

Your Resume

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Resume Overview

Your resume is a recruiter's first impression of you, your background and experience, and your accomplishments. It is imperative that the resume represents you to your best advantage. This section is designed to help you develop and write an effective resume. Your resume is a critical marketing tool in the job-search process, and you should devote time and thought to make it the best presentation of what you have to offer.

In many cases, your resume will be the first piece of information a prospective employer receives about you. Therefore, it is one of the most important documents you will prepare throughout your job search. Your resume is also something that you will continually update during your job search. There are many different ways to design and format your resume to target the right employer and job for you. Resume samples are available from numerous publications and Internet websites. We encourage you to carefully review many samples as you develop your presentation for a particular opportunity.

Recruiters and business managers are busy people who often sort through hundreds of resumes. Make it as easy as possible for prospective employers to see how your skills and background have prepared you to become an asset to their organization. In addition to highlighting the critical skills you possess in your targeted job field, your resume should convey that you are a person who gets things done, takes initiative and has a history of successes.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your resume is free of grammatical and typographical errors, so that nothing distracts the reader from your accomplishments and what you have to offer. Actions speak louder than words, and a recruiter may judge how you will represent the employer to its clients based on how you present your resume.

Keep in mind that each recruiter will receive your resume before he/she has the opportunity to meet you, and that this resume will be the launching point for the conversations that take place during your interviews. Make sure you are emphasizing the items that are most likely to be relevant and impressive to your target employers.

Guidelines for Resumes

A one-page resume is acceptable, with a minimum of 8-point font (Times New Roman works well). If you have difficulty editing your resume to one page, please seek assistance from a Career Management advisor. The resume should be balanced on the page—top and bottom margins should be even, as should left and right. A 1" margin on the left is required.

Perfect spelling is critical, as is consistent use of punctuation. Spell Check, while an excellent feature, will not catch all errors. Proofread your resume **many** times and have others proof it as well.

Resume Design and Development

Using years, not months, check to be sure that all time is accounted for on your resume, primarily the years following graduation from your undergraduate institution. Recruiters will want to know how you have been spending your time. Discuss all "missing years" with a Career Management advisor if you foresee a problem.

When writing your job descriptions, avoid unnecessary words such as "responsibilities" or "duties included," "I," "my," etc. In addition, use action verb phrases instead of complete sentences. Employers spend only a few seconds on a resume; "filler" words detract from the real message you are trying to convey.

Major Headings

Your name and section headings should be bold-faced and in all caps. The side headings will include EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, and ADDITIONAL DATA/INFORMATION. Other headings, such as OBJECTIVE, AWARDS AND HONORS, SKILLS AND INTERESTS may be used as appropriate.

*For those of you with Mission experience, write out The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mission experience may be included in work experience and can be identified as “volunteer representative” or “missionary.” Express your accomplishments in business terms. Specify number of people trained or supervised and the length of time of the leadership experience.

Identification

Identification includes name, address (telephone number(s), fax number, e-mail, and optionally, web site. Check accuracy of all numbers and information—it is very easy for numbers to be out of place.

- Name should be bolded, in ALL CAPS, and centered or left justified at the top of the page.
- Align and balance your address on the line directly below your name. If listing two addresses, list present (campus) address on the left (left justified) and permanent on the right (right justified).
- Include your e-mail address.
- Fax number is optional, though be sure to include it if you have one. (The Career Management office has a fax available for student use, 801-422-8395.)
- Your personal web site can also be listed, be sure that it includes only professional information.

SARA HARRIS
113 N. 15th Street
Provo, UT 84604
(801)371-xXxX
(801)371-xXxX (fax)
sah@email.byu.edu

This information is critical! It allows a recruiter to contact you. Make certain it is accurate and current. Immediately update your resume anytime your contact information changes.

Education

Usually your MBA degree is your strongest selling point to recruiters so start off your resume with the EDUCATION section. Of course, once you graduate and have worked post-MBA for several years, work experience will again take precedence. The heading is normally in the left margin; space across to list the institution, followed by city and state.

Current Degree

- Start the Education section with your MBA degree information. Even though you have not yet completed the degree (even if you are just getting started), resume readers expect to see it first. Lead off with the university, follow with the school, and conclude with the emphasis or track identification and graduation date.
- Academic clubs and organizations, especially those where you have taken leadership roles, should be highlighted. Avoid listing more than two or three career clubs; too many may indicate lack of career focus.
- Include academic scholarships (crediting the individual/organization for whom the scholarship is named).
- GMAT, if above 700, can also be listed. Some industries and employers will care more than others about your test scores.
- Career concentration, or track, should also be included in this section

Other Degrees

- Other graduate degrees follow the MBA, then undergraduate.
- Format the same as the MBA section.
- Be selective of what activities (clubs, etc.) to include. They should enhance your attractiveness.
- Include undergraduate GPA only if close to a 4.0 (on a 4.0 scale)—3.7 or higher.
- Include study abroad programs, education self-financing, and scholarships.
- Do not include any high school information unless it is unique or highly relevant to your career interests.
- Avoid using abbreviations for your degrees. (Master of Business Administration rather than MBA, Bachelor of Arts instead of BA, etc.) **DO NOT PUT PERIODS BETWEEN LETTERS IF YOU DO ABBREVIATE!**

Example:

EDUCATION BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Marriott School of Management, Provo, UT
Master of Business Administration, April 2005

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles, CA
Bachelor of Science in Finance, May 19XX
Alpha Kappa Phi Business Fraternity, President
Student Association Concert Committee, Treasurer

Experience

Most of your time will be spent writing this section. Take great care and effort—many interview questions will stem from your work experience. The more time you spend writing about your jobs, the easier it will be to answer these questions!

- Try to account for all time since graduating with your undergraduate degree. Recruiters will question any gaps in employment.
- The dates should be on the same line with your job title. However, if you had multiple positions with one company, you may opt instead for listing the overall dates with the company. This method keeps the left margin from looking too cluttered.
- To describe each job, use one of three forms for the job description:
 - General job description—sentence or two followed by bullet points of specific accomplishments (preferred).
 - Bullet points of accomplishments.
 - Paragraph discussion of job description and accomplishments.
- Highlight progressive increases in responsibility; stress accomplishments related to the position you are seeking.
- Use bold, underline, or italics in your descriptions for emphasis, but not all three, and use sparingly or the effect will be lost (bold company name, city, state; italicize job title)
- Reverse chronological order; list most recent job first.
- Use action verb phrases instead of complete sentences for job descriptions. Each verb should be in the past tense, unless you are currently working in the position; then use present tense.

Example:

EXPERIENCE Financial Advisor, Zion's Bank, SLC, UT 1995-1997

Aggressively developed and serviced a \$25 million+ credit portfolio consisting of 35 middle-market business relationships representing diversified industries.

- Demonstrated expertise in business development, underwriting, negotiation and customer service skills by growing credit portfolio over 200% in less than two years.

- Exceeded all fee income, portfolio growth and ancillary product sales goals.
- Improved portfolio credit quality by eliminating FDIC Watchlist exposure and actively managing delinquent accounts to levels beneath established targets.
- Selected by senior management to lead a transitional initiative to stabilize and revamp the bank's deteriorated penetration and presence in the Durham commercial market.

Describing Your Accomplishments

Accomplishment statements are the fundamental building blocks of an effective resume. They are the "stories" of your experience and can be built on the **CAR** model.

- **C**ircumstances, problem or opportunity you faced.
- **A**ction you took.
- **R**esult of the action you took, including the benefit to the organization.

Every bullet point on your resume should include all or part of the CAR method. Most often, on a resume, you can only include the Action and Result statements. The Circumstances may need to be detailed in an interview. In order to develop points for your resume, think about what you did in your job day-to-day with regard to circumstances, problems or situations you faced (C), the actions you took (A), and the results of those actions (R). Through CAR stories, you will show your skills and competence to a potential employer.

The descriptions of your jobs in the Experience section of your resume serve the purpose of highlighting your accomplishments—what you did or made happen.

Characteristics of an Accomplishment Statement

- Identifies the action you took to improve a situation.
- Describes what you did.
- Expresses the benefit of your actions through:
 - Cost savings—use actual dollars or percentages
 - Improved efficiencies—improved process, saved time, reduced staff
 - Increased revenues—increased sales or profits, increased market share, generated new business
- Accomplishment statements can be written without results, but add results whenever possible.
- Statements are generally not longer than one sentence.
- Begin statements with an action verb and state the result of your action in numbers or percentages when possible.

Examples of Accomplishment Statements

- *Without results*
 - Supervised strategic planning for 4 divisions.
 - Created spreadsheets to perform credit analysis.
 - Trained 30 sales assistants and support personnel.
 - Maintained records for \$765 million money-market fund.
 - Performed competitive analysis on a seasonal product and recommended a plan of action to respond to competitive threats.
 - Reviewed engine specifications for reliability and safety requirements.
- *With results*
 - Led re-engineering projects that reduced company operating expenses by \$2.3 million, while maintaining original output levels.
 - Developed pricing strategy using IRI scan and internal sales data that will increase

profits \$6 million annually upon implementation.
 Designed incentive programs that contributed to increased annual sales of \$2.5 million.
 Improved plant-wide productivity 15 percent by implementing new work procedures
 and revising existing job standards.

Action Verbs and Phrases

Action verbs are concise, dynamic and indicate high-energy initiative and creative action. Use them to your advantage in the *Experience* section of your resume.

Accelerated	Corrected	Financed	Mastered
Accomplished	Created	Forecasted	Mobilized
Achieved	Cultivated	Formulated	Modified
Acquired	Decentralized	Formalized	Monitored
Activated	Decided	Founded	Motivated
Addressed	Decreased	Framed	Negotiated
Administered	Defined	Fulfilled	Nominated
Advanced	Delegated	Generated	Normalized
Advised	Delivered	Governed	Obtained
Advocated	Demonstrated	Guided	Officiated
Allocated	Designated	Handled	Operated
Analyzed	Designed	Headed	Ordered
Anticipated	Detailed	Helped	Organized
Applied	Determined	Hired	Oriented
Appointed	Devised	Identified	Originated
Appraised	Directed	Implemented	Overcame
Appreciated	Discovered	Improved	Overhauled
Approved	Displayed	Improvised	Oversaw
Aspired	Distinguished	Increased	Officiated
Arranged	Distributed	Induced	Operated
Assessed	Documented	Influenced	Ordered
Assigned	Doubled	Initiated	Organized
Attained	Earned	Innovated	Oriented
Audited	Edited	Inspected	Originated
Avoided	Educated	Inspired	Overcame
Broadened	Effectuated	Installed	Overhauled
Budgeted	Eliminated	Instituted	Oversaw
Built	Employed	Instructed	Participated
Calculated	Enabled	Insured	Perceived
Captured	Encouraged	Integrated	Perfected
Centralized	Energized	Intensified	Performed
Clarified	Enforced	Interpreted	Piloted
Collaborated	Engineered	Interviewed	Pinpointed
Combined	Enhanced	Introduced	Pioneered
Commanded	Envisioned	Invented	Placed
Completed	Established	Invested	Planned
Composed	Estimated	Investigated	Pleased
Conceived	Evaluated	Judged	Popularized
Concluded	Examined	Justified	Prepared
Conducted	Exceeded	Keyed	Presented
Connected	Executed	Keynoted	Presided
Consolidated	Exercised	Launched	Prevented
Constructed	Exhibited	Led	Processed
Consulted	Expanded	Lightened	Procured
Contributed	Experienced	Liquidated	Produced
Controlled	Extended	Located	Programmed
Converted	Extracted	Managed	Projected
Cooperated	Facilitated	Manufactured	Promoted
Coordinated	Finalized	Marketed	Prompted

Propelled	Resolved	Sponsored	Tested
Proposed	Responded to	Stabilized	Tightened
Proved	Restored	Staffed	Traded
Provided	Revamped	Standardized	Trained
Published	Reviewed	Started	Transacted
Purchased	Revised	Stimulated	Transferred
Re-established	Revitalized	Streamlined	Transformed
Realized	Revived	Strengthened	Translated
Reconciled	Satisfied	Stretched	Trebled
Recognized	Saved	Structured	Trimmed
Recommended	Scheduled	Studied	Tripled
Recruited	Secured	Substantiated	Uncovered
Redesigned	Selected	Succeeded	Undertook
Regulated	Served	Suggested	Unified
Reinforced	Serviced	Summarized	Used
Rejected	Set up	Supervised	Utilized
Related	Settled	Supported	Verified
Renegotiated	Shaped	Surpassed	Widened
Reorganized	Showed	Surveyed	Withdrew
Reported	Simplified	Sustained	Won
Represented	Solved	Tailored	Worked
Researched	Sparked	Taught	Wrote
Reshaped	Specified	Terminated	

Useful Phrases

The following phrases may help you organize your accomplishment statements for both resumes and employment correspondence. When choosing the phrase that best describes the situation, read it over once or twice in the context of the sentence to be certain that the selection is correct, and that the phrase reads well.

Proven track record of/in...
 Contracted/Subcontracted by... to...
 More than . . . years' extensive/Diverse experience in...
 Demonstrated expertise in...
 Extensively trained in...
 Extensively involved in...
 Newly established company/Entity engaged in...
 Initially employed to/Joined organization to...
 Specialized in...
 Company engaged in...
 Total accountability/Totally accountable for...
 Temporarily assigned to/Temporary assignments included...
 Acted/Functioned as...
 Provided technical assistance to...
 Ensured maximum/optimum/minimum...
 Provided valuable/invaluable...
 Interacted heavily with..
 Promoted from... to...
 Provided liaison for/between...
 Covered assigned territory consisting of...
 Promoted to...
 Succeeded in...
 Exceeded by...
 Selected as/Elected to...
 Reported to/Reported directly to...

Honored as...
Consistently...
Won...

Additional Data

The final section of your resume, while optional, is important because it gives the reader another impression of you. Focusing not on your work performance, but rather your outside-of-work activities and interests, allows the reader to gain a complete picture of you as a prospective employee and co-worker.

- Include significant community service, as well as foreign language fluency, clubs, activities and interests outside of college experiences.
- Travel and experience living abroad are great additions.
- Because recruiters are usually familiar with the religious affiliation of the Marriott School, it is wise to list mission experience if you have it.
- State citizenship status only if work experience or undergraduate degree/other graduate degrees were completed outside the United States and only if you are a U. S. Citizen or Permanent Resident of the United States.
- List only current, up-to-date information.
- Spell out any acronyms that may be confusing to the reader.

Example:

ADDITIONAL Sierra Club. Participated in student exchange in Germany. Speak German fluently. Interests include tennis, cycling, and jogging.

Skills—Focusing Your Resume

Listed below are both essential MBA and function-specific skills to help you focus your resume. You should showcase the skills that are most relevant for you and your job search. Write accomplishment bullet statements from your past that highlights these skills. As most MBA students are career changers, it is critical to pinpoint and highlight those skills that are transferable—those that apply, or "transfer," from job to job. All skills listed under "Essential MBA Skills" are transferable in nature.

Essential MBA Skills

- Leadership
- Decision making
- Vision
- Persuasion
- Flexibility
- Initiative
- Problem solving and analytical
- Interpersonal and general communication
- Pattern of accomplishments (history of excellence)
- Strategic thinking and planning abilities
- Global ("Cross-cultural") orientation
- Results orientation
- Ability to use technology
- Time management skills
- Building teams and coordinating between departments ("cross-functional")

Function-Specific Skills

Commercial Banking

- Finance and quantitative skills
- Strong marketing abilities
- Team-oriented approach
- Ability to analyze diverse information and formulate recommendations
- Strong relationship management abilities

Finance

- Quantitative/analytical skills
- Understanding accounting and financial management principles
- Ability to interpret numbers and draw conclusions from results of various financial strategy changes
- Ability to handle a wide variety of tasks
- Strong financial and analytical skills
- Good balance between quantitative and interpersonal skills
- Able to take initiative
- Ability to follow through with projects, commitments
- Results-oriented perspective

Investment Banking

- Team player
- Handle multiple tasks/multiple bosses
- Strong quantitative and financial skills
- Ability to analyze diverse information and formulate recommendations quickly
- Willingness to take risks, deal with uncertainty and accept occasional failures
- Ability to perform well under pressure
- Aggressiveness, strong internal motivation and ambition

Management Consulting

- Evidence of solid intellectual capacity
- Ability to elicit information from others; listening skills
- Ability to see the "big picture"
- Solid business judgment and desire to tackle complex business problems
- Creative/conceptual ways of thinking
- Project management skills
- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Ability to determine KEY issues from confused and incomplete information

Marketing

- Ability to motivate others (persuasion skills)
- Ability to work with departments other than marketing (cross-functional skills)
- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Flexibility
- Creativity (can think through different ways of doing things—not necessarily artistic creativity)
- Presentation skills
- Project management skills
- Ability to recognize key factors in extensive data
- Quantitative/research skills

- Organizational skills; ability to coordinate projects, data and people

Supply Chain Management/Operations

- Ability to work well with a wide variety of people
- Understanding of the production environment
- Preference for a variety of tasks
- Quantitative skills
- Ability to coordinate with departments and individuals not under your control
- Ability to initiate and implement major projects

Resume Pointers: A Summary

Goal

To quickly convey to a recruiter that you have desirable skills and qualities that would be of great benefit to the employer; to convince the recruiter to interview you.

Strategies

- Bold, concise statements that tell how you made a difference
- Creative, action-packed verbs
- Quantitative or qualitative results

Six Qualities That Should Jump Out

- Strategic thinking
- Leadership and team work
- Initiative
- Analytical thinking
- Results/follow-through
- Interpersonal skills

Desirable Verbs

Led

Initiated

Secured management approval to.. .

Analyzed

Recommended

Great Verbs

Published/Instituted

Launched/Supervised

Supervised/Coached

Streamlined/Accelerated

Why They're Great

Implies perpetuity and approval by company

Leadership, action, improvement

Leadership of people, personal investment

Unique actions words that say a lot

Weak Phrases to Avoid

- Responsible for
- Duties included
- Maintained

In general, try to use action verbs that describe how you enhanced a process/function versus how you maintained the status quo.

It is important to remember that employers and recruiters will be viewing your resume on e-Recruiting, accordingly, it is your responsibility to make sure that it is formatted properly and looks good electronically.

General Critique Guidelines

Read the entire resume at least twice, with the following questions in mind:

- Are your job 'activities and responsibilities clear? Is the language used to describe them specific enough, but not too specific or technical?
- Does the resume showcase results and accomplishments?
- Is the resume coherent and well organized? Are specific accomplishments and

- responsibilities placed in a strategic order? Is parallel phrasing/structure used?
- Is the resume concise? Are the action verbs vivid and varied whenever possible?
- Does the resume look easily readable with enough white space? Is it effectively formatted within given restrictions?
- Is the resume correct mechanically and grammatically?
- Is the overall emphasis effective?
- Does it target the job you are seeking?

Once again, be aware that the Career Management advisors are available to critique and review your resume.

Resume Writing Guidelines For MBA Students

Introduction

The purpose of your resume is to get an interview. Your resume needs to inform and intrigue the reader (the prospective employer) so that he or she wants to meet you. An effective resume involves self-awareness and other-awareness: it reflects your awareness of your greatest strengths and contributions; it also reflects your awareness of your reader—certainly the organization you want to work for, probably the position you hope to fill, perhaps the specific recruiter or interviewer you are trying to inform and intrigue. Every word in your resume is important. Like good ad-copy, your resume should be crisp and accessible to the reader's eyes and mind.

In this discussion, we present some principles and tips for writing an effective resume. We've broken our advice into two major categories: content and formatting. We begin with content because it takes the most work and makes the greatest difference.

Content

Your resume needs to tell a quick (but specific) story about how you have added value to other organizations through past employment or participation. Don't simply list past employers and job duties. Don't describe in mundane fashion the things that any person in that position or job would have done: "Responsible for balancing all accounts at close of billing period..."; or "Supervised the work of nine team members..." or "Duties included..." Rather, tell a story of past success that is unique to you and compelling to your reader.

To the prospective employer, your past performance is a proxy to future performance. Think very carefully about your experiences before you settle on written descriptions of them. The vital questions are:

- Did you make things better (faster, cheaper, more efficient, more pleasant, more interesting, more effective, more client-focused)?
- What specifically did you do to make things better?
- How was your contribution measured or quantified in ways that can be documented in your resume?

Your answers to these questions constitute a quick (but specific) story about how you added value to other organizations, with the intent of both informing and intriguing the reader.

You may need to create multiple versions of your resume, each focusing on a targeted recipient and employer. When you write (and rewrite) your resume, bring attention to value added. We recommend that for each job or significant experience, you begin with a crisp statement of your role and then list two or three (probably no more than three) bullet-point descriptions of the major contributions or specific achievements you made during that experience. For example:

MediSoft, Inc. – Dayton City, Ohio

Sales Director/Sales Representative

5/98-7/02

Marketed specialty medical software for \$300M annual revenue division. Recruited, hired, and directed a sales team of three.

- Developed multi-channel sales promotions that expanded sales 15%
- Exceeded annual sales projections by 20%
- Promoted to sales director after six months

Focus on a Specific Firm, Industry, or Position if Possible. You should end up with several versions of your resume tailored to specific jobs or organizations. Without a specific target the resume becomes a generic work history and does not sell you to the reader. Finance, marketing, OB/HR, or operations are good general targets; however, a finance position at Ford Motor Company is a more specific (and therefore focused) target. Focusing your resume on a specific position and employer helps eliminate irrelevant information such as personal data and outdated technical or business skills.

Watch the Numbers. Be careful how you make claims about your accomplishments. When recruiters see a phrase like, “Managed \$500,000 budget...” it may be meaningful or insignificant depending on the context. In an investment banking department or a consulting engagement it may be a flag that you haven’t had much experience. It may be better to say, “Managed employer’s largest account.” Some numbers may be difficult for readers to understand. For example, GMAT and GPA scores are largely significant relative to school or employer averages, so don’t state GMAT scores under 650 or average GPA’s less than 3.7.

Avoid Personal Information. An employer cannot appropriately ask a candidate’s age, race, religion, gender, health, or marital status during the hiring process. To avoid lawsuits, some employers simply discard or return resumes that include such personal information.

Don’t Include Objectives and References. In a few cases, you can include an objective statement at the beginning of your resume, but it must add something to the resume to be worth the space. Consider stating an objective in the cover letter and leaving it off the resume. If employers want references, they will generally ask; saying “References Available Upon Request” is another waste of space. Do prepare a list of references (people who are positive and enthusiastic) and provide it when the employer requests it. Ask prior permission from all references to use them—if a reference hesitates in any way, do not use that individual.

Be Professional with Contact Information. Check your resume to ensure that your contact information is current and correct. Recruiters rarely make more than two call attempts before they tire and go on to the next candidate. Tell the recruiter how to reach you when you are in class or away from home. Use a message system or recorder and be careful about the professionalism of your recorded greeting. Inform roommates that answering with, “Sewer Department” or “Pizza Palace” will not make a good impression in your job search. If you move, send your resume again noting the new contact information. This keeps the employer informed, demonstrates responsibility, and might re-energize interest in your qualifications.

Use Jargon and Acronyms Sparingly. Jargon and acronyms may demonstrate familiarity in a field, but can mask breadth and broader business ability. Most graduate students are seeking higher responsibility levels and need to use language that conveys broader professional comfort. Don’t forget that college recruiters not only look to fill current positions, but are seeking leadership potential as well. Use language that demonstrates your leadership potential. If there is any doubt, spell out acronyms.

Formatting

There are no formatting absolutes. Formats vary widely and are often subject to reader and industry preferences. However, there are conventions that should be followed to assure that format idiosyncrasies do not detract from your resume’s effectiveness. It is important to be consistent with whatever style you choose. For example, if you lead with the employer name

in one job description, lead with it in all descriptions. Use the format to highlight your strengths and downplay your weaknesses.

If an employer has a format preference, it is usually obtained through the employer's web page or by contacting their recruiting office. Always adhere to requests by employers such as:

- Do not send resume as an attachment
- Complete an online application form in lieu of submitting a resume
- Supply your resume in a scanable format (with specifications listed)

Follow these instructions to eliminate a rejection or delay in resume processing.

Pass the Skim Test. While the resume tells a story about employability and skills, it must pass the "skim" test. Help the recruiter find your pertinent information quickly and pull it out from the mass of other resumes received. When recruiters skim, they eliminate candidates who clearly are not qualified. Your resume should meet these test objectives:

- Can a hiring manager see main credentials within 10 to 15 seconds?
- Does critical information jump off the page?
- Is the first bullet the most important information for the reader?
- Is the employer effectively sold on the candidate in the top quarter of the first page?

Begin with the Present. The most frequently used general format in resume writing is reverse chronological order, especially when listing employer and position experiences. There are no rules that dictate the order of responsibilities or accomplishments under each position heading. If you know the job's requirements and learn what is significant to the organization, the order of position accomplishments and results should begin with what is most important to the employer.

Stay Within One Page. Typically your resume should not exceed one page. There are some exceptions to this rule: a few top management consulting firms like very detailed resumes, as do some investment banking firms. Avoid giving a data dump listing of every past job responsibility. Most firms are looking for more than a list of your past assignments. They are also judging your ability to write concisely and succinctly about your capabilities and accomplishments. Tell enough to inform and intrigue the employer, but avoid repetition and wordiness.

Watch Consistency and Alignment. Frequently, we see problems arising from the resume templates that come with word processing programs. If you use a template, be careful to properly align bullets and text. Some templates don't allow multiple text lines to fall directly under previous text; instead they align directly under the bullet. Use consistency of form, i.e. if the job position or company name is bold in one section, follow that format for all sections. If a blank line is used to separate sections, all sections should have a blank line separator. Be careful to not mix too many font styles, types and sizes.

Find and Correct All Errors. Many employers have stated that regardless of how qualified a candidate might be, they eliminate resumes with noticeable errors. These errors demonstrate sloppiness with details and recruiters assume that this casual behavior will continue on the job.

Avoid Gimmicks in Packaging. Recruiters often discount resumes received in plastic folders, printed on bright colored paper, enhanced with ornate graphics or unusually designed. While the writer's intent is to set the resume apart from others, the reader frequently interprets these gimmicks as efforts to hide something. Resumes that rely on content and present that

content in a straightforward, truthful fashion are the most effective. Good content will almost always make a resume rise to the top of the stack.

Consider not folding your resume to fit a standard business envelope. Heavy-stock paper that retains its crease is a problem, especially for the 50% of employers that scan resumes. Since most resumes will be copied and distributed, consider making it easy on the employer's College Relations or HR staff by giving them a flat copy. There is little need to waste money on expensive "resume" stationary. Keep it simple—good quality white, light gray, or light cream color.

Examples

Included are two examples of actual resumes from Marriott School master degree students. While their experiences may differ significantly from yours, you will see how to evaluate their content and format, and find some solutions for the problems identified using the guides provided above. Please note that like your resume, even these examples are subject to further improvements. Other sources of resume samples are available on the web, through library publications, and in bookstores.

DARIA W. SMITH

493 South Sunnyside Lane, Provo, UT 84601

email: Daria@lfi.com

444-555-2222

EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Brigham Young University

2004

Provo, UT

- Marketing emphasis
- 4.0 GPA, 740 GMAT (98th Percentile), Full Tuition Scholarship
- CFA Level 1 Candidate (June 2001), CFA Program Scholarship
- Equity Marketing Club, Vice President

BACHELOR OF ARTS, MARKETING, CUM LAUDE

Brigham Young University

1997

Provo, UT

- Major GPA 3.9, overall GPA 3.8
- Dean's Academic Scholarship, Georgia R. Merket Academic Scholarship and Leadership Scholarship, Dean's List, Phi Kappa Phi
- Student Leader of the Year, Student Advisory Council, BYUSA (1993-1994)
- Taught advanced marketing courses at Utah University in Salt Lake City on faculty recommendation
- Additional coursework in mathematics, electrical engineering, accounting and physics

EXPERIENCE

LFI CAPITAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Registered Investment Advisor

1999-2002

Ventura, CA

Position – Vice President

- Co-managed \$5-10 million in domestic equities for private individual on a discretionary basis. Responsibilities included security selections, valuation, trading and customer relations
- Allocated and oversaw \$50 million in corporate cash for a large public company – helped to build and maintain the relationship for more than 3 years
- Developed valuation models and analytical framework for the equity management service. Analyzed numerous companies across various industries using traditional financial statement analysis, qualitative analysis, DCF, break-up and comparative valuation methods
- Won contract to offer investment services through 14 branches of a local bank
- Developed a rapidly growing brokerage clientele – products offered included mutual funds, stocks, bonds, individual and company retirement plans, insurance and annuities
- Registered Representative, Special Securities Corporation, member NASD, SiPC
- Licenses: Series 7, Series 63, Series 65, California Insurance – Life and Variable

LEVERAGE COMMODITY INFO, INC.

Management Consulting Firm and Registered Commodity Trading Advisor

1997-1999

Lodi, CA

Position – Database Manager

- Provided customized analysis, software, charting and data for clients including Nabisco, Kraft-General Foods, Louis-Dreyfus, C&H Sugar, Frito-Lay and Holley Sugar
- Expanded proprietary database to include numerous unique data sets, particularly in the cash coffee and oilseeds markets and created new and innovative products based on customer surveys
- Secured Louis-Dreyfus and Frito-Lay as clients

Additional Information

Community / Volunteer:

Member, Board of Directors, Ventura Education Foundation (2001-2002)

Interests:

Art collecting, biking, fishing, skiing, volleyball

Professional Groups:

Simi Valley Entrepreneurial Forum

EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

2004

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT

- Marketing emphasis
- 4.0 GPA, 740 GMAT (98th Percentile), Full Tuition Scholarship
- CFA Level 1 Candidate (June 2001), CFA Program Scholarship
- Equity Marketing Club, Vice President

BACHELOR OF ARTS, MARKETING, CUM LAUDE

1997

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT

- Major GPA 3.9, overall GPA 3.8
- Dean's Academic Scholarship, Georgia R. Merket Academic Scholarship and Leadership Scholarship, Dean's List, Phi Kappa Phi
- Student Leader of the Year, Student Advisory Council, BYUSA (1993-1994)
- Taught advanced marketing courses at Utah University in Salt Lake City on faculty recommendation
- Additional coursework in mathematics, electrical engineering, accounting and physics

EXPERIENCE

LFI CAPITAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

1999-2002

Registered Investment Advisor

Ventura, CA

Position – Vice President

Change to list accomplishments

- Co-managed \$5-10 million in domestic equities for private individual on a discretionary basis. Responsibilities included security selections, valuation, trading and customer relations
- Allocated and oversaw \$50 million in corporate cash for a large public company – helped to build and maintain the relationship for more than 3 years
- Developed valuation models and analytical framework for the equity management service.
- Analyzed numerous companies across various industries using traditional financial statement analysis, qualitative analysis, DCF, break-up and comparative valuation methods
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- Registered Representative, Special Securities Corporation, member NASD, SIPC
- Licenses: Series 7, Series 63, Series 65, California Insurance – Life and Variable

How?

What results?

How many?
Volume?

Consider moving
to Additional

LEVERAGE COMMODITY INFO, INC.

1997-1999

Management Consulting Firm and Registered Commodity Trading Advisor

Lodi, CA

Position – Database Manager

- Provided customized analysis, software, charting and data for clients including Nabisco, Kraft-General Foods, Louis-Dreyfus, C&H Sugar, Frito-Lay and Holley Sugar
- Expanded proprietary database to include numerous unique data sets, particularly in the cash coffee and oilseeds markets and created new and innovative products based on customer surveys
- Secured Louis-Dreyfus and Frito-Lay as clients

Why this
order?
Alphabetize?

What is significance?

Additional Information

Tell me about these. Break up
these thoughts.

Community / Volunteer:

Member, Board of Directors, Ventura Education Foundation (2001-2002)

Interests:

Art collecting, biking, fishing, skiing, volleyball

Professional Groups:

Simi Valley Entrepreneurial Forum

DARIA W. SMITH

493 South Sunnyside Lane, Provo, UT 84601

email: Daria@lfi.com

444-555-2222

EDUCATION

Consider moving Education to bottom, use experience to sell you. Add an Expertise section to focus on the job you want.

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Brigham Young University

- Marketing emphasis
- 4.0 GPA, 740 GMAT (98th Percentile), Full Tuition Scholarship
- CFA Level 1 Candidate (June 2002), CFA Program Scholarship
- Equity Marketing Club, Vice President

2002
Provo, UT

Place emphasis next to degree

BACHELOR OF ARTS, MARKETING, CUM LAUDE

Brigham Young University

- Major GPA 3.9, overall GPA 3.8
- Dean's Academic Scholarship, Georgia R. Merket Academic Scholarship and Leadership Scholarship, Dean's List, Phi Kappa Phi
- Student Leader of the Year, Student Advisory Council, BYUSA (1994-1995)
- Taught advanced marketing courses at Utah University in Salt Lake City on faculty recommendation
- Additional coursework in mathematics, electrical engineering, accounting and physics

1997
Provo, UT

De-emphasize the titles to gain some content space. Smaller font, could eliminate line.

EXPERIENCE

LFI CAPITAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Registered Investment Advisor

Position – Vice President

- Co-managed \$5-10 million in domestic equities for private individual on a discretionary basis. Responsibilities included security selections, valuation, trading and customer relations
- Allocated and oversaw \$50 million in corporate cash for a large public company – helped to build and maintain the relationship for more than 3 years
- Developed valuation models and analytical framework for the equity management service. Analyzed numerous companies across various industries using traditional financial statement analysis, qualitative analysis, DCF, break-up and comparative valuation methods
- Won contract to offer investment services through 14 branches of a local bank
- Developed a rapidly growing brokerage clientele – products offered included mutual funds, stocks, bonds, individual and company retirement plans, insurance and annuities
- Registered Representative, Special Securities Corporation, member NASD, SIPC
- Licenses: Series 7, Series 63, Series 65, California Insurance – Life and Variable

1999
Ventura, CA

Tighten
Bullet space

LEVERAGE COMMODITY INFO, INC.

Management Consulting Firm and Registered Commodity Trading Advisor

Position – Database Manager

- Provided customized analysis, software, charting and data for clients including Nabisco, Kraft-General Foods, Louis-Dreyfus, C&H Sugar, Frito-Lay and Holley Sugar
- Expanded proprietary database to include numerous unique data sets, particularly in the cash coffee and oilseeds markets and created new and innovative products based on customer surveys
- Secured Louis-Dreyfus and Frito-Lay as clients

1997-1999
Lodi, CA

Additional Information

Community / Volunteer:

Member, Board of Directors, Ventura Education Foundation (2001-2002)

Interests:

Art collecting, biking, fishing, skiing, volleyball

Professional Groups:

Simi Valley Entrepreneurial Forum

DARIA W. SMITH

493 South Sunnyside Lane, Provo, UT 84601

email: Daria@lfi.com

444-555-2222

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Deep knowledge of asset management/wealth-development built through six years of hands-on business experience
- Presentation and closing skills delivered through exceptional customer service
- Ability to simplify and resolve complex financial problems

EXPERIENCE

LFI CAPITAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Registered Investment Advisor

Position – Vice President

1999-2002

Ventura, CA

Co-managed \$5-10 million in domestic equities for private individuals. Selected securities, valued portfolios, traded equities and built personal customer relationships. Developed valuation models and analytical framework for the equity management service.

- Allocated and oversaw \$50 million in corporate cash for a large public company – helped to build and maintain the relationship for more than 3 years
- Analyzed more than a hundred companies across various industries using traditional financial statement analysis, qualitative analysis, DCF, break-up and comparative valuation methods
- Won contract offering investment services through 14 branches of a local bank
- Developed a rapidly growing brokerage clientele of 250 accounts – products included mutual funds, stocks, bonds, individual and company retirement plans, insurance and annuities

LEVERAGE COMMODITY INFO, INC.

Management Consulting Firm and Registered Commodity Trading Advisor

Position – Database Manager

1997-1999

Lodi, CA

Provided customized analysis, software, charting and data for clients including Nabisco, Kraft-General Foods, Louis-Dreyfus, C&H Sugar, Frito-Lay and Holley Sugar

- Expanded proprietary database to include numerous unique data sets, particularly in the cash coffee and oilseeds markets
- Created twenty new and innovative products to meet specific customer needs
- Secured Louis-Dreyfus and Frito-Lay as clients

EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MARKETING

Brigham Young University

2004

Provo, UT

- 4.0 GPA, 740 GMAT (98th Percentile), Full Tuition Scholarship
- CFA Level 1 Candidate (June 2002), CFA Program Scholarship
- Equity Marketing Club, Vice President

BACHELOR OF ARTS, MARKETING, CUM LAUDE

Brigham Young University

1997

Provo, UT

- Major GPA 3.9, overall GPA 3.8
- Numerous scholastic awards including scholarships, Dean's List, Phi Kappa Phi
- Student Leader of the Year, Student Advisory Council, BYUSA (1995-1996)
- Additional coursework in mathematics, electrical engineering, accounting and physics

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Certifications: Registered Representative, SMO Securities Corporation, member NASD, SiPC
Licenses: Series 7, Series 63, Series 65, California Insurance – Life and Variable
Academic: Selected by faculty to teach advanced marketing courses at Utah university
Community / Volunteer: Member, Board of Directors, Ventura Education Foundation (2001-2002)
Missionary, Juneau, Alaska (1992-1994)
Professional Groups: Simi Valley Entrepreneurial Forum
Interests: Art collecting, biking, fishing, skiing, volleyball

JANET LINFORD

EDUCATION

- 2002-2004** **Brigham Young University, UT**
Master of Business Administration, Organizational Behavior
- 1998-1999** **Brigham Young University, UT**
B.S. Degree Recreation Management & Youth Leadership
- 1995** **Janetta's Academy of Beauty Culture, AK**
(AK) Licensed Nail Technician

EXPERIENCE

- 2002** **Church Educational System, UT, AK**
Especially for Youth Counselor
- 1998-1999, 2001** **Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK**
Recreation Assistant
- Facilitated coordination of speakers/speciality classes for "Teen Zone" (Jr. High) &O "Generation eXcellence Team" (High School).
 - Organized & On-site Supervisor for the "Teens in Action" Summer Camp program.
 - Prepared budget for "teen Zone" & Teen Summer Camp '99.
- 1998-1999, 2001** **Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK**
Ballroom Dance Instructor
- 1999, 2000** **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Metropolis, Brasil**
Missionary
- 1998, 2001** **Joseph Smith Legacy Tour, AK, MY, MI**
Tour Escort
- Supervised busloads of high school students on tour from NY to MI. Worked w/hotels, restaurants, site guides and chaperones to arrange & conduct smooth tour
- Summer 1998** **Messa Arts Center, AK**
Concert Assistant, Program Assistant, Intern
- Summer 1997** **Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK**
C.I.T. Coordinator, Intern
- Counselor-In-Training Coordinator, Managed West District's CIT program. 9 sites, 70 south, composed newsletters, wrote & revised CIT staff training manual.
- 1997** B.Y.U. Study Abroad in *Zambia, Africa*
- 1995-1997** **Self-Employed, UT**
Nail Technician
- 1996** **Museum of Art Café, B.Y.U, UT**
Office Manger

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Portuguese, Understand Spanish, speak some.

JANET LINFORD

Full Name

EDUCATION

← Add: Marriott School

2002-2004 Brigham Young University, UT
Master of Business Administration, Organizational Behavior

1998-1999 Brigham Young University, UT
B.S. Degree Recreation Management & Youth Leadership

1995 Janetta's Academy of Beauty Culture, AK
(AK) Licensed Nail Technician

← Leave off, unnecessary & unrelated

EXPERIENCE

2002 Church Educational System, UT, AK
Especially for Youth Counselor ← Tell what was involved and show accomplishments/results

1998-1999, 2001 Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK
Recreation Assistant

- Facilitated coordination of speakers/speciality classes for "Teen Zone" (Jr. High) & O "Generation eXcellence Team" (High School). ← Give number speakers & attendees, How complex?
- Organized & On-site Supervisor for the "Teens in Action" Summer Camp program.
- Prepared budget for "teen Zone" & Teen Summer Camp '99. ← How big \$, spreadsheets needed?

1998-1999, 2001 Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK

Ballroom Dance Instructor

1999, 2000 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Metropolis, Brasil
Missionary ← Tell more about job-related accomplishments in this position

1998, 2001 Joseph Smith Legacy Tour, AK, MY, MI

Tour Escort

- Supervised busloads of high school students on tour from NY to MI. Worked w/hotels, restaurants, site guides and chaperones to arrange & conduct smooth tour

ALWAYS PROVIDE RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS QUANTIFY IF POSSIBLE

Summer 1998 Messa Arts Center, AK
Concert Assistant, Program Assistant, Intern

Summer 1997 Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK
C.I.T. Coordinator, Intern
• Counselor-In-Training Coordinator, Managed West District's CIT program. 9 sites, 70 south, composed newsletters, wrote & revised CIT staff training manual. ← What does this mean?

1997 B.Y.U. Study Abroad in *Zambia, Africa*

1995-1997 Self-Employed, UT
Nail Technician
1996 Museum of Art Café, B.Y.U., UT
Office Manger

← Can probably eliminate these jobs, irrelevant

FOREIGN LANGUAGE
Portuguese, Understand Spanish, speak some.

Do you speak some Spanish or some Portuguese?

2231 Manor Lane * Messa, AK 54090
(801) 989-2344 * jjl@email.byu.edu

Resume Sample 2
Format Comments

JANET LINFOR

Contact information
needs to be easily seen
near top of page

2002-2004 ← Brigham Young University, UT
Master of Business Administration, Organizational Behavior

1998-1999 ← Brigham Young University, UT
B.S. Degree Recreation Management & Youth Leadership

1995 ← Janetta's Academy of Beauty Culture, AK
(AK) Licensed Nail Technician

Indent

No periods needed after BS

Most important things first,
move dates to the right of
the description

Inconsistent font size

EXPERIENCE

2002 ← Church Educational System, UT, AK
Especially for Youth Counselor

1998-1999, 2001 ← Rosa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK
Recreation Assistant

Align bullet lines

- Facilitated coordination of speakers/specialty classes for "Teen Zone" (Jr. High) & O "Generation eXcellence Team" (High School).
- Organized & On-site Supervisor for the "Teens in Action" Summer Camp program.
- Prepared budget for "teen Zone" & Teen Summer Camp '99.

Spelling

1998-1999, 2001 ← Rosa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK
Ballroom Dance Instructor

1999, 2000 ← The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Metropolis, Brasil
Missionary

Could move this to OTHER section

1998, 2001 ← Ioseph Smith Legacy Tour, AK, MY, MI
Tour Escort
Inconsistent line spacing,

- Supervised busloads of high school students on tour from NY to MI. Worked w/hotels, restaurants, site guides and chaperones to arrange & conduct smooth tour

Summer 1998 ← Rosa Arts Center, AK
Concert Assistant, Program Assistant, Intern

Summer 1997 ← Rosa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK
C.I.T. Coordinator, Intern

← Counselor-In-Training Coordinator, Managed West District's CIT program. 9 sites, 70 south, composed newsletters, wrote & revised CIT staff training manual.

1997 ← B.Y.U. Study Abroad in *Zambia, Africa*
 Move to education section

1995-1997 ← Self-Employed, UT
Nail Technician

1996 ← Museum of Art Café, B.Y.U., UT
Office Manger

Format is inconsistent, use same font as above; consider changing to OTHER

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ← Portuguese, Understand Spanish, speak some.

2231 Manor Lane * Messa, AK 54
 (801) 989-2344 * jjl@email.byu.edu

Consider moving address to top (not required, but may be better.)

JANET J. LINFORD

200 South 300 East No 4, Provo, UT 84602 (current)
2231 Manor Lane, Messa, AK 74097 (permanent)
(801) 989-2344 * jjl@email.byu.edu

EDUCATION

Marriott School of Management, **Brigham Young University, Provo, UT** 2002-2004
Master of Business Administration—Organizational Behavior

School of Recreation Science, **Brigham Young University, Provo, UT** 1998-1999
Bachelor of Science—Recreation Management & Youth Leadership

Kennedy International Center, **Brigham Young University, Zambia, Africa** 1997
Three-Month Study Abroad Program

EXPERIENCE

Especially for Youth Counselor, Church Educational System, UT, AK 2002
On-campus educational program for youth ages 14-16, training multiple living principles regarding social, peer, family and religious understanding. Focused on assisting youth in dealing with adolescent cultural, self-assurance and growth issues.

- Guided 200 youth each week for six weeks using smaller 10-15 person groups in targeted learning experiences
- Chaperoned activities, taught appropriate social conduct and group interaction skills
- Provided limited counseling assistance and referred individuals to higher level counselors when needed
- Rated No. 1 Counselor by all groups

Recreation Assistant, Messa Parks, Recreation & Cultural Division, AK 1998-1999, 2001
City sponsored activities organization for 15,000 teens, in five local schools

- Facilitated coordination of speakers/specialty classes for “Teen Zone” (Jr. High) and O “Generation eXcellence Team” (High School)
- Organized and Supervised on-site the “Teens in Action” Summer Camp program
- Prepared spreadsheet and presented \$10,000 budget for “Teen Zone” and Teen Summer Camp ’99

Ballroom Dance Instructor – Taught 150 students Latin, Classical, and Jazz dance

Tour Escort, Joseph Smith Legacy Tour, AK, NY, MI 1998, 2001

- Supervised busloads of high school students on tour from NY to MI. Worked with hotels, restaurants, site guides and chaperones to arrange & conduct smooth tour

Concert Assistant, Program Assistant, Intern, Messa Arts Center, AK Summer 1998
City of Rosa cultural arts and theater center presenting 25 stage productions annually in multiple venue modes including: symphony, opera, live plays, rock and roll

- Assigned to concert productions, ticketing, house setup, venue preparations, budgeting and performer relations

OTHER

Missionary, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Metropolis, Brazil 1999-2000
Presented lessons and answered investigators questions, held unit leadership responsibility, performed community service

Speak, read and interpret Portuguese; understand and speak some Spanish

Cover Letters & Other Job Search Correspondence

Cover Letter Guidelines	2
Formatting the Letter	2
Content.....	2
Writing Tips	2
Components of a Cover-Letter	3
Conveying Interest	3
Highlighting Resume Points	3
Communicating Motivation	4
Demonstrating a Fit	4
Common Mistakes	4
Strategies for Problem Solving.....	4
10 Tips on Cover Letter Writing.....	5
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Cover Letter Guidelines

Along with your resume, the cover letter, or letter of application, is the first impression you will make on a potential employer. While the resume is general, capable of being sent to many types of employers, the cover letter should be very job or organization specific. Time and effort should be taken with each letter so that the reader is able to understand completely your interest in the job and employer. More importantly, he/she should see how your background, skills and abilities would "fit" with the organization. The cover letter is one of the most effective ways to show you have researched the employer. Your cover letter should effectively convey that you are knowledgeable about the activities of the organization.

Formatting the Letter

- Always typed
- Professional and concise (3-4 paragraphs; never more than one page)
- Grammatically perfect
- Straightforward
- Not a duplication of resume
- Unique to each employer/organization
- Addressed to a person, not a department
- Top and bottom margins should be even—letter should be centered.

Content

- Start each letter with your return address, either left justified or the center of the page, Both with left justification.
- Follow your return address with the date you are mailing the cover letter.
- Space down four lines—on the fourth line, begin the forwarding address. Include person's name, title, organization and mailing address.
- Double-space after forwarding address; then write salutation. Use the person's last name unless you are definitely on a first-name basis.
- Double-space between paragraphs, single space within.

Example

555 W. Franklin St.
Provo, UT 84601
October 21, 20xX

(Space down to the fourth line)

Ms. Joanne Doe
Brand Manager
Procter and Gamble
112 P &G Way
Cincinnati, OH 45222

Dear Ms. Doe:

(Opening paragraph starts here.)

Writing Tips

- Use professional language, not slang.
- Be sincere.
- Avoid language unfamiliar to you (words you do not fully understand or use regularly).
- Focus on what you can do for the company.
- Write from the reader's perspective (what would you like to know about a candidate if you were an employer?)
- Realize that your objective is to land an interview.
- Follow-up is critical.
- Proofread several times.

Components of a Cover Letter

During your job search it is extremely important to communicate effectively with potential employers. This section covers components of cover letter writing, strategies for presenting your background clearly in a cover letter, and examples of the typical types of employment correspondence.

Opening Paragraph, Body and Closing Paragraph

In the opening paragraph you should:

Establish rapport with the reader

- If you met earlier, indicate when, where and for what event/situation. Give an insightful impression of your last encounter.
- If you were referred by another person, indicate that you were and by whom.
- If you are writing a "cold call" letter, hook into the company strengths and/or reputation (via research, employees, professor, etc). Note: cold call letters have the lowest probability of success; expand networking efforts to avoid cold calls (even lukewarm calls are better).

Indicate clear purpose for writing

- Informational meeting
- Interview
- Employment (internship vs. permanent)
- Visiting employer's city and want to meet with them

Provide a one-sentence summary statement of qualifications

- Two or three selling points
- Link to how that qualifies (or should qualify) you for the position—the ways you can contribute

In the body you should:

- Elaborate on the two or three selling points indicated above by providing examples
- Illustrate points by highlighting qualifications or job experience from resume that are applicable to the job and organization you are applying to
- Demonstrate knowledge of and potential fit with employer
- Convey motivation to contribute (what you can do for or bring to position/organization)
- Consider using bullets to highlight your skills/accomplishments

In the closing paragraph you should:

- Reiterate interest in the employer and fit for the job
- Indicate the next step/action to be taken
- Close professionally

Convey Interest in and Knowledge of the Employer

- Write with regard to the style of the reader/employer/industry style (formality of writing)
- Refer to events in the organization or interests of reader
- Refer to recent conversations or published comments

Highlight Resume Points (particularly results/impact)

- Support your claims with resume illustrations
- Unsupported claims don't say much

Example

OK: I revitalized the sales department.

Better: By streamlining office procedures and introducing weekly staff meetings, department morale improved

and productivity increased. We posted a 26 percent rise in sales the first month after I instituted these new measures.

Communicate Motivation

- Note that motivation can be conveyed by statements and by the vigor of your writing

Example

With my analytical and coordination skills, I believe that I could be an integral part of your organization's continued success.

Demonstrate a "Fit" with Employer/Position (when possible and appropriate)

Example

ABC is seeking marketing expertise and creativity in its interns. During my four years of services marketing and advertising experience, I have developed strong skills in these areas.

Common Mistakes

- Using a self-oriented approach (focused on why you chose a field or what the reader/company can do for you)

Bad Example (choosing a field)

I am undertaking my MBA studies with an emphasis in finance so that I may gain a better understanding of the financial markets. Of particular interest to me is Mega Trust's sales and trading division. I have followed the securities market for several years and have developed an intense desire to become active in the securities industry. My previous work experience as a highly successful sales representative in the competitive photographic industry lends credibility to my desire to remain in sales. Therefore, I have chosen to pursue a career in financial sales and trading. (Instead, focus on what you bring to the organization, not what you get out of it.)

- Positioning yourself too much as a "charity case."

Bad Example

Please allow me to express my appreciation to you for allowing me the opportunity to present my qualifications and request for consideration for employment with your organization. In review of my enclosed personal resume, I present my experience and qualifications which I feel, with your cooperation, will allow me to be a valuable asset to your firm.

- Relying on hyperbolic statements (exaggerating reactions, qualifications and potential.) At the least, your sincerity can easily be questioned; at the most, you can come across as pretentious or foolish.

Bad Example

The perpetuity and stability of the Walt Disney Company is of paramount importance to society as a whole, for a great void would be left with no relief in sight.

Strategies for "Problem" Situations

- If you have no/very little related work experience..
 - Draw parallels between seemingly unrelated experience and the job; make the link for the reader.
 - Focus on skills and functions (rather than job titles and company names).
 - Expand on outside interests, memberships, extracurricular activities, etc., that relate to the job.
- If you have had little or no upward advancement (such as a series of lateral moves). .
 - Choose examples of achievement that indicate advancement in expertise and abilities.
 - Use strong action words to underscore vigor and motivation.
 - Emphasize how duties expanded and responsibilities increased.
 - Note self-initiative (or management selection) as key points in your career.

- If you have had a period of unemployment...
 - General rule: Don't address it in a cover letter (especially if you were fired). Most explanations tend to be long-winded, drawing further attention to the issue. Be prepared to address the employment gap in an interview (including any phone discussions before the interview meeting).
 - Focus on consulting projects or part-time jobs to fill in gaps in employment. You do not have to be working 40+ hours a week in a formal company setting to be gaining experience.

10 Tips on Cover Letter Writing

1. Avoid overt carelessness such as:
 - a. Typographical errors
 - b. Spelling errors
 - c. Grammatical errors
 - d. Incorrect name/title/address
2. Keep the letter brief, no more than one page.
3. Address the letter to a person (not a title).
4. Follow a typical business letter format (see examples of cover letters).
5. Create a visually appealing letter.
6. Proofread the letter several times; have a Mentor, Career Management advisor or trusted friend offer objective advice on the letter.
7. Limit the use of sentences beginning with "I."
8. Keep a copy of all correspondence.
9. Remember to think about what the employer is looking for in a candidate: "Why should I hire this person?"
10. Keep the sentence structure simple and concise.

Additional Job Search Correspondence

Networking Letters

Purpose of Networking Letters:

- Set the stage for a personal introduction or informational interview
- Acquaint the person with your qualifications in advance of your phone call or meeting

Objectives of Networking Letters:

- Create an open and comfortable atmosphere between yourself and the contact where he/she is willing to share information with you
- Provide sufficient information about yourself and your career aims so the person can provide meaningful help

Key Elements (order may vary, depending on situation):

- Personalized opening paragraph that builds rapport. Include name of the person who has referred you and the basis of your relationship
- Explanation of how referral came about (when helpful)
- Reasoning for job/career change or for career focus
- General notation as to how this individual can assist you
- Brief overall summary of qualifications
- Action statement to initiate next step (with logistics if appropriate)
- Statement of appreciation

Follow-Up/Thank-You Letters

Interviews/meetings or phone calls must be followed up with a thank-you letter. Letters should also be written following interactions with recruiters at job fairs and corporate presentations. In a thank-you letter, be sure to:

- Re-establish rapport: acknowledge the interview/meeting or call and convey insightful impression(s)/reaction(s)

- Reiterate your key selling points (about two) and their fit to the position or organization
- Reinforce interest
- Include information requested by interviewer, if appropriate
- Note (or remind of) next step
- As always, keep the message brief
- If the employer contacts you with e-mail, use e-mail to contact them
- Avoid:
 - Defensive tone (Example: You may not think that I have sufficient finance skills, but I can tell you my budget exposure at TI provided me with a lot of knowledge.)
 - Arrogant, presumptuous tone (Example: I'm your best candidate.)
 - Impersonal style

Acceptance Letters

When writing an acceptance letter, remember to:

- Use professional, direct style
- Restate terms of employment and indicate acceptance
- Convey eagerness
- Note (or remind of) next interaction, if appropriate
- Avoid:
 - Overly "chummy" style (example: I can't believe it!! I 'm now employed at Dillon Read. I'm really excited about this...)
 - Overly detailed logistical questions
 - Your acceptance being vague or unclear that you are accepting the offer

Rejection Letters

With letters you write to turn down an offer, remember to:

- Express appreciation for the offer
- Provide a reasonable, appropriate explanation; keep it brief
- Work to retain goodwill (for self and business school) –You may want a future relationship
- Pay particular attention to the message tone
- Avoid:
 - Overly apologetic tone (example: I am very sorry to have to tell you this, but I've decided to accept another offer. Please accept my sincere apology...)
 - Blow-by-blow description of your decision-making process.

Electronic Correspondence: E-mail, Sending Attachments, and Voice Mail

When writing correspondence via e-mail, it is easy to forget that e-mail is only a medium of sending a message, much like the Postal Service. The care and attention spent on the message should equal that which you put into "paper" correspondence. Many employers have expressed dismay at the "informal" tone, sometimes bordering on sloppiness, that students use when sending e-mailed inquiries or cover letters.

The same rules apply when using electronic correspondence as they do with traditional correspondence. As you write e-mails to recruiters, send faxes, or leave voice mail messages, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- All written correspondence must be grammatically perfect and free of typographical errors.
- Professionalism is key to success. Delete any personal messages you may have on your voice mail, at the end of your e-mail (in the signature portion) and on your personal Web site.
- Be wary of sending resumes electronically. Check with the recipient first to see what kind of format his/her system will accept. You want your resume to look as good printed as an attachment as it would if you were sending it through the mail. If you type your resume in Microsoft Word, it will more easily convert to a pdf file through Adobe Acrobat. There are also templates on E-Recruiting that you can just type your information over the existing information.
- When leaving voice mail messages, always speak clearly and distinctly. Leave your name, phone number, a brief, to-the-point message, and when you can be reached. It is a good idea to leave your

name at the beginning and end of your message and to repeat your phone number. Script the key points you want to make before you call.

Interviewing

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Interview Preparation

Overview

The interview is the most important part of the job-search process. Typically, the interviewer has already seen your resume and established an initial impression. However, the interview is usually the first opportunity to interact with a potential employer in person, and this interaction will determine whether or not you have the opportunity to continue in an employer's selection process.

The following section outlines important interview tips, including preparation techniques, as well as types of interviews. You should refer to the information throughout your job search to keep your interview skills crisp and effective.

Preparation

Given the importance of the interview in landing the job of your choice, preparation is a necessity. You should familiarize yourself with the specific position for which you are interviewing. Then, make a link between your skills and strengths and the requirements of the position. Fundamentally, you must be convinced that a particular job and employer is right for you before you can convince the employer that you are the right candidate for the position.

Prepare Your Information:

- Research the organization/industry thoroughly using information from network contacts, web sites, and published materials. You must understand the products, processes, history, industry dynamics/challenges, and people involved in each interview.
- Reread job descriptions and newspaper ads/articles.
- Review a copy of the same resume (and cover letter if applicable) that the interviewer will be using and keep a copy with you. However, do not pull your resume out during the interview unless the interviewer asks for another copy.
- Develop a list of thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer about the position, organization, and industry. Always have more than you think you might need. It is better to be overly prepared rather than not have enough questions.
- Develop and rehearse your CAR illustrations (see below) relevant to the employer and the position for which you are interviewing.
- Prepare for open-ended introductory questions.
- Reconfirm interview details: time, location, interviewer's name/position. Prepare yourself.
- Check your appearance carefully. If you have questions, speak to a Career Management advisor, mentor, or business associate as to the appropriate dress.
- Give yourself a pep talk and approach the interview process in a positive state of mind.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the interview and relax. Suggestion: Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your interview time.
- Reflect on the image that you wish to project.
- Review your interview agenda several times (see interview agenda on the next page).
- Remember to SMILE!

Match Competence and Experience with the Employer's Needs:

- Identify themes that are relevant for the employer and position including prior work experience, academic performance and extracurricular activities. Include themes that feature specific knowledge, skills, abilities or personal characteristics that highlight a good fit with the employer and/or position.
- Use **CAR** stories to support these themes. These illustrations should highlight your accomplishments by showing something you did or made happen.
 - Circumstances, problem or opportunity you faced
 - Action you took
 - Results of the action you took, including the benefit to the organization

Effective CAR stories lasting 30 to 90 seconds convey specific examples aimed at highlighting results and prioritizing work, academic and extracurricular experience.

Identify the relevance of these CAR illustrations to the potential position.

Relate how past experiences will translate into future success, and specifically link the stories to positions/tasks of the employer.

Interview Agenda

Develop an agenda for the meeting that will meet your objective and enhance the opportunity for a shared, productive interchange. Create an agenda outline taking into account the following:

- **Interviewer information:** Name, title and role in the interviewing process.
- **Purpose of the interview:** Informational, screening, call back, etc.
- **Available time:** If you only have 30 minutes, don't spend 20 of it on small talk.
- **Goals of the organization, division, department:** Understand what the organization is and wants to be, its competitors, its strengths and weaknesses.
- **Specifics of the position:** Responsibilities, objectives, authority.
- **How your competencies match the needs of the position** (CAR stories in brief).
- **The perspective of the hiring manager:** How well does the interviewer perceive that you match the employer's requirements? Try to anticipate the most pressing concern the interviewer has about your fit for this position and be sure to address this in the interview.
- **Ask about the next step:** When is the next round of interviews? What is the employer's agenda regarding making its final decisions?
- **Ask about other sources** that will help you learn more about the organization/position.

During the Interview

Tips to keep in mind:

- Listen carefully.
- Use your agenda.
- Ask thoughtful questions.
- Think of the interview as a conversation where each party learns more about a potential opportunity. Strive to have a natural conversational flow and avoid "canned" responses or just saying what you think the interviewer wants to hear.
- Remember the importance of your visual impact:
 - Use eye contact.
 - Avoid awkward leg positions.
 - Sit up straight.
 - Square your shoulders.
 - Place one or both hands in the interviewer 's view (keep them still unless making a point).
 - Try not to fidget. Relax and be professionally comfortable.
 - Use listening cues: head tilt and facial expressions.
 - Clarify the next step in the process.
 - Use your closing to reinforce themes or mention critical agenda items not already covered.
 - Smile every now and then! It is amazing how persuasive enthusiasm and a relaxed demeanor can be in the interview process.
 - Be yourself, but present yourself to the best of your ability.
- Demonstrate genuine interest in the organization and position.

Types Of Interviews

First Interview: The Screening Process

The purpose of the first interview is to see if you meet the preliminary requirements for the position and overall fit. The interview is usually conducted by the personnel or human resources department of an employer, but may be done with a line manager.

If taking place on campus, this initial interview is usually short (30 to 45 minutes) and may be your only chance to market yourself to this organization; therefore, make sure you market yourself effectively. Be proactive. Be sure to:

- **Prepare for the interview** by knowing your qualifications, as well as important facts about the employer. Refer to the Interview Preparation Section for guidance.
- **Educate the interviewer** about you, your experience and competencies then show how they match the position requirements.
- **Ask questions** about the position and the person(s) to whom you would report.
- **Ask about the timeline** for filling the position and discuss the next steps in the hiring process.
- **Take the interview seriously**, even if the interviewer acts in a casual manner.

Remember, most human resources and/or recruiting personnel may not have a working knowledge of the position, so avoid challenging the interviewer with overly specific questions. Your goal is to get past this interviewer to the hiring manager. However, never underestimate the influence any interviewer may have; always treat him/her with respect.

Follow Up: Timely follow-up can be critical in gaining access to the next round of interviews. Do not disregard content in thank-you letters, but do not make it so lengthy that the message gets lost.

Thank-you letters are almost always the most appropriate first step in following up a first interview. A phone call to reiterate your interest or check on timing may or may not be appropriate, and is best tailored to the specific situation.

The Second Interview: The Call Back

Having passed the initial screening interview, you may be invited to the organization to interview for a half-day or full day, generally with several individuals. Second interviews present several challenges including:

- Maintaining a high energy level for an entire day of interviews.
- Discussing redundant topics with a fresh perspective.
- Striking a balance between selling yourself and interviewing your potential employers.

Each organization approaches the second interview in its own manner. Some may make offers on the spot, while others may include one or more additional rounds before making final decisions. Be prepared at the end of the day to ask how the organization approaches the process. That way you won't waste time wondering about the next step, and they will know that you are seriously interested.

The basic purpose of the interview is for the employer to evaluate whether or not you fit with the culture. Fundamentally, each interviewer may be asking, "Would I want to work with this person every day for 10-12 hours?" They'll be gauging both your interpersonal interactions and your ability to manage the rigor of multiple interviews, as well as confirming your skills and abilities.

Tips to Keep in Mind:

- **Know your audience:** Identify key decision-makers on the interview agenda, recognizing each interviewer's objectives and potential interests. Doing some homework and being alert to cues will help.
- **Remember that you are always being evaluated:** The spotlight comes on as soon as you enter the employer's premises, and all interactions, including those with human resource and administrative personnel, are important.
- **Try to respond to questions in a fresh and interested manner:** Redundancy is not uncommon, so don't get annoyed or use "canned" responses. Remember that each of these interviewers will evaluate you on

- his/her experience. Consistency is equally important, but try to vary your responses around clearly thought-out themes.
- **Get your specific career questions answered:** Again, do your homework, but this is an opportunity to ask some hard questions. Generally, interviewers appreciate this level of thought and it's a great way to convince them of your interest.
 - **Allow for spontaneous interaction:** Pre-prepared questions are important, but take advantage of opportunities to find out about your interviewers, their careers and the particulars of the organization/job itself.
 - **Keep your antennae up at all times:** Be alert to how people in the organization address each other, how position/power is defined and displayed, etc.
 - **Use your breaks wisely:** Generally, all day interviews include breaks. Use this time to re-energize and assess the day's interaction. Jot down ideas or simply take a deep breath.
 - **Do not panic if you have a poor interview:** Instead think about what you would have liked to have said differently and look for an opportunity to clarify your response with another interview.
 - **If you are interested in the position at the end of the interview, make sure you clearly communicate your desire to continue with the interview process:** This is commonly known as "making a successful close."
 - **Most important, be yourself and have fun:** Employers want to get to know what type of person you are. Simply put, people hire people, not suits and skill sets.

As part of your preparation, understand whether the organization will be paying for your visit and, if so, how reimbursement works. If you are interviewing in an unfamiliar geographic location, familiarize yourself with the area, cost of living and other issues that may be pertinent in your decision to accept or decline an offer.

Follow Up: Just as in the first interview, follow-up can be critical in making or breaking your second interview. Try to get business cards (or at least titles and addresses) from the people with whom you speak. A short thank you for their time and insights can pay big dividends, and can help set you apart from the competition. A phone call may be appropriate to discuss unanswered questions and reiterate your interest.

Group Interviews (or the Stress Interview)

Answering questions and maintaining a dialogue with two or three interviewers at the same time can be a rough and rigorous process. The scenario is not uncommon, particularly in interviews with consulting and financial firms.

Sometimes you'll know beforehand whether there will be more than one interviewer, but often you may not. Don't be thrown off or intimidated if you enter an interview and find more than one interviewer; always be prepared for the possibility.

The purpose of group interviews is generally to get an idea of how you interact with different people at the same time, to see how you handle stress, and to assess your ability to position yourself (and hold your position) when challenged.

Tips to Keep in Mind

- Once again, **do your homework** on the organization, industry and current events.
- **Don't expect to have a flowing discussion when faced with multiple interviewers.** The conversation is likely to be more awkward, and being alert and responding forthrightly should be your objective.
- **Don't get wrapped up in merely responding to a barrage of questions.** Highlight your skills/successes; ask thoughtful questions, etc.
- **Be aware of how you are responding to non-verbal cues.** Periodically make eye contact with all interviewers, not merely the person to whom you are responding.
- **Avoid being thrown off balance.** If need be, ask for clarification. Think through your answers but don't stall.

Follow Up: Just like you would after any interview, follow up with a short thank-you letter and a possible phone call or e-mail when appropriate.

Function Specific Tips for Interviews

Consulting

- Always be ready for a case question/interview
- Know the firm
- Know what skills you bring that are value-added
- **Strategy interviews**
 - Multiple case questions to be expected
- **Big 5 interviews**
 - Behavioral (strengths/weaknesses; team-based examples)
 - Resume-based
 - Focused on transferable skill set
 - Potentially case-based in second round
- **Skills**
 - Analytical skills (logic, structuring a problem, ability to make quick calculations, implications of recommendations/business strategy decisions)
 - Diagnostic skills (extracting pertinent information in diagnosing a problem, prioritization of problems/issues)
 - Communication skills (good listener, ability to handle pressure, self-confidence, ability to defend ideas)
 - Creativity

High-Tech

- **Critical Skills**
 - Flexibility to deal with a rapid change of pace
 - Passion for technology
 - High energy/enthusiasm
 - Team-orientation—ability to work with cross-functional teams of a variety of disciplines
 - Willingness to learn
 - Analytical skills (especially for high-tech finance)
 - Technical capabilities—must demonstrate interest in and ability to learn technical type of information
 - Goal-oriented
 - Communication skills
 - Willingness to accept large amounts of responsibility relative to level in organization
- **High-tech Finance**
 - Understanding the link between finance and the operations of the company
 - Project management skills
 - Analytical ability
- **High-tech Marketing**
 - Understanding of the products and industry issues facing the employer
 - Convince the interviewer of your ability to work with engineers/technical people—be able to "speak the language" of the industry
 - Strong marketing skills are especially important to companies that have more commodity-based products (i.e., Compaq, Dell)
- **High-tech Operations**
 - Stress understanding of an employer's operations function
 - Emphasize process improvement focus and understanding

Operations/Supply Chain

- Interviews are typically behavioral—be extremely familiar with your resume and have answers prepared for specific points that may stand out on your resume.
- Strong analytical and quantitative skills are required; focus on leadership skills and demonstrated teamwork if you have a strong technical/quantitative background or undergraduate degree

Finance

- **Corporate Finance**

Interviews are typically behavioral, though mini-case questions occur

Skills

Analytical

Communication (verbal and written)

Team-orientation—ability to work as a member of cross-functional teams with representatives from a variety of disciplines (finance, operations, engineering, marketing)

Project management

Leadership—ability to conduct team efforts during project-oriented work

Understanding of operational and manufacturing issues

Accounting (knowledge of Sarbanes-Oxley Act is a plus)

Innovative/creative thinking—ability to develop value-added recommendations based on financial, strategic and operational concerns

Willingness to accept large amounts of responsibility relative to level in organization

- **Investment Banking**

It is critical to demonstrate experience in the financial market

Use the Finance Club to learn valuation techniques, mini-case preparation, etc.

Stay current with financial indexes and general topics like DJIA, S&P 500, Treasury Bond yield, yield curve, inflation trends, global market trends, etc.

Be able to compare and contrast your targeted firm with other investment banks

Know each firm: culture; names of executive management; recent deals; stock price, ticker symbol, P/E ratio, etc.; recent mergers and acquisitions; weaknesses

Have 3-4 solid questions prepared for each interview

Know basics of Glass-Steagall Act and how changes are affecting the industry

Be familiar with Bloomberg

Read the *Wall Street Journal* daily and know what the Federal Reserve is doing, be familiar with current finance news

- ***Sales and Spending***

Career field can be very market-oriented—may be asked to sell one or more stocks (have five in your "arsenal" and know them thoroughly)

Have an opinion on the stock and bond market—be ready to back it up

Determination and desire—loves the markets and will do whatever it takes to earn a spot

Knowledge of the organization and its competitors

Knowledge of the market and of stocks

Aggressive

Understanding differences in firms' cultures and personalities of employees

Communication and relationship building

Successful traders: highly competitive, hate to lose, decisive, risk-taker

- ***Private Client Services***

Exceptional internal and external communication skills

Adept analytical skills

Broad-based understanding of the markets

Tact, discretion and professionalism

Personal initiative

Proficient use of electronic resources (Bloomberg, etc.)

Team-oriented mindset

Well-developed leadership skills (mission experience)

- ***Real Estate/I-Banking***

Team-orientation

Good communication skills

Solid quantitative and analytical skills

Willingness to work long hours at an often hectic pace

Ability to generate client business -most positions require a great deal of selling
Creativity

Real Estate/Development

Project management
Team-orientation
Ability to work with a diverse group of people
Ability to coordinate processes in different areas
Strong analytical skills
Good communication skills

Marketing

Project management
Knowledge of all parts of a marketing strategy (price, product, place, promotion)
Ability to think from the consumer's viewpoint
Confidence
Strong analytical skills
Excellent communication skills
Ability to communicate background to recruiter—make the connection between non-marketing background to marketing

Case Interview Guide

Case Interviews

Cases are organization or industry specific problems based on real-life business situations. The case interview is no longer just a recruiting tool within the consulting industry. Financial, marketing, and operations environments are increasingly using the case interview to screen an applicant on the ability to think quickly and logically about business problems, to demonstrate analytical skills, and to showcase interpersonal skills. There is a very high probability that you will face case interviews this year regardless of your career focus.

Successfully mastering the case interview relies on both art and science. The scientific, logical approach to reviewing case facts will permit you to make great inroads into quickly identifying the issues of the case, but without the art of a well-communicated dialogue, your case interview is doomed. Case interviews are rarely easy; relentless practice is the best method for case interview success.

Types of Cases

Cases come in a variety of shapes and sizes:

1. The most common cases (especially in consulting) are "long" cases (20-60 minutes) which ask you to analyze a business strategy or operations challenge. You may have multiple cases in one interview. The content of the case will depend on the functional area in which you are interviewing. While marketing case interviews will focus primarily on marketing issues, for example, a single consulting case interview question may cover marketing, operations, strategic, and financial issues. An example of a consulting case question might be: "Should we acquire a stock brokerage firm on the Continent?" Depending on the individual firm and more importantly the individual interviewer, this case may be interactive, allowing you to ask questions as you progress or one-sided, leaving you to walk through your approach after the problem is initially set up. A suggested methodology or approach to this type of case is found below.
2. Market sizing questions are aimed to assess how comfortable you are with numbers and whether you can identify drivers, make assumptions, and work through to a reasonable answer. "How many golf balls would be used in the US in a given year?" is one example.
3. Brainteasers are structured to find out if you can think out of the box. A classic brainteaser is "Why are sewer covers round?"

Suggested Methodology

It is important to understand that the method you use to approach the case is just as important as your answer.

The following methodology is a helpful starting point in your quest to mastering the case interview. You may find it helpful to customize your approach to your individual style over time. It is important to be flexible and realize that this is only one approach. Different firms and different individuals have different case styles. (Talk to second years about various styles of each firm.) Be sure to respond to hints, data, or suggestions of the interviewer. More often than not, the interviewer will guide you in the direction they want you to go—it is up to you to read his/her subtle clues such as “We already looked into that” or “That isn’t relevant to this industry.”

1. Identify the problem

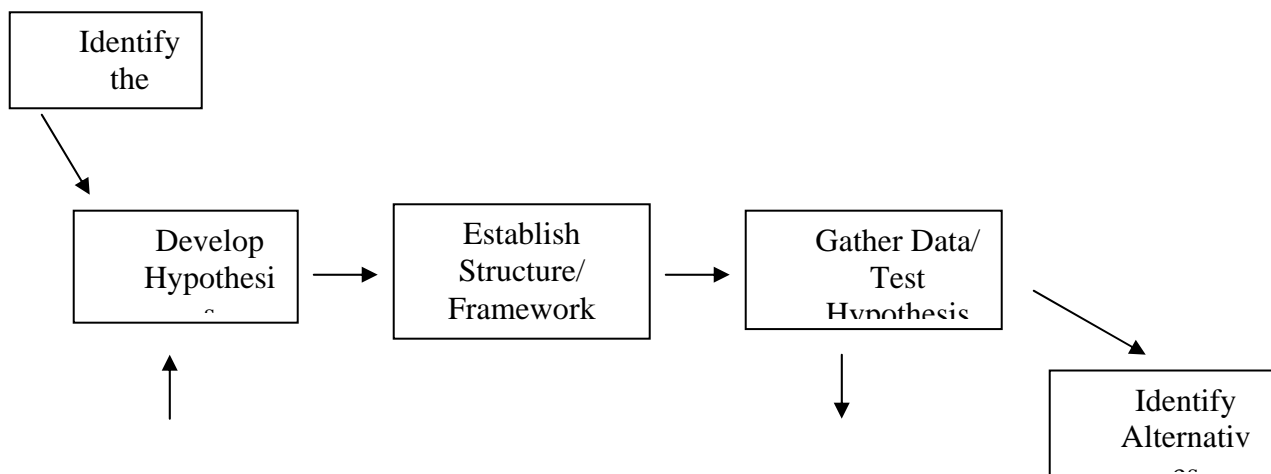
- The interviewer will begin by verbally outlining a case situation (e.g. profits are declining in the menswear division). Listen carefully and write down the recruiter's main points. Identify the critical/key issue(s). A diagram of the situation may help you think clearly as you dissect the issues.
- Make sure you know what question the interviewer is asking and what type of recommendation they are seeking; keep that objective in mind as you develop your clarifying questions. Consider the following two case scenarios. In the first situation, the overriding question of the interviewer is "How can we best increase capacity to meet projected product demand?" In the second situation, the overriding question of the interviewer is "How can we best supply product to meet projected product demand?" The desired result for both situations is to plan for meeting the market forecast, but the way you would attack the case in each situation would differ.
- Take a few moments to think and organize your approach before speaking. Then communicate your next steps. For example (say to the interviewer): "What I would like to do is spend a few minutes reviewing my notes, then I am going to ask you some questions. After that...". This shows the interviewer your logical approach to attacking a problem and lets the interviewer know you are intentionally taking a few moments of silence to think.

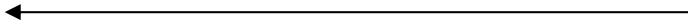
2. Develop a hypothesis

- Many firms follow a hypothesis-based approach, which calls for the interviewee to develop a hypothesis early on regarding the nature of the business issue. While some firms prefer this up-front hypothesis, others prefer you skip this step, and work toward a hypothesis and recommendation at the conclusion of the case. By talking to second years and Career Management advisors you will develop a better understanding regarding the general approach of a particular firm.
- As you gather data in the time that follows, you are working to prove this hypothesis. If you gather enough data to refute your hypothesis, you should refine your hypothesis and proceed.

3. Establish a "framework" or a series of frameworks to structure your analysis

- A framework is a structure that you use to organize your thoughts and help you analyze the critical issues of a case, such as the cost-benefit model or Porter's Five Forces. Choosing a framework is not the main goal of this exercise—it is meant only to guide you. Allow your own creativity to come through rather than being overly reliant on the framework. If a single framework could solve the problem, the interviewer probably would have presented a different case.
- After you have decided how you are going to structure your analysis, communicate this to the interviewer so they understand the way in which you are approaching the problem.





Make Recommendation

4. Gather data/test hypothesis

- Begin by asking the most basic questions. Work your way methodically through, starting with the most important issue. Your framework will guide you in covering your major points for in-depth analysis in the time allowed. Remember that the case facts will be intentionally ambiguous—keep probing to get the information you need. Don't forget to delve into the industry, competitors, overall corporate strategy, effects on suppliers/buyers and other internal/external factors.
- Think out loud! Let the interviewer see how you are analyzing the problem by letting them hear your thought process and assumptions out loud.

5. Identify alternatives

- Discuss the costs and benefits of each alternative, including your reasons for discounting their relevance in the particular situation. Clearly state your assumptions and your rationale.
- Conduct a sensitivity analysis to determine how sensitive the results are to any assumptions you may have made.

6. Make recommendation

- Summarize your analysis and the approach you used.
- Summarize your main findings, stating the main supporting facts you've gathered and the relevant assumptions you have made.
- Make a solid, data-driven recommendation, choosing an alternative that has a positive net present value and is consistent with the strategy of the firm.
- Indicate the next steps and additional analysis needed (do not recommend additional analysis be done before a recommendation can be given—a solid recommendation should always be given, followed by a statement of steps you would take prior to implementing that recommendation, if necessary).
- After your recommendation, an assessment of the risks of your recommendations is an added plus. ("The risks of this solution are...")
- In summary, a good recommendation might sound like this: "The company could...[alternatives]. Given the company's main goals of x and y...the best alternative is...because... strategic fit...financially attractive...high growth...requires no additional capital investment... However, z should be evaluated to ensure that.... The risks of this recommendation are that...however, as I have illustrated, the benefits far outweigh the costs. To alleviate these risks..."

The whole purpose of a case interview is for the recruiter to test your ability to dissect a problem in a logical fashion. Therefore, in your analysis, make sure to justify all your assumptions and decisions. When faced with a complex problem, break it down into manageable portions, and develop a decision tree to arrive at your solution. This will allow you to retrace your thought process and proceed down a different path if your first solution is not optimal.

Don't be afraid to ask questions when you need more information; the opening dialogue is intentionally vague. You are not expected to know everything but your ability to ask poignant, probing questions will shed light into your logical thought process.

Case Interview Preparation

Case interview preparation takes a considerable time commitment on your part. Starting early is advisable, especially in the consulting arena where cases are most prevalent and most rigorous. There are many avenues available for case interview preparation:

- Practice by attacking your academic cases in a consistent, logical fashion.
- Read all of the available case interview preparation resources in the Career Management Library.
- Work with your mentors and second-year students who interned with consulting firms. Ford, Honeywell, and GAP are the non-consulting companies that typically have case interviews.
- Form informal study groups with your peers and practice on a regular basis. Many students pursuing non-consulting jobs have considered case interview preparation unnecessary. History has shown, however, that consulting firms often choose their list of interview candidates based not on the students' interests in pursuing that field, but rather on the attraction of the firm to that candidate. If you would even consider interviewing for these types of jobs, it is wise to pursue at least some level of knowledge early on so that you are not caught off guard when an invitation to interview arrives a week prior to an interview for which you are unprepared.

In addition, it is common for global consulting firms to contact international students directly. An international division of a company may not interview on campus, but instead invite you to another location. Most often, the interview includes a case.

Marketing/Brand Management Case Scenarios

Typically, marketing cases are designed to:

- Establish your ability to articulate thoughts
- Assess problem-solving skills
- Evaluate your ability to think strategically
- Evaluate your understanding of the business
- Evaluate your basic understanding of marketing issues
- Evaluate your ability to think creatively

Companies typically are not looking for "THE " answer but instead, want to test your abilities as a Brand Manager. A quality response incorporates 3 specific elements:

1. A basic use and understanding of marketing concepts and language (The 4 Ps)
2. A logical thought progression and sequence
3. Creative solutions to demonstrate "Out-of-Box Thinking "

Most MBAs have the ability to get the first two parts of the case; it is your ability to touch on the third element that will differentiate you from your peers.

In general, when attacking a question, you need to keep in mind the 4 Ps to show marketing knowledge and the 4 Cs to demonstrate your broader business perspective.

The 4Ps -Demonstrate *Marketing Knowledge*

- Product
- Price
- Place
- Promotion

The 4 Cs -*Demonstrate Your Broader Business Perspective*

- Category
- Company
- Customer
- Competition

If you are not familiar with these terms, utilize Mentors (in marketing), other students, faculty, and textbooks to educate yourself.

Potential Questions

1. Pick a recent ad campaign that you thought was effective. Why?
2. You are the Brand Manager for Mountain Dew. Coke launches Surge in test. What do you do!
3. You are Brand Manager for Mercedes. Your current buyer demographics indicate the average age of a Mercedes buyer is 50-60 years old. How would you launch your new sport utility vehicle (SUV)?
4. You are Brand Manager for the newly acquired Cracker Jack business. Business is down. What would you do to get the business growing again?
5. You are Brand Manager for a well-regarded athletic footwear company. **You** awake one morning to learn your celebrity spokesperson has been arrested. How do you respond?

Interview Questions

Questions You May Ask

Future of the Organization:

- Where do you see the company in five years?
- What is the company's mission as you see it?
- To what extent has the company realized that mission?
- What do you view as the company's most important asset? Why?
- Tell me about your (interviewer's) growth with this firm.

Future of the Position:

- Why was the position created?
- What opportunities might I have to contribute?
- What does the career progression look like? Are there lateral opportunities?
- How do you see the position expanding or changing in the future?

Questions Regarding Expectations:

- How long do I remain in this position before being considered for X job?
- What would a typical day in the position look like?
- How is success determined?
- Who evaluates you and what are the criteria for promotion?

Perspectives on Change, Growth and Development:

- What critical factors will determine the company's growth/success?
- How do employees interact?
- How would you describe the culture of the organization?
- How does the company plan for (or react to) change?

Questions to Expect

Education-oriented Questions:

- Why did you return to school?
- What made you choose Brigham Young University?
- What was your undergraduate experience like? Your major? Your GPA?
- Are your grades a good indication of your academic achievement or ability?
- How has your degree prepared you for a career in (function)?
- What are the most important experiences you had outside the classroom?
- General questions regarding leadership and extracurricular participation.

Goal-related Questions:

- What are your long-and short-range goals?
- How did you decide on these goals, and how will your career enhance your ability to reach them?
- What do you want to get out of your summer internship?
- What is most important to you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

- How much do you expect to be earning in five years?
- What would you do if money were not an issue?
- Why and how did you choose the career for which you are preparing?

Employer-related Questions:

- Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
- If you wanted to be in (N. Y., Calif., etc.), why did you pick BYU?
- Will you relocate? Are you willing to travel? How much?
- How do you feel about being a trainee given previous levels of responsibility?
- Why did you pick our organization?
- What profits did our company declare last year?
- What do you know about us? How would you describe us to outsiders?
- What type of organization fits your style and why?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in our organization?
- What level of contribution could you make to our organization?
- What do you see as the greatest challenges in our industry?
- How might you overcome them?
- Why should I hire you versus another candidate?

Character-related Questions:

- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think your peers/professors would describe you?
- What excites and/or motivates you?
- Describe your role within a group.
- Describe your BYU study group.
- How do you determine and evaluate success?
- What accomplishments have given you the greatest satisfaction?
- How do you manage your time?
- What major problems have you encountered? How did you handle them?
- What attributes make you believe you will be successful in business?
- How do you deal with criticism?

Others:

- What can you offer us?
- Given your youth, how will you handle managing people older than you?
- Give an example of a leadership experience (make this relevant to the position).
- What type of outside activities do you enjoy? Why?
- What is the biggest risk you've ever taken?
- Describe yourself in three words.
- Describe a situation in which you failed and what you learn from it?
- What was your greatest frustration in your last job?
- Who would you say has been your most important role model? Why?

Function-specific Questions

If You Are Interviewing for Finance Positions:

Recommended Preparation:

- Read the *Wall Street Journal* and other business publications to be up-to-date on what is happening in the global financial environment, especially the day of the interview. Be current on the prime rate, the discount rate and general trends about inflation.
- Stress attention to detail and problem-solving ability.
- Be prepared to back up your claim of having analytical skills, ability to build computer models and experience with financial statistics.
- Be prepared to talk about the ethical implications of financial issues.
- Be confident and don't change your answers.

- Anticipate issues the employer may have with your background and be prepared to address them. If you have never worked in finance, expect more questions to prove you have the required skill set. If you have been a number-crunching analyst, make sure you demonstrate you have seen the big picture and have good interpersonal skills.
- List six "Red Flags" in your career (things employers will look at and may not hire you because of). Example—spent entire life in one place and want to work somewhere new.
- List two "Turn-Arounds" (turn into advantage) for each of the "Red Flags."
- Have a recent (within 1 1/2 years) example of one of the most creative things you've done.
- Have a specific, recent example of how you managed, recovered from, or turned around a bad situation.
- Have a specific, recent example of some courageous act/stand you took and exactly what you did.
- Have a specific, recent example of an entrepreneurial behavior and what you did.
- Be prepared to tell the interviewer what you learned from an extracurricular activity and how that would make you a better banker or financial analyst.
- Be prepared to tell the interviewer if you would return to your former employer and why/why not.
- Be prepared to think and talk through mini-valuation cases.

Typical Finance Questions:

- Walk me through your resume, explaining the major decisions you made.
- Can you teach analysts techniques such as cash flows, present value analysis, etc?
- How is your managerial ability with new analysts right out of college?
- What was the toughest problem you had to solve in your last job?
- Give me an example of work experience you had to perform under time pressure.
- Tell me about a financial analysis you completed on a case in one of your classes.
- Why did you attend BYU if New York City finance is your goal?
- Describe at least three methods of valuing a company.
- Specifically, what quantitative courses have you had and what have your grades been in each?
- What three skills differentiate you from your peers?
- If you had a \$1,000 investment that went down 40 percent and then up 20 percent, what would your investment be worth?
- What is your opinion of derivative instruments?
- How can the United States improve its competitiveness?
- What was your GMAT score? GPA?

Typical Sales & Trading Questions:

- Is your personality more suited to the bond market or the equity market? Why?
- What was the yield curve today? How is the shape going to change? What does that mean to me as a potential investor?
- What stocks do you follow? What do you think the market will do in the future?
- What are interest rates now?
- Why did you attend BYU for sales and trading?
- Why this firm? Why not other firms?

Typical Corporate Finance Questions:

- We are producing widgets in our plant and cannot meet existing demand. Our manufacturing associates want to build a new plant adjacent to the existing one to address the need for more capacity. What factors would you need to consider before making a recommendation? Are there any alternatives that should be considered?
- A resort hotel has two restaurants and is considering adding a third. You have been assigned to a team of marketers to determine the effects this would have on the resort's profitability. What factors would you like the team to consider?
- Our company can make a part needed internally for \$10—\$7 represents variable costs, \$3 represents fixed costs. An outside supplier can sell it to us for \$8. What should we do? What factors would you consider?
- Describe EVA and how it can be used to determine the attractiveness of potential projects.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of using EVA, NPV, discounted cash flows, and payback period as methods of determining the attractiveness of potential investments.

- Discuss activity-based costing and its associated pros and cons.
- You are working for a plant manager who understands little about finance and accounting. He also doesn't care much for the budgeting process. How would you explain the importance of budgeting to him in terms he can understand?
- R&D has just developed a new product and has asked for your help in setting the price for the product. How would you approach this?
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of leasing equipment instead of purchasing.
- A manufacturing group is wondering whether it should make a component of one of its products or purchase it from an outside supplier, and they've asked for your help. What would you need to know before you can answer this question?
- Your corporation makes five products and has just built a new plant for manufacturing these products. However, cumulative demand exceeds the plant's capacity. How would you go about determining which products the company should make?

If You Are Interviewing for Management Consulting Positions:

Recommended Preparation:

- Be prepared for case interview questions. Attend one of the workshops and discuss this interview style with students who have experienced this type of interview.
- Stress teamwork ability and problem-solving skills.
- Showcase intellectual horsepower, whether it is from GMAT scores, GPA or solid work experience.
- Demonstrate an ability to present an argument clearly, logically and concisely.
- Be confident. The rationale for your answers is often more important than the answer itself.
- Highlight project management skills.

Typical Management Consulting Questions:

Problem-Solving Questions:

The interviewer wants to evaluate if the candidate is an analytically sound problem-solver who can identify business problems, reason clearly and synthesize sometimes disparate elements into conclusions. The types of questions will most often fall into categories about intelligence and critical thinking skills.

- What was your GMAT score? GPA?
- Describe a major problem and how you handled it. What was the result?
- Describe a time when you had to solve a poorly defined problem.
- Tell me about an analysis you completed on a case in one of your classes.
- Describe the toughest decision you had to make in the last five years. How did you weigh the alternatives?
- How can the United States improve its competitiveness?
- Convince me of your analytical skills.
- Be prepared for case interview questions.
- How do you deal with ambiguity in problem analysis?

Ability to Get Things Done Questions:

An interviewer is looking for a pattern of leadership, achievement and the candidate's "results" orientation. He or she is interested in the candidate's interpersonal skills, judgment and common sense, energy level and motivation. The question foremost in the interviewer's mind is whether the candidate would perform well in a client relationship. Some examples are cited below.

- What were your goals for your last job? Did you accomplish them?
- When have you felt challenged and stimulated in your academic work or work experience? Most frustrated?
- Describe a major work or school accomplishment. How did you achieve your goal?
- What impact did you have on the organization you last worked for? What new initiatives or projects did you undertake? What result did they have on the organization's performance?
- Describe a failure. What did you learn from the experience?

Ability to Build Working Relationships Questions:

Interviewers want to explore if you can achieve the kind of results discussed in previous questions without "bulldozing" others. The questions probe attributes such as the candidate's ability to be a team player and his or her personal impact, communications skills, reliability and integrity. The candidate's maturity and tolerance for an unstructured work environment are as equally essential. Some examples are cited below.

- Describe your study group experience at BYU. What role did you usually take in group projects?
- How did you attempt to influence people who disagreed with you (use either a work or class project example)?
- How would former co-workers and study partners describe you?

If You Are Interviewing for Marketing Positions:

Recommended Preparation:

- Stress your leadership abilities.
- Initiative is very important. Have examples of projects you were involved with from start to finish. Prepare key results and lessons learned.
- Creativity is a must. You will need innovative problem-solving skills and good critical thinking.
- Teamwork ability is critical.
- Demonstrate an ability to present an argument clearly, logically and concisely.
- Be confident, poised and demonstrate good interpersonal skills.
- Highlight project management skills.
- Be a facilitator because brand managers work closely with various other functions (e. g., operations, R&D, sales, etc.)
- Understand various marketing elements: research, development, brand management, sales, advertising, etc.

Typical Marketing Questions:

- What is your leadership style? What have people who worked for you (either in campus organizations or at work) told you about your leadership abilities?
- Describe an example where you convinced someone who initially disagreed with you to follow your recommendation. How did you convince them?
- Describe a major problem and how you handled it. What was the result?
- Tell me about an analysis you completed on a case in one of your classes.
- Describe the toughest decision you had to make in the last five years. How did you weigh the alternatives?
- What were your goals for your last job? Did you accomplish them?
- Describe the biggest risk you have taken. How did you decide to take that risk?
- If you were an advertisement, what would it say?
- How would you launch a new product?
- Give an example of an innovative product and tell me why it is innovative.
- Pick a product you are loyal to, market and position it. Now pick its rival competitor and market that to me.
- When examining the elements in the marketing mix, which one has the biggest impact on the "bottom line"?
- Imagine you're the product manager on the No.1 product in a mature category, and a competitor introduces a revolutionary and innovative product. What do you do?
- You're the product manager on a product that, while still No. 1, is aging with its population. How do you get new consumers to try the product without alienating your core franchise? Whom do you target?
- What is the one thing that sets you apart from everyone else I'm going to talk to today?
- You're a category director. Your category is basically divided into three segments. Your products dominate the high (premium) segment and the low-priced discount segment. The mid-price/middle segment is dominated by one or two competitors and is projected to have the highest growth for the next 5 to 10 years. How would you address this issue?
- Give an example of how you have used data to make decisions.
- Describe your study group experience at BYU. What role did you usually take in group projects?

If You Are Interviewing for Operations Positions:

Recommended Preparation:

- Stress your quantitative and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrate your understanding of the production environment.
- You must have the ability to initiate and implement major projects. Be sure to have a few examples of projects you completed from start to finish.
- You must be able to work with a wide variety of people, and influence others who do not directly report to you. Make sure you showcase your interpersonal skills.

Typical Operations Questions:

- Describe a case analysis that you did for one of your classes.
- What is your opinion about the use of activity-based costing in the manufacturing environment? What issues concern you?
- What is your leadership style? What have people who worked for you (either in campus organizations or at work) told you about your leadership abilities?
- Describe an example where you convinced someone who initially disagreed with you to follow your recommendation. How did you convince them?
- Describe the toughest decision you had to make in the last five years. How did you weigh the alternatives?
- Describe the biggest risk you have taken. How did you decide to take the risk?
- Give an example of how you have used data to make decisions.
- Describe your study group experience at BYU. What role did you usually take in group projects?

If You Are Interviewing for Real Estate Positions:

Recommended Preparation:

- Stress your quantitative and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrate your understanding of real estate finance.
- You must have the ability to look long term and to take a broad perspective in analyzing "deals."
- You must be able to work with a wide variety of people and have strong negotiation and client management skills. Make sure you showcase your interpersonal skills.

Typical Real Estate Questions:

- There is tremendous career risk and uncertainty in real estate. Give me an example of a big risk you took and how you handled it.
- Your work experience is heavily analytical and financial. Why should I believe that you could incorporate a more qualitative view of the issues involved with successful real estate development or, for that matter, even real estate finance today?
- Describe an example where you convinced someone who initially disagreed with you to follow your recommendation. How did you convince them?

Typical High-tech Questions:

- In what type of work environment do you enjoy working?
- What are the major issues facing our organization and the industry?
- Why high-tech?
- You have an impressive resume but no high-tech experience. What makes you think that you could be a valuable contributor to the organization?
- Talk about a time when you challenged someone of authority in your organization and how you handled it.
- What is your willingness to relocate to (high-tech location) permanently?
- How do you function in a rapidly changing and unstructured environment?
- How do you organize what you do on a day-to-day basis?

Evaluation

Common Reasons for Rejection

- Inadequate presentation of personal goals and career objectives

- Lack of knowledge or interest in the company
- Poor general preparation
- Inability to articulate past accomplishments linking them to relevant goals
- Vague, evasive or inconsistent responses
- Failure to ask good questions or to demonstrate interest
- Poor body language (weak handshake, fidgeting, lack of eye contact)
- Lack of enthusiasm/energy
- Lack of self-confidence
- Arrogance, overly aggressive
- Poor listening habits—constantly missing cues
- Apathy
- Poor personal appearance, grooming

The Interviewer's Evaluation

Key characteristics being judged include:

- Experience
- Education and training
- Appearance
- Attitude and manner
- Self-expression, both written and oral skills
- Job, employer and industry knowledge
- Motivation
- Judgment
- Leadership qualities/experiences
- Enthusiasm
- Maturity

After the Interview

Follow-up can be as important as the interview itself. Remember to take some time to "close the deal " by following some simple hints.

Immediately after an interview, make notes about:

- The position
- The people involved and your interactions with them
- The organization or company
- The division
- The department
- Other clues and information you picked up

Critically assess your performance in terms of what went well and what didn't. What were your strengths and weaknesses? Think about how you performed with your agenda. What did you leave out and why? Use this information as a building block for your next interview.

Write a follow-up letter. Write each individual with whom you met, as appropriate. Keep it brief and to the point—no more than one page. Develop the letter as follows:

- Express your appreciation for the person's time and insights
- Re-emphasize some important issues you discussed
- Add in any point you wanted to discuss but didn't
- Elaborate on how you can contribute (set yourself apart)
- Reinforce your interest and enthusiasm
- Include any additional information requested by the interviewer

Appendix

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- 10 Things That Will Get You Hired 7

Resume Preparation Guides

The resume is a marketing document designed to sell your background and skills to a targeted reader.

- No. 1 *More is not better, enough is needed*
You need to provide enough detail but, Avoid Data Dump
Concise resumes are not an autobiography
- No. 2 *Remember the reader and what makes the reader want to see more.*
You have 10-15 seconds to attract the reader's attention
Lead with what specifically sells you to the reader
Your previous employers and positions especially when they are clients or competitors of the employer make you attractive
- No. 3 *The résumé's appearance attracts, but it's the content that holds.*
There should be some (not more than 50%) white space, a good resume is readable, avoid odd and/or hard to read type styles.
Show the reader that you have the skills they want, it is very hard to convince them to buy something you have that they don't need.
- No. 4 *Objectives are objectionable if they don't add meaning or enhancement.* If any doubt, leave it out.
- No. 5 *Education is what you are selling*
List your degrees properly (highest degree first)
- No. 6 *Experience is what sells you*
Relate your experience to:
 Key Job Skills (Shows You Know the Job),
 Attributes the Employer Seeks (Shows You Know the Employer)
 Articulate Your Skills (Shows You Know Yourself)
- No. 7 *Focus on Accomplishments*
Use Action to get action; express your experience using action verbs (see the list)
Avoid "Responsible for" and declarative sentences "I did this..."
Relate mission and extracurricular experiences from a business skills context: self-motivation, training, leadership, interpersonal skills, time management, planning, cultural tolerance, dedication, hard work, adaptability, perseverance
- No. 8 *No formatting option is any better than another.*
Left aligned is most common
Reverse chronological order is expected
Bullets add emphasis and accessibility

Narrative paragraphs can be used, but are risky
Use present tense for current experience and past tense for past
- No. 9 *One page is good, two pages are minimally needed, avoid multi-pages*

After your draft ask the following:

Can I cut out any paragraphs? Can I cut out any sentences? Can I cut out any superfluous words? Are there any repetitions?

Keep it white, light cream or gray. You don't need to spend a fortune on resume paper it will probably be copied and distributed on the employer's copy paper.

Be careful with graphics, it is very easy to misinterpret them. They also don't scan well and may cause a scanner to reject your resume.

Style elements should be used with some conservatism. **Bold** – is ok, ALL CAPS – limited use, Indents – are ok, *Italics* – use sparingly, underline – avoid it.

You don't need I, Me, My—recruiters know that this resume is about you

Abbreviations must be universally understood. If there is a doubt, spell it out!

Check your grammar and absolutely **no** spelling or typographical errors.

Include your GPA if it will add to your appeal, recommend 3.7+. This is sensitive to the academic difficulty of the curriculum. Sorry, but a hard science GPA may be considered more difficult than a soft skill GPA.

Focus on accomplishments and results.

Cover Letters

Identify why you are writing. Tell about common contacts and referrals. Explain why you should be considered. Give the reader a reason to read the resume. Keep concise and never too long.

April 2005

Action Verbs and Phrases

Action verbs are concise, dynamic and indicate high-energy, initiative and creative action. Use them to your advantage in the *Experience* section of your resume.

Accelerated	Cooperated	Extended	Lightened
Accomplished	Coordinated	Extracted	Liquidated
Achieved	Corrected	Facilitated	Located
Acquired	Created	Finalized	Managed
Activated	Cultivated	Financed	Manufactured
Addressed	Decentralized	Forecasted	Marketed
Administered	Decided	Formulated	Mastered
Advanced	Decreased	Formalized	Mobilized
Advised	Defined	Founded	Modified
Advocated	Delegated	Framed	Monitored
Allocated	Delivered	Fulfilled	Motivated
Analyzed	Demonstrated	Generated	Negotiated
Anticipated	Designated	Governed	Nominated
Applied	Designed	Guided	Normalized
Appointed	Detailed	Handled	Obtained
Appraised	Determined	Headed	Officiated
Appreciated	Devised	Helped	Operated
Approved	Directed	Hired	Ordered
Aspired	Discovered	Identified	Organized
Arranged	Displayed	Implemented	Oriented
Assessed	Distinguished	Improved	Originated
Assigned	Distributed	Improvised	Overcame
Attained	Documented	Increased	Overhauled
Audited	Doubled	Induced	Oversaw
Avoided	Earned	Influenced	Officiated
Broadened	Edited	Initiated	Participated
Budgeted	Educated	Innovated	Perceived
Built	Effected	Inspected	Perfected
Calculated	Eliminated	Inspired	Performed
Captured	Employed	Installed	Piloted
Centralized	Enabled	Instituted	Pinpointed
Clarified	Encouraged	Instructed	Pioneered
Collaborated	Energized	Insured	Placed
Combined	Enforced	Integrated	Planned
Commanded	Engineered	Intensified	Pleased
Completed	Enhanced	Interpreted	Popularized
Composed	Envisioned	Interviewed	Prepared
Conceived	Established	Introduced	Presented
Concluded	Estimated	Invented	Presided
Conducted	Evaluated	Invested	Prevented
Connected	Examined	Investigated	Processed
Consolidated	Exceeded	Judged	Procured
Constructed	Executed	Justified	Produced
Consulted	Exercised	Keyed	Programmed
Contributed	Exhibited	Keynoted	Projected
Controlled	Expanded	Launched	Promoted
Converted	Experienced	Led	Prompted

Propelled	Showed	Succeeded	Transformed
Proposed	Simplified	Suggested	Translated
Proved	Solved	Summarized	Trebled
Provided	Sparked	Supervised	Trimmed
Published	Specified	Supported	Tripled
Purchased	Sponsored	Surpassed	Uncovered
Re-established	Stabilized	Surveyed	Undertook
Realized	Staffed	Sustained	Unified
Reconciled	Standardized	Tailored	Used
Recognized	Started	Taught	Utilized
Recommended	Stimulated	Terminated	Verified
Recruited	Streamlined	Tested	Widened
Redesigned	Strengthened	Tightened	Withdrew
Regulated	Stretched	Traded	Won
Reinforced	Structured	Trained	Worked
Rejected	Studied	Transacted	Wrote
Related	Substantiated	Transferred	
Renegotiated			
Reorganized			
Reported			
Represented			
Researched			
Reshaped			
Resolved			
Responded to			
Restored			
Revamped			
Reviewed			
Revised			
Revitalized			
Revived			
Satisfied			
Saved			
Scheduled			
Secured			
Selected			
Served			
Serviced			
Set up			
Settled			
Shaped			

Useful Phrases

The following phrases may help you organize your accomplishment statements for both resumes and employment correspondence. When choosing the phrase that best describes the situation, read it over once or twice in the context of the sentence to be certain that the selection is correct, and that the phrase reads well.

Proven track record of/in...	Company engaged in...
Contracted/Subcontracted by... to...	Total accountability/Totally accountable for...
More than . . . years' extensive/Diverse experience in...	Temporarily assigned to/Temporary assignments included...
Demonstrated expertise in...	Acted/Functioned as...
Extensively trained in...	Provided technical assistance to...
Extensively involved in...	Ensured maximum/optimum/minimum...
Newly established company/Entity engaged in...	Provided valuable/invaluable...
Initially employed to/Joined organization to...	Interacted heavily with..
Specialized in...	Promoted from... to...

Provided liaison for/between...
Covered assigned territory consisting of...
Promoted to...
Succeeded in...
Exceeded by...
Selected as/Elected to...

Reported to/Reported directly to...
Honored as...
Consistently...
Won...

Test Your Resume

- Appearance:** Is it enticing? Would you want to read it?
- Layout:** Professional style, graphically presented?
- Length:** Can you get the same effect if it is shorter?
- Relevance:** Has extraneous material been deleted?
- Writing Style:** Is everything grammatically correct? Spelling checked?
- Action:** Do sentences begin with action verbs?
- Specificity:** Is there focus instead of generalities?
- Accomplishments:** Are your most outstanding abilities presented?
- Completeness:** Have you left out important data?
- Goal Directed:** Does the employer immediately know what you want?
- Audit Trail:** Can an employer find you later?
- Truth:** Do you avoid inflating the truth?
- Impact:** Do you imply self-confidence?
- Documentation:** Can statements be verified?
- Relationships:** Have references been informed?

10 Things That Will Get You Hired

By Laura Morsch, CareerBuilder.com

(She researches and writes about job search strategy, career management, hiring trends and workplace issues.)

Do you want to extend your time looking for a job? Of course not. Candidates are always on the lookout for the most efficient, effective way to find new work. The following tips -- when heeded during the job search and interview processes -- can make job hunting go by faster:

1. Customize your résumé and cover letter. It might seem faster to blast off generic materials to dozens of employers, but this will cost you time in the long run. Tailor your résumé and cover letter to each open position to clearly demonstrate how your experience fills the employers' requirements. For example, if you're applying for a public relations role, give your PR experience a prime spot on your résumé.

2. Diversify your search. If you've been responding to newspaper ads with no response, also post your résumé online, search some job Web sites, talk to your friends and attend an industry trade show. The more ways you search, the more likely you are to connect with the right employers.

3. Don't go solo. Your friends, family and former co-workers each have a network of their own -- and a friend-of-a-friend might hold the perfect lead. Don't be shy: Reach out to your network and let your contacts know you're on the job market.

4. Find a company where you fit in. Browse potential employers' Web sites and ask your friends about what it's like to work at their companies. Employers are looking for candidates who would be a good fit and thrive within the company culture.

5. Don't get discouraged. Experts estimate the average job search to last anywhere between three and 10 months -- and that means a lot of rejection. Keep at it: Your dream job is out there.

6. Always be prepared. You can never be too prepared for your first meeting with a potential employer. Before your interview, always browse the company's Web site. Find out as much as you can about the company's products, leadership, mission and culture, and prepare answers to common interview questions.

7. Be on time. Whether it's an informational interview, an open house or a formal interview, always arrive about 10 minutes early. Allow plenty of time for traffic and poor weather.

8. Dress and act the part. In a business setting, always dress in professional clothing in the best quality you can afford. Take the industry and employer into consideration, but a business suit is almost always appropriate for interviews.

9. Listen more than you talk. Even if you're nervous at an interview, try not to ramble. By keeping your mouth shut, you can learn valuable information about the company and avoid saying something that you'll wish you hadn't.

10. Ask good questions. At the end of an interview, the employer will inevitably ask if you have any questions. Have a list of questions prepared that showcase your company research and interest in the position.