress of your application. Give them a specific time frame (usually about 7-10 days) that you will be calling. Only do this if you are committed to doing this follow-up.
- ✓ **Proofread!!!** Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings, or grammatical errors. Your letter is an employer's first impression of you. Any errors can negatively impact your chances of getting an interview, or even the job. Employers are looking for ways to cut down an interview pile- a mistake on a cover letter is a great place to start..
- ✓ **Sign your Cover Letter**

Cover Letters- Additional Guidelines

Your Present Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date of Writing

Specific Name
Title
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Ms. _____

Opening paragraph- State why are you writing, naming the position, field or general area of work about which you are asking. Mention how you learned about the position or the company.

Second paragraph- Talk about your qualifications as they relate to the position for which you are applying. The key word is skills. Cite your work experience, educational preparation, activities and skills which qualify you for the position and would make you an asset to this organization. Indicate why you should be considered as a candidate, focusing on how your skills can fulfill the needs of the organization. Mention specific results or achievements. This is the key paragraph, the one that can distinguish you from the next candidate.

Optional third paragraph- Have at least one sentence explaining why you are interested in this organization. What makes it special? What attraction does it hold for you? How does the company's mission support your career growth?

Closing paragraph- Close by making a specific request. Usually this means a request for an interview. State when you will be available and how you can be reached. Indicate that you will follow-up with a phone call to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet or talk on the phone. Also point out that additional references will be furnished upon request. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Typed Name

Sample Cover Letter- Nurse

Beverly M. Jones RN

200 Hacienda Drive, Helena MT 70000

(600) 555-4000

bmjm@notmail.com

April 28, 2003

Lee Jones
Human Resource Manager
St. Marie's Hospital
1200 Main Street
Helena, Montana 75000

Dear Mr. Jones:

I was pleased to learn of your need for an ICU Staff Nurse, as my career goals and expertise are directly in line with this opportunity. My experience and education have provided me with excellent knowledge of ICU practices, acute patient care, family relations, staff development and other relevant skills required of an effective team member.

The following are highlights of my qualifications and accomplishments:

- Extensive patient care experience in ICU, CCU, Emergency and Medical Surgical environments.
- In-depth knowledge in administration that includes admissions, assessment, treatment, referral and education for a wide range of patients.
- Frequent commendations by patients and families for providing exceptional care.
- Employee awards for dedication, excellent performance, leadership, and patient advocacy.

My strong initiative and exceptional organizational skills, combined with my ability to work well under pressure, will enable me to substantially contribute to St. Marie's Hospital. I believe that a challenging environment such as yours will provide an excellent opportunity for me to best my skills while contributing to the healthcare community, patients and their families.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you personally how my skills and strengths can best serve your hospital.

Sincerely,

Beverly M. Jones

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter- Office Assistant

15-43 Elm Street
Forest Hills, NY 11111
(555) 555-1212
marnie@monster.com

March 1, 2005

John Short
General Manager
Action Company
1428 Main Street
New York, NY 12222

Dear Mr. Short:

Are you spending too much time handling administrative tasks? Would you like to free yourself from tedious detail work so you can focus on building your business? If the answer is yes, then we should speak.

I offer a five-year track record in office management and administrative support. You will benefit from my following key strengths:

- **Computer Expertise**, with proficiency in all MS Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Access).
- **Broad-based experience covering a full spectrum of administrative duties**, including executive support, office management, billing/invoicing, payroll administration, customer care, account management, database administration, document preparation, travel/meeting coordination, and project/program support.
- **Superior multitasking talents**, with the ability to manage multiple high-priority assignments and develop solutions to challenging business problems.
- **A proven reputation**, with a consistent history of exemplary performance reviews and recognition for driving efficiency improvements to office systems, workflows, and processes.

I am confident that if you hire me as your administrative assistant, you will have more time and energy to concentrate on your growing business. My resume is enclosed for your review, and I will follow-up with you in a few days to discuss your administrative support needs. You may also call me at (555) 555-1212 or email me at marnie@monster.com. Thank you for your time and have a great day.

Sincerely,

Marnie Smith
Enclosure

Sample Action Verbs- Resumes and Cover Letters

Accommodated	Determined	Introduced	Reconciled
Achieved	Developed	Invented	Recorded
Acquainted	Devised	Inventoried	Recruited
Adapted	Diagnosed	Investigated	Reduced
Administered	Directed	Judged	Referred
Advertised	Discontinued	Learned	Regulated
Advised	Discovered	Lectured	Removed
Advocated	Dispatched	Led	Reorganized
Analyzed	Dispensed	Logged	Repaired
Applied	Displayed	Maintained	Reported
Approved	Disproved	Managed	Represented
Arbitrated	Dissected	Marketed	Researched
Arranged	Distributed	Mediated	Resolved
Assembled	Dramatized	Medicated	Responded
Assessed	Drew	Memorized	Restored
Assisted	Edited	Mentored	Reviewed
Assumed	Educated	Minimized	Routed
Attained	Eliminated	Modeled	Scheduled
Audited	Encouraged	Modernized	Selected
Authorized	Enforced	Modified	Separated
Balanced	Established	Monitored	Served
Budgeted	Estimated	Motivated	Shaped
Built	Evaluated	Navigated	Shared
Calculated	Examined	Negotiated	Simplified
Charted	Executed	Observed	Sketched
Classified	Expanded	Obtained	Sold
Coached	Expedited	Operated	Solved
Combined	Experimental	Ordered	Sorted
Communicated	Explained	Organized	Spoke
Compiled	Extracted	Oversaw	Sponsored
Completed	Financed	Painted	Strengthened
Composed	Fixed	Performed	Studies
Compounded	Formulated	Persuaded	Suggested
Computed	Founded	Photographed	Summarized
Condensed	Gathered	Piloted	Supervised
Conducted	Generated	Planned	Supplemented
Conferred	Guided	Prepared	Supplied
Conserved	Handled	Prescribed	Surveyed
Consolidated	Headed	Presented	Synthesized
Constructed	Hypothesized	Printed	Systematized
Consulted	Identified	Processed	Talked
Controlled	Illustrated	Produced	Taught
Converted	Implemented	Programmed	Tested
Coordinated	Improved	Projected	Trained
Corresponded	Improvised	Promoted	Translated
Counseled	Increased	Proofread	Traveled
Created	Influenced	Protected	Tutored
Criticized	Informed	Provided	Typed
Defined	Initiated	Publicized	Umpired
Delegated	Inspected	Published	Unified
Delivered	Inspired	Purchased	United
Demonstrated	Installed	Questioned	Updated
Described	Instituted	Read	Upgraded
Designated	Instructed	Realized	Utilized
Designed	Interpreted	Reasoned	Weighed
Detected	Interviewed	Recommended	Wrote

Types of Resumes

Since each individual possesses a unique set of talents, skills, abilities, experience, and training, there is no one format that is best for everyone, however, *it is essential to choose the appropriate format based upon your circumstances.*

Types of Resumes:

- ✓ Chronological
- ✓ Functional
- ✓ Electronic

Chronological Resumes

A chronological resume is organized by job titles beginning with your most recent position. It details your most recent job and highlights companies, job titles, dates, and achievements.

Advantages:

- ✓ Employers prefer this format since it can be easily skimmed.
- ✓ Employers perceive this style as fact-based.
- ✓ This style of resume is fairly easy to organize.
- ✓ Shows professional growth
- ✓ Gives interviewers a format to follow during the interview process.

Disadvantages:

- ✓ Shows employment gaps and "job hopping".
- ✓ Highlights job duties rather than job skills- it may undersell your skill level.

Use the Chronological Resume if you:

- ✓ Demonstrate a logical job history
- ✓ Have a recent work history
- ✓ Are looking for a job in a similar field
- ✓ Have had the same job (or been in the same company) for over 2 years

Functional Resumes

The functional format presents qualifications that support your current objectives by illustrating only your functional skills. A functional format may show a brief work history at the end of the resume, but without job descriptions and accomplishments.

Advantages:

- ✓ Allows you to control, mold, and develop the image you want to project.
- ✓ Presents you as a forceful, goal-oriented applicant
- ✓ Offers ample description of your skills
- ✓ Hides any job hopping

Types of Resumes

Disadvantages:

- ✓ The functional format is often used to hide unfavorable elements in a candidate's employment history; therefore it may be viewed with caution by human resource professionals, i.e., causing them to ask "What is this candidate trying to hide?"
- ✓ May hide a very stable work history

Use this type of resume if you:

- ✓ Have current career goals that are *completely* unrelated to your work history.
- ✓ Have brief periods of employment- job hopping
- ✓ Have been out of work for over two years
- ✓ Have minimal or no work history

Electronic Resumes

When sending a resume via email, it is important to copy and paste your resume into the message because an employer may not have the appropriate software to open a document as an attached file.

Tips to Remember:

- ✓ Left Justify the entire document
- ✓ Use font size 10 to 14
- ✓ Use one of these font styles: Arial, Courier, Times New Roman- they are clear and easy to read.
- ✓ Avoid bullet points, vertical or horizontal lines, graphics, shading, or shadowing- these do not always open properly into a person's email account.

Ten Things to Avoid on Your Resume

The average employer gives a resume a 30 second review before examining it more carefully. To give your resume an advantage, avoid these mistakes:

1. Proofread your resume before it's printed and sent out. First impressions are crucial- an employer can (and usually will) assume that mistakes on a resume indicate a careless employee.
2. Don't write corrections or notes on your resume. Resumes should always be typed on a computer.
3. Don't omit a cover letter! Without one, your resume could end up on the wrong desk with no indication of what position you are applying for.
4. Don't provide salary history or requirements on your resume. If a salary history is requested, it should either be on the cover letter or a job application.
5. Don't lie about your background or stretch the truth. It's easy to give a previous employer a call to verify your work experience.
6. Don't include personal descriptions such as ethnicity, age, weight, gender, or marital status. Photos should never be submitted.
7. Don't staple or tape your resume pages. If you mail your resume to an employer, use a large envelope to keep you resume and cover letter flat and crease-free.
8. Don't use your present employer's fax, email, envelopes, or mail department to send your resume. This is extremely unprofessional behavior. Your local library should have computers and internet access. Many convenience stores and pharmacies offer faxing services for a fee.
9. Don't use a resume that looks cluttered or disorganized. If your resume is not organized with information quickly available, it will most likely not be read.
10. Don't make your resume any longer than 1-2 pages.

Sample Resume- Nursing (Chronological Format)

Addison Joyce, RN

963 E. Main Street, Helena, MT 59601
(406) 555-5220
a.joy@myisp.com

QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Dedicated and patient-focused Registered Nurse with proven expertise in acute patient care, staff development, and family advocacy.

- > Exceptional capacity to multitask; manage competing priorities with ease while fostering delivery of superior patient care.
- Solid administrative and referral experience includes admissions, assessment, treatment, referral, and education for a broad range of patients.
- > Widely recognized as an excellent care provider and patient advocate
- > Demonstrated ability to forge, lead, and motivate outstanding healthcare teams that provide top-quality patient care.
- > Outstanding interpersonal and communication skills; superior accuracy in patient history, charting, and other documentation.

Certifications and Proficiencies

Ventilator Care	Med/Surg	Care Plan Administration
Telemetry	ICU and CCU	NG/Sum and Peg tubes
Intravenous Therapy	ER Procedures	Patient/family education
Phlebotomy	Triple lumen CVP	Training and inservices
Basic Life Support	AV fistulas	Meditech documentation

CAREER EXPERIENCE

ST. ANDREW'S HOSPITAL, Missoula, Montana 2004-Present
Staff Nurse, Intensive Care Unit

Serve as charge nurse caring for patients with life-threatening illnesses, including acute congestive heart failure, acute myocardial infarction, drug overdose, massive trauma, respiratory failure, and disseminated intravascular coagulopathy. Promote health and support patients and families in coping with illnesses. Skilled in bedside monitoring, 12-lead EKG, and Bennett 7600 ventilator.

- Provide strong contributions as key member of unit quality assurance program designed to identify and evaluate problems, manage patient census, and allocate staff assignments.
- Exhibit motivation and dedication by providing the highest quality of care to each patient.

O'FLANNERY MEDICAL CENTER, Missoula, Montana 2001-2004
Emergency Staff Nurse

Provided care for patients suffering from trauma, acute chest pain, respiratory failure/complaints, drug overdoses, and gastrointestinal bleeds. Acquired and recorded patient information. Prepared patients for surgical and radiological procedures, initiated and maintained intravenous therapy, and operated 12-Lead EKG.

- Contributed substantially to successful ICAHO accreditation-within the department.
- Implemented and coordinated ongoing staff education program.

Sample Resume- Nursing (Chronological Format)

Addison Joyce, RN

Page 2

BERKELEY COUNTY HOSPITAL, Helena, Montana
Registered Nurse

1996-2000

Delivered a complete range of *RN* services and expertise. Accurately obtained and documented patient history and medication lists, assessed individual conditions and needs, and selected departmental referrals for acute and chronically ill patients. Prepared equipment and assisted physicians during patient examinations and treatments. Monitored patient reactions to drugs and carefully documented progress of individuals participating in clinical trials.

- Repeatedly commended by patients and supervisors for outstanding quality of care; received consistent mention in care-survey responses. _
- Maintained a high degree of accuracy to achieve optimal patient acuity monitoring.
- ® Significantly improved facility's public image by ensuring exceptional patient satisfaction.

KEILLOR STATE PRISON, Deer Lodge, Montana
Registered Nurse

1994-1996

Provided triage, referrals, direct nursing care, and medication administration to incarcerated population. Organized and managed regular clinics involved external physicians, including ophthalmology, ENT, Med/Surg, orthopedics, and podiatry professionals. Scheduled and managed external medical consultations in concert with security and other necessary personnel. Created, managed, and maintained patient medical and health records.

- Selected to serve as Infection. Control Coordinator, maintaining tuberculosis and hepatitis standards and conducted screenings and preventative activities.
- Organized and facilitated meetings with security managers to ensure infection-control policy compliance.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Bachelor of Science in Nursing, **BSN** (1994)
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY- Bozeman, Montana

Licensure

Registered Nurse (RN), State of Montana

Sample Resume- Medical Office Assistant (Functional Format)

Joan Smith

2800 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT
(203) 555-1212
jsmith@nomail.com

JOB OBJECTIVE

Gain entry level position as a Medical Office Assistant

EDUCATION

Certificate, Medical Office Assistant, 2006
St. Vincent's College, Bridgeport CT

Course Highlights: Medical Terminology, Medical Office Procedures, Medical Machine Transcription.

2006-present	Writer, Student Newsletter
2005-2006	President, Student Congress
2004-2006	Committee Member, Swim Across the Sound

SKILLS

LEADERSHIP

- **President of Student Congress**, helped address policy issues at St. Vincent's College. Served as a role model for the student body.
- **Student Ambassador**, gave tours of camps to prospective students, their families, visitors, and guests.

COMPUTERS

- **Proficient** in the following Microsoft applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, & Access.
- **Skilled** in other computer applications such as MS publisher and Crystal reports

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Demonstrated ability to maintain professional demeanor and superior customer service in fast-past call center environment.
- Trained new employees on telephone skills and database management.

WORK HISTORY

2004-Present	Comcast Cable, New Haven CT Customer Service Representative
2003-2004	BJ's Wholesale, Trumbull CT Customer Service Representative
2001-2003	Sheraton Hotel, Shelton CT Front Desk Clerk

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteer history includes clothing and food drives, read aloud programs for local elementary schools, Habitat for Humanity, and Swim Across the Sound.

References

Creating a Reference List

Your reference list is an important document that should be as professional as your resume and cover letter. Most potential employers (for both jobs and internships) will request a list of references at some point in the search process. Some employers will only ask for references from candidates they are seriously considering; others will request references from all applicants.

Guidelines

- Your list should contain at least 3 professional (not personal) references of people who can speak well of you.
- Include the complete name, title, organization, address, and telephone numbers for each person listed.
- List your references in the order you want them to be contacted — by priority or strength of reference.
- Have a heading similar to that of your resume so that it can be easily recognized and matched with your materials by potential employers.
- Make sure to use the same style font that was used to write your cover letter and resume, giving your application packet a more uniform look.

Before you send out your Reference List:

- Ask permission from references **before** you list them.
- Send each reference a copy of your resume.
- Discuss the content of your resume and your personality, accomplishments, and skills with each person; remember, you want them to speak knowledgeably and well of you.

Sample Reference List

Joan Smith

2800 Main Street, Bridgeport CT
(203) 555-1212
'smith_trk@mail.com

REFERENCES

Mark Jones
Call Center Supervisor
Comcast Cable
New Haven, CT
(203) 555-5555
mjones@nomail.com

Sheila James
Director, Call Center
Comcast Cable
New Haven, CT
(203) 555-3333
sjames@nomail.com

Margaret Hamilton
Front Desk Manager
Sheraton Hotel
Shelton, CT
(203) 555-5555
mhamilton@nomail.com

Steven Thomas
Customer Service Supervisor
BJ's Wholesale
Trumbull, CT
(203) 555-4444
sthomas@nomail.com

PRACTICE RESUME WORKSHEET

WORK OBJECTIVE:

EDUCATION

Name: St. Vincent's College Year of Grad: _____
Major: _____
Relevant Coursework: _____
Honors, Awards: _____

Other College(s) attended

Name/Location: _____ Year(s) Attended: _____
Name/Location: _____ Year(s) Attended: _____

High School:

Name/Location: _____ Year(s) Attended: _____
Honors, Awards: _____
Significant Activities _____

PROFESSIONAL/WORK EXPERIENCE

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Company: _____ Location: _____
Description of work: _____

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Company: _____ Location: _____
Description of work: _____

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Company: _____ Location: _____
Description of work: _____

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Company: _____ Location: _____
Description of work: _____

ACTIVITIES (college or outside organizations, etc.)

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Organization: _____ Location: _____
Description of Duties: _____

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Organization: _____ Location: _____
Description of Duties: _____

Position: _____ Date(s): _____
Organization: _____ Location: _____
Description of Duties: _____

OTHER SKILLS (Computer skills, Languages, Special Certifications, etc.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE/OTHER INTERESTS

Additional Sources

The following sources are retrieved from the Ebrary database in the Campus Portal (my.stvincentscollege.edu) under the Library Resource Tab:

101 Great Resumes (3rd Edition)

Fry, Ron
Pages: 215
Publisher: Course Technology
Location: Boston, MA, USA
Date Published: 02/2009

Electronic Resumes and Online Networking : How to Use the Internet to Do a Better Job Search, Including...

Smith, Rebecca
Pages: 223
Publisher: Career Press, Incorporated
Location: Franklin Lakes, NJ, USA
Date Published: 11/2000

Get the Interview Every Time : Fortune 500 Hiring Professionals' Tips for Writing Winning Resumes and Cover Letters

Greene, Brenda
Pages: 240
Publisher: Dearborn Trade, A Kaplan Professional Company
Location: Chicago, IL, USA
Date Published: 04/2004

Killer Cover Letters and Resumes! The WetFeet Insider Guide

WetFeet
Pages: 116
Publisher: WetFeet, Incorporated
Location: San Francisco, CA, USA
Date Published: 09/2003

Resumes for All Occassions

Bhalla, Ashok
Pages: 207
Publisher: Global Media
Location: Chandigarh, IND
Date Published: 2009

Strategic Resumes : Writing for Results

Mahoney, Marci Manber, Beverly
Pages: 157
Publisher: Course Technology Crisp
Location: Menlo Park, CA, USA
Date Published: 02/1993