

# 15·MINUTE COVER LETTER

*write an effective cover letter right now*

Second Edition

## COVER LETTER HELP IN A HURRY!

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- Quick and easy worksheets for instant, impressive letters
- Clever ways to target hiring managers with customized letters
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- Tips on other job search correspondence
- Proven advice for getting a good job in less time

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MICHAEL FARR and  
LOUISE KURSMARK

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MICHAEL FARR  
and  
LOUISE M. KURSMARK



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© 2009 by Michael Farr and Louise M. Kursmark

Published by JIST Works, an imprint of JIST Publishing

7321 Shadeland Station, Suite 200

Indianapolis, IN 46256-3923

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Trade Product Manager: Lori Cates Hand

Copy Editor: Chuck Hutchinson

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Page Layout: Toi Davis

Cover Designers: Katy Bodenmiller and Alan Evans

Proofreader: Paula Lowell

Indexer: Joy Dean Lee

Printed in the United States of America

14 13 12 11 10 09

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Farr, J. Michael.

15-minute cover letter : write an effective cover letter right now / Michael Farr and Louise M. Kursmark.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-59357-661-5 (alk. paper)

1. Cover letters. 2. Résumés (Employment) 3. Job hunting. I. Kursmark, Louise. II. Title. III.

Title: Fifteen-minute cover letter.

HF5383.F315 2009

650.14'2--dc22

2008051122

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ISBN 978-1-59357-661-5

# About This Book

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This book will teach you how to write personalized, effective cover letters very quickly. We don't want you to get frustrated and bogged down in the process, but neither do we want you to dash off something that is quick but not effective. We give you techniques to help you move rapidly through the opening, middle, and closing sections of your cover letters; we tell you when mail or e-mail is most appropriate; and we tell you what you should do *before* you write your cover letters to make them truly effective. And we provide lots of sample cover letters to review for ideas to use in your own.

Cover letters are just one important part of the job search, so we also provide information on thank-you letters, e-mail, and other job search correspondence that, when used effectively, can make your transition to a new job smoother and faster. A short but powerful chapter on how you can improve your resume in just 15 minutes is also included, and we close out with a key chapter on job search—what works, what doesn't, and how you can find a job fast.

After all, changing jobs and changing careers are no longer rare events. Many workers choose to or are forced to look for work every few years. So learning methods that work, and work quickly, will help you the rest of your working life.



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# A Brief Introduction to Using This Book

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You are ready to start your job search—or so you think. You have written a great resume, turned up some promising leads, and now need to send your resume with a cover letter to various people in advance of an interview.

But for too many job seekers, the job search comes to a screeching halt at this point. Questions like these come to mind:

- What should I say in my cover letter?
- Can I write one letter and use it for every situation?
- How much background information should I provide?
- What do they really want to know?
- Do I have to match up perfectly for every requirement in the job posting?
- Should I quickly summarize all my positions?
- Do I have to share information about why I left my last job?
- Do they care about why I'm looking?
- How can I quickly get the attention of busy hiring managers?
- Should I mail or e-mail my cover letter and resume?

It's no wonder that the task of quickly sending out resumes can become a time-consuming, difficult challenge and a real roadblock to a swift, successful search.

With *15-Minute Cover Letter*, we want to change all that. We give you strategies, ideas, and examples that will make the process of producing your cover letters quick, easy, and foolproof. Using these guidelines, you won't become bogged down in the task of writing and sending an effective cover letter, and you can keep your job search moving ahead.

Because our theme is “quick,” we haven't loaded down the book with hundreds of examples. Instead, we have given you dozens of *good* examples that illustrate our key points. These include

- 70 complete cover letters and thank-you letters
- Additional samples of language for the opening, middle, and closing sections of your cover letters
- Worksheets to help you organize and keep track of material for your cover letters
- Examples of quick notes, JIST Cards (a mini-resume), and job proposals
- 12 professionally written sample resumes that illustrate our key points for improving your resume

If you are like most job seekers, you will go immediately to the section of the book that deals with your most pressing need—whether that is how to get a cover letter out the door in the next 15 minutes, how to quickly improve your resume, or how to manage your job search for the fastest, best results. But we hope you will take the time to skim through all the sections of the book. All components of your job search—your cover letters, resume, follow-up correspondence, search strategy, network contacts, interview responses, and more—are interrelated, so the more proficient and knowledgeable you become in the entire process, the more successful you'll be. You can't accomplish a job search in 15 minutes, but you can accomplish a lot in each 15-minute segment you allot to it—beginning with the 15-minute cover letter.

We wish you well.

# Quick Tips for Writing a Cover Letter in 15 Minutes

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Cover letters are an essential component of your job search. During your search and transition, you will write many different letters or e-mails to “cover” your resume. In essence, cover letters tell your readers why you are contacting them. Often these letters are your first opportunity to make an impression on a hiring decision-maker. They offer you the golden opportunity to link your unique set of skills, experiences, talents, and interests with a particular company or job opportunity. They are your formal introduction to people who can be extremely influential in your job search, and they prepare your readers for all the details, experiences, and accomplishments you have highlighted in your resume.

In our experience working with all levels of job seekers in hundreds of professions, we have found that writing cover letters is perhaps the greatest stumbling block to an efficient job search. The resume has been written, polished, and is ready to go. Now faced with writing an individual cover letter each time they want to send out a resume, job seekers struggle to find the right words and tone. They worry about not including enough information or the right information. They debate whether they need to point out a match for every qualification listed in a job posting. And they tell us they spend far too much time in all this struggle, worry, and debate—time that they could better spend expanding their network or following up on leads or preparing for interviews.

We understand the problem, and in this book we provide a solution—a simple, foolproof formula so that you can quickly write letters that convey the right message in the right tone to the many people you’ll be contacting during your career transition.

## Cover Letters: Why You Need Them and How to Use Them

Sending a resume to someone without explaining why is not appropriate. Whether you're mailing, faxing, or e-mailing your resume, it is important to provide a letter along with your resume—a cover letter (or cover message, in the case of e-mailing). Even when you post your resume in an online database (also known as a resume bank), the Web site where you're posting often has a place where you can upload or paste a cover letter. A cover letter highlights your key qualifications, explains your situation, and asks the recipient for some specific action, consideration, or response.

Because each circumstance is different, you can't write just one cover letter and expect that it will be appropriate in every situation. But remember, our focus in this book is helping you to move quickly through the process of creating your cover letters. By breaking down these letters to their essentials, we give you a framework and a process that will work for *most* situations, along with dozens of examples that will give you ideas and inspiration for both common situations and unusual circumstances.

### Only Two Groups of People Will Receive Your Cover Letters

If you think about it, you will send a resume and cover letter to only two groups of people:

- People you know.
- People you don't know.

We realize this sounds overly simple, but it's true. And this observation makes it easier to understand how you might structure your letters to each group. Before we explain our "formula" and show you some useful and effective cover letter samples for both groups, let's first review some basics regarding writing cover letters in general.

**Note:** *While many situations require writing a formal letter, a simple note will do in many instances. Additional information on informal notes is in chapter 4.*

# Seven Quick Tips for Writing a Superior Cover Letter

No matter whom you are writing to, virtually every good cover letter should follow these guidelines.

## **1. Write to Someone in Particular**

Avoid sending a cover letter “To whom it may concern” or using some other impersonal opening. We all get enough junk mail, and if you don’t send your letter to someone by name, it will be treated like junk mail.

## **2. Make Absolutely No Errors**

One way to offend people right away is to misspell their names or use incorrect titles. If you are not 100 percent certain, call and verify the correct spelling of the name and other details before you send the letter. Also, review your letters carefully to be sure that they contain no typographical, grammatical, or other errors.

## **3. Personalize Your Content**

We’ve never been impressed by form letters, and you should not use them. Those computer-generated letters that automatically insert a name (known as merge mailings) never fool anyone, and we find cover letters done in this way offensive. It’s likely your recipients will think so, too. While some resume and cover letter books recommend that you send out lots of these “broadcast letters” to people you don’t know, you will most likely find that doing so wastes time and money. Small, targeted mailings to a carefully selected group of prospective employers can be effective if you tailor your cover letter to each recipient, but large mass mailings are a waste of time. If you can’t customize your letter in some way, don’t send it.

But that doesn’t mean you can’t use *some* of the material in one cover letter for other letters as well. In fact, this is one of our top tips to make writing your letters easier and more efficient. In chapter 2 we show you how to do this and how to incorporate some repeatable material into your customized letters.



## **4. Present a Good Appearance**

Your contacts with prospective employers should always be professional, so buy good-quality stationery and matching envelopes for times when you'll be mailing or hand-delivering a letter and resume. For your cover letters, use papers and envelopes that match or complement your resume paper. The standard 8 1/2 × 11 paper size is typically used, but you can also use the smaller Monarch-size paper with matching envelopes. For colors, we recommend white, ivory, or light beige—whatever matches your resume paper. Cover letters are almost never handwritten anymore; employers expect them to be word processed and produced with excellent print quality.

Use a standard letter format that complements your resume type and format. You might find it easier to use your word-processing software's template or "wizard" functions than to create a format from scratch. Your letters don't have to be fancy; they do have to look professional. And don't forget the envelope! It should be typed and printed carefully, without errors.

## **5. Begin with a Friendly Opening**

Start your letter by sharing the reason you are writing and, if appropriate, a reminder of any prior contacts or the name of the person who referred you. The examples throughout this book will give you ideas for beginning your letters.

## **6. Target Your Skills and Experiences**

To effectively target your skills and experiences, you must know something about the organization, the job opportunity, or the person with whom

**Tip:** *Undoubtedly, you will send many of your cover letters as e-mail messages. All the rules we discuss for traditional cover letters apply equally to e-mail cover letters. Just because e-mail is a less formal means of communicating doesn't mean you can be careless with writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, or presentation. We do recommend that your e-mail cover letters be a bit shorter and crisper than your traditional paper letters. You need to capture the reader's attention before he or she clicks "delete"! Several of the sample cover letters in chapter 3 are presented in e-mail format, without headings or stationery, to give you some examples of how to present these letters for best results.*

you are dealing. Present any relevant background that may be of particular interest to the person to whom you are writing.

## **7. Close with an Action Statement**

Don't close your letter without clearly identifying what you will do next. We do not recommend that you leave it up to the employer to contact you, because that doesn't guarantee a response. Close on a positive note and let the employer know how and when you will be following up.

## **Writing Cover Letters to People You Know**

It is always best if you know the person to whom you are writing. Any written correspondence—no matter how powerful!—is less effective than personal contact, so the ideal circumstance is to send a resume and cover letter after having spoken with the person directly.

For example, it is far more effective to first call someone who has advertised in the paper than to simply send a letter and resume. You will immediately differentiate yourself from “one of the crowd.” Using a variety of methods that we discuss in chapter 6, you can get to know all kinds of people who can help you with your job search. You might not have known them yesterday, but you can get to know them today.

So, for the purposes of teaching you good job search principles, we'll assume you have made some sort of personal contact before sending your resume. Within this assumption are hundreds of variations, but we will review the most common situations and let you adapt them to your own circumstances.

## **The Four Types of Cover Letters to People You Know**

You will have one of four basic situations when sending cover letters to people you know. Each situation requires a different approach. The

**Tip:** *Using a few simple techniques, you are able to make the acquaintance of all sorts of people. That's why we say that sending your resume or cover letter to strangers wastes time and money; it is relatively easy to make direct contact. Chapter 6 provides details on how to make contact with people you don't know, and we recommend that you learn more about these techniques.*

situations are presented here, along with an explanation. We'll provide sample cover letters for each situation later.

The four types of cover letters illustrate an approach that you can use in getting interviews, which is the real task in the job search. Look at the samples for each type of cover letter and see how, in most cases, it assumes that personal contact has been made before the resume was sent.

1. **An interview is scheduled, and a specific job opening may interest you.** In this case, you have already arranged an interview for a job opening that interests you, and the cover letter should provide details of your experience that relate to the specific job.
2. **An interview is scheduled, but no specific job is available.** In chapter 6, we explain in more detail why this situation is such a good one for you to set up. In essence, this is a letter you will send for an exploratory interview with an employer who does not have a specific opening for you now but who might in the future. This situation is fertile ground for finding job leads where no one else may be looking.
3. **An interview has already taken place.** Many people overlook the importance of sending a letter after an interview. This is a time to say that you want the job (if that is the case, your letter should say so) and to add any details on why you think you can do the job well.
4. **No interview is scheduled—yet.** There are situations in which you just can't arrange an interview before you send a resume and cover letter. For example, you may be trying to see a person whose name was given to you by a friend, but that person is on vacation. Or you might be responding to a blind ad in the newspaper or online. In these cases, sending a good cover letter and resume will make any later contacts more effective.

## ***Sample Cover Letters to People You Know***

The following are sample cover letters for the four preceding situations. Note that they use different formats and styles to show you the range of styles that are appropriate. Each addresses a different situation, and each incorporates all the cover letter-writing guidelines presented earlier in this chapter.

Keep in mind that the best cover letter is one that follows your having set up an interview. Anything else is just second best, at best.

## Sample Cover Letter 1: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** This writer called first and arranged an interview, the best possible approach. Note how she briefly summarizes her strongest qualifications for this specific job opening. To convey some of the intangibles that can make a real difference when choosing among several comparable candidates, she includes a brief recommendation from an executive at her current company, praising her for her persistence and professionalism.

7314 74 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE Seattle, WA 98130	<b>SARAH T. RUBIN</b> s_rubin@earthlink.net	206-849-3456 (Home) 206-300-2379 (Mobile)
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April 30, 2009

Mr. Mark Anders  
Northwest Financial Advisors  
2150 Commercial Parkway, Suite 4-B  
Seattle, WA 98249

Dear Mr. Anders:

Thank you for speaking with me this morning about your current opening for a Compliance Specialist. As you suggested, I am sending along my resume to give you additional information prior to our meeting next week. It expands on these qualifications that are essential for success as a Compliance Specialist:

- Nine years of experience in banking and financial services including participation in audit procedures and in-depth involvement with the full range of compliance issues.
- History of initiative and leadership in identifying and reducing compliance risks.
- Strong skills in tracking, monitoring, documenting, and reporting.
- Ability to manage multiple detailed projects simultaneously.

My position at Standard Financial has been eliminated due to a downsizing. As evidence of the value of my work there, the compliance role will be assumed by the company's chief operating officer, who has commended me for my professionalism and "get the job done" attitude.

I look forward to our meeting at 10:30 on Wednesday and learning more about this exciting opportunity with your company.

Sincerely,

Sarah T. Rubin

enclosure: resume

## Sample Cover Letter 2: Pre-Interview, No Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** This letter illustrates how the writer has built on a casual in-person meeting to initiate a formal discussion about future career options. Although no job opening exists, he is wise in assuming that there will be one in the future. He is planting the seeds to be first in line when an opening does occur. Not only that, he is strengthening his professional network and making himself more visible and memorable within the new industry he is trying to penetrate.

**DARRYL T. POSTON**

4525 Carmel Court, Indianapolis, IN 46210  
317-204-8040 • darrylposton@aol.com

April 30, 2009

Sharon Hanrahan, Sales Manager  
Alpha Omega Services  
252 Court Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46201

Dear Sharon:

I look forward to meeting with you on Friday to continue the conversation we started at last month's Downtowners event. We agreed that one of the characteristics of a successful sales professional is persistence. Now that I've more thoroughly researched your company, I don't intend to give up trying until I am successful in joining one of the best sales teams in the business and one of the best organizations in town!

My sales background is strong. In each of the last four years, in two different sales positions, I have exceeded my sales goals by 10% or more. I attribute this success to superior closing skills and dedication to every step of the sales process.

Since January, my performance has been measured by how well I continue selling after the initial sale is made. Customers come to me after they have decided to purchase a new car, and I sell them financing plans and add-on features and services. By carefully listening to my customers' needs and recommending the add-ons that are right for them, I have sold more extended service plans and dealer-installed stereo systems than anyone in my position in the last five years.

I'm confident I can deliver similar results for Alpha Omega, and I am eager to be part of your team.

If you have any questions before our meeting, please contact me by phone or email. Otherwise, I look forward to seeing you at 3 pm on Friday.

Sincerely,

Darryl T. Poston

attachment

## Sample Cover Letter 3: After an Interview

**Comments:** This letter shows how you might follow up after an interview and make a pitch for solving a problem—even when no job formally exists. In this example, the writer suggests that he can use his skills to solve a specific problem he uncovered during his conversation with the employer. Although the thought never occurs to many job seekers to set up an interview where there appears to be no job opening, jobs are created as a result of such interviews.

**Ted Markham**

7529 Old Bay Boulevard, Pinellas Park, FL 33781  
727-249-8349 — tedmarkham@tampabay.rr.com

April 30, 2009

Shannon Edwards  
Vice President, Marketing & Community Relations  
Highland Hospital  
2945 Hospital Road  
Tampa, FL 33605

Dear Ms. Edwards:

Thank you for taking time to meet with me on Wednesday. I was impressed with everything I learned about Highland Hospital—you have just the culture, challenges, and people that I find create the most satisfying work environment. I realize you don't have a position available right now for someone with my skills, but I would like to keep in touch and share some ideas with you from time to time.

I have been thinking about one of the challenges we discussed. Your need for enhancing ties with current physicians as well as recruiting new doctors matches the situation I faced at Sarasota Regional Hospital. By tapping into our strong network of volunteers and board members, I was able to improve our communications with physicians and get better results in our recruiting initiatives. If you have an interest, I would be happy to share more details of what we did and how effective it was.

Thank you, also, for suggesting I speak with Roger Midland at South Coastal Health Center. I have a call in to him, and I will follow up with you next week to let you know how our conversation goes. If there is anything I can do for you in the meantime, please call; the best number at which to reach me is my cell phone, 727-249-8349.

Sincerely,

Ted Markham

P.S. A copy of my resume is attached for your files—or to pass along to someone who you think might be interested in talking to me. As I mentioned, I am eager to make a move within the next six to nine months.

## Sample Cover Letter 4: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter makes an immediate connection with the recipient by mentioning a referral from a professional association. This type of connection can be an excellent source of contacts and job leads. Note that the writer will call again to arrange an appointment. This is an effective message because it leaves the ball firmly in the job seeker's court. Instead of relying on a busy executive to pick up the phone, the person with the most at stake (you, the job seeker) should persist in seeking a telephone conversation and ultimately an in-person meeting.

### BRETT SAMUELSON

295 Skyline Drive, Ft. Thomas, KY 41015  
Home 859-349-9076 • Mobile 859-208-0987 • brett@samuelson.com

April 30, 2009

Mr. Thomas Elder  
Director of Marketing  
Sabatino Specialties, Inc.  
259 Vine Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mr. Elder:

Rachel Koehler (current president of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Marketing Association) suggested that I contact you about marketing opportunities that you may know of in your role as chairman of the Cincinnati Incubator marketing board. I hope you received my voice-mail message on Monday—as promised, I am following up with more information.

I recently married and relocated to the Cincinnati area, and I am eager to find a young technology company that needs an experienced marketing professional to help introduce its innovations to various business markets.

My background and interests are a good fit for emerging high-tech companies. Since completing my MBA, I've helped two fledgling software developers gain solid traction in their markets. I understand how to position and present new technology concepts to business audiences (emphasizing business benefits, not just technology advances).

I will call you early next week to follow up. I appreciate any ideas, referrals, or assistance you can offer!

Sincerely,

Brett Samuelson

P.S. The enclosed resume provides more detailed information about my experience, expertise, and track record.

## Writing Cover Letters to People You Don't Know

If it is not practical to directly contact a prospective employer by phone or some other method, it is acceptable to send a resume and cover letter. This approach makes sense in some situations, such as if you are moving to a distant location or responding to a blind ad offering only a post office box number.

In other instances, you might have tried but cannot connect with the person you are writing to. Because your time and other resources are limited, it does not make sense for you to spend hours pursuing contact information for a newspaper ad. Neither do you want to ignore these opportunities. We recommend that you make one or two phone calls to try to make a connection and customize your letter. But if you are unsuccessful, responding with a generic letter is better than not responding at all. To make these letters as effective as possible, try to find something you have in common with the person or company you are contacting. You will see some examples of how this is done in the following sample letters.

**Note:** *Various surveys show that only 6 percent to 25 percent of job seekers find their jobs through newspaper ads or Internet postings. Given these numbers, it is likely that you will be among the 75 percent who find their jobs through other methods—such as a referral from a friend or direct contact with a company. Don't make the mistake that so many job seekers make, spending most of their time sending out dozens (or hundreds) of letters and resumes in response to ads and then feeling frustrated when they get no response. We want to repeat our recommendation that you write to people you know or people you can get to know. You will get a better response to your letters, your job search activities will be much more purposeful and satisfying, and your career transition will be faster.*



## Sample Cover Letter 5: Response to a Want Ad

**Comments:** This letter does a good job of outlining the candidate's credentials as relevant to the position advertised. The bullet points give the reader a quick overview of his qualifications; then more detail is provided if the reader cares to know more before turning to the resume. Note the explanation for relocating to Florida—and note how prominently it is displayed, directly under his name at the top of the page. This information can help ease an employer's concerns about the cost of bringing in someone from outside the area.

Because this letter was written in response to a blind ad, Antonio cannot state when and how he will be following up. In cases like this, a less assertive closing must be used, but it is still a good idea to ask for further contact.

### Antonio Ruiz

Mobile: 317-218-4594

Relocating to Florida May 2009

antonioruiz@att.com

Re: Licensed Contractor Position, *Miami Herald* April 27, 2009

With in-depth construction management experience and a 30-year record of never missing a project-completion date, I have proven skills and a track record of performance that can benefit your company as a Licensed Contractor.

In brief, I offer:

- Expertise in all facets of commercial/industrial and residential construction
- State of Florida General Contractor license (fully up to date with annual CEUs)
- Record of 100% on-time, on-budget project completion
- High quality standards and ability to get top results from contractor crews
- Proven dependability, integrity, and dedication to customer satisfaction

As a partner in a small construction company, I have managed every stage of a project, from preparing bids to handing over keys to new owners. Through active daily oversight on every project, I eliminate problems such as subcontractor miscommunication, faulty construction, blueprint misinterpretation, and carelessness. My relationships with subcontractors (both managers and crew) have always been excellent, and I am able to create the teamwork necessary for successful, profitable projects.

I have been a regular visitor to Florida for more than 10 years and now plan to make the state my permanent home. The position with your company sounds like an excellent fit for my skills and track record. May we schedule a time to talk?

Sincerely,

Antonio Ruiz

Enclosure: Resume

## Sample Cover Letter 6: Unsolicited Resume Sent to Obtain an Interview

**Comments:** In this letter, the candidate makes an immediate connection by referring to a recent news article that featured the school system to which she is applying. Her bullet points make additional connections to what she learned about the school district. This helps send the message that she understands and fits into the unique culture of that organization. Notice how she indicates that she will call in hopes of setting up a meeting. Although she could not make a connection beforehand, she will work diligently to establish one after the fact.

### Jennifer Tolles

75 Bolivar Terrace, Reading, MA 01867  
jennifertee@aol.com  
781-592-3409

April 30, 2009

Dr. Mark B. Cronin, Superintendent  
Belmont Public Schools  
644 Pleasant Street  
Belmont, MA 02478

Dear Dr. Cronin:

Your school district's reputation for *excellence in education*—described so vividly in the recent *New England Journal of Elementary Education*—has prompted me to forward my resume for consideration for fall teaching positions. In addition to my strong professional qualifications, you will find that I also have the intangible personal qualities that fit your culture and enable me to truly make a difference to the children I teach.

Please consider my qualifications:

- Recent bachelor's degree and Massachusetts teaching certification, grades 1–8.
- Year-long teaching experience as an LD Tutor for elementary and high school students—experience adapting classroom materials for individual students, delivering individual and group lessons, working collaboratively with classroom teachers, and promoting a positive learning environment for my students.
- Diverse field-teaching experiences (grades 1, 4, 6), planning and delivering integrated lessons that sparked students' interest, creativity, and desire to learn.
- Keen respect for each individual child and appreciation for the differences among us.
- A highly effective classroom-management style that creates an environment in which all children can learn.

I will call you within a few days to see when it might be convenient to meet. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Tolles

enclosure

## Sample Cover Letter 7: No Interview Is Scheduled

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**Comments:** This letter is shown in an e-mail format and is a response to an online posting. This candidate tries to set himself apart from perhaps hundreds of candidates by emphasizing his eager interest in near-space exploration along with intangible qualities that will make him a good employee.

Subject: Software Engineer—Monster.com posting SW-43902

Your posting describes needs that are a near-perfect fit for my career experience and interests. In brief, my qualifications include:

- \*\* Programming and scripting skills in JAVA, JavaScript, Perl, and C.
- \*\* Extensive development experience in multiple environments and methodologies.
- \*\* Leadership roles in the development of secure content managers.
- \*\* Project management experience and the ability to bring projects in on time and on budget.

But it is my passionate interest in near-space exploration that sets me apart from other candidates with similar skills and experience. I am extremely interested in putting my skills to work in the atmosphere of exploration that characterizes the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

I can easily schedule a phone interview at your convenience and would be very willing to travel to Pasadena for further discussions. I am confident I will convince you that I have the technical skills you're looking for as well as the intangible qualities—enthusiasm, energy, dedication, sense of mission, and intellectual curiosity—that characterize your best employees.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tyler Wilson-Dooley

## Key Points: Chapter 1

Here's a summary of the key points of this chapter:

- Whenever possible, send your cover letter and resume to someone you know.
- Try to arrange an interview before you send your cover letter and resume.
- Don't limit your job search to responding to published or posted openings. Not only will the competition be fierce, but you will be missing at least 75 percent of job opportunities!

- Don't waste your time and money sending form letters to hundreds of unknown people or companies.
- Always customize the content of your letter for the specific person, organization, or opportunity. Make a connection between what they are looking for and what you have to offer.
- Keep the ball in your court by informing your reader how and when you will follow up—then be sure to do so.

## Chapter 2



# Write Your Own 15-Minute Cover Letter

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We promised you an easy-to-use, foolproof system to write cover letters that are individual, personal, and effective—in about 15 minutes. In this chapter we'll lead you through the process step by step. Along with explanations and examples, we'll give you some tools and exercises that you can use to rapidly generate material for your letters. Then we'll show you how to put it all together for a polished, professional presentation.

Here are the eight start-to-finish steps to write and send your own cover letter:

- Step 1: Create Your Format
- Step 2: Add the Basics
- Step 3: State Why You're Writing and Get the Reader's Attention
- Step 4: Share Information Relevant to the Reader's Needs
- Step 5: Close with an Action Statement
- Step 6: Proofread and Polish
- Step 7: Choose the Transmission Method (Mail or E-mail)
- Step 8: Send and Follow Up

As we expand on each of these steps in the following sections, you will find examples of different ways to present the information. In some cases we have created worksheets for you to use to develop your material, as well as “quick tips” and other suggestions for making the process as smooth and painless as possible.

If you spend time completing all the exercises, writing your first cover letter will take you more than 15 minutes. But after just a few times, you should have enough material and a firm grasp of the process so that you'll be able

to move rapidly through each step, creating, reviewing, and sending cover letters quickly and easily for each unique opportunity you uncover during your search.

## Step 1: Create Your Format

You can use a wizard or template from your word-processing program or copy the heading and font choices from your resume. Either way, start out by creating a new word-processing file and showing your name, address, telephone number(s), and e-mail address at the top of the page. You want to make it easy for readers to contact you right away if they are interested in your background.

For the body of your letter, we recommend a fairly conservative font that is easy to read. Times New Roman, Arial, Book Antiqua, Bookman, Garamond, and Tahoma are attractive fonts that are found on most PCs. If you want to use a more decorative or distinctive font for your name, go ahead and do so. Just be sure it is not too playful or hard to read.

To create a cohesive, highly professional image, be sure that your cover letter mimics the font and style choices of your resume.

Save your document with a distinctive name that will allow you to access the file quickly when you need it. You might label it according to the organization name or person you are writing to. Or if you are starting out by creating a generic letter that you plan to customize for individual letters throughout your search, be sure your file name reflects this fact.

Following are three different ways to format a cover letter. There is no rule for what's right or what's best. Use your judgment and choose something you like, whether one of these or one of your own. We advise that you keep your format professional looking and that you use something that is easy for you to reproduce time after time as you write customized cover letters throughout your search.

**Tip:** *A cover letter sent as an e-mail message requires a different format than a traditional paper letter. In Step 7 we address this issue and provide complete details for converting your word-processing file to an e-mail message. For now, we suggest that you follow the formatting steps outlined here so that you will have the print format ready to go when you need it.*

## Format Example 1

---

**Sandra Smithers**

ssmithers@cinci.rr.com

Home 513-249-8409 • Mobile 513-606-3909

7529 Fallen Oak Lane, Loveland, OH 45140

Date

Mr. Rafael Montoya  
Accounting Manager  
West Side Realty  
2509 Central Parkway  
Cincinnati, OH 45204

Dear Mr. Montoya:

Opening paragraph

Paragraph of relevant, compelling information

- Bullet point 1
- Bullet point 2
- Bullet point 3

Closing paragraph

Sincerely,

Sandra Smithers

attachment: resume

### FONT NOTES:

*Text font: Times New Roman, 11 pt.*

*Headline (name) font: Verdana Bold, 18 pt.*

## Format Example 2

### **STEVEN ADAMS**

11099 Desert Sands Drive  
Tempe, AZ 27317  
827-876-0043  
steveadams@aol.com

Date

Ellen Masterson, R.N.  
Director of Nursing  
Mercy Hospital  
7450 Hospital Drive  
Phoenix, AZ 27312

Dear Ms. Masterson:

Opening paragraph

Paragraph of relevant, compelling information

Paragraph of relevant, compelling information

Closing paragraph

Sincerely yours,

Steven Adams

Enclosure

#### **FONT NOTES:**

*Text font: Arial, 11 pt.*

*Headline (name) font: Arial Black, 18 pt., small caps.*



## Format Example 3

DALE GELMAN

*phone:* (203) 549-0929 • *cell:* (203) 303-1276 • *e-mail:* DALE@SNET.NET  
*residence:* 459 ELM STREET • NORTH GUILFORD, CT  
*mailing address:* PO BOX 750 • MADISON, CT 06443-0750

Date

Ms. Chris Andenoro  
District Manager  
Cintas Services  
75 Shoreline Industrial Park  
Branford, CT 06473

Dear Ms. Andenoro:

Opening paragraph  
(first line of each paragraph indented)

Paragraph of relevant, compelling information

Paragraph of relevant, compelling information

Closing paragraph

Sincerely yours,

Dale Gelman

Enclosure

### FONT NOTES:

*Style adapted to match "Contemporary Resume" template in Microsoft Word.*

*Text font: Garamond, 11 pt.*

*Headline (name) font: Garamond, 22 pt., all caps, spacing expanded 4 pt.*

## Step 2: Add the Basics

A few lines below your contact information, type today's date; then space down two or three lines and type the name, title, and address of the person you're writing to. If there is any question about this information, make a phone call to verify it. It is especially important to use the person's correct name and title and to spell everything correctly!

Two spaces below this "inside address," write a formal salutation, such as this:

*Dear Mr. Singh:*

Be sure to use a colon, not a comma, after the salutation (this is the proper punctuation for business correspondence). Do not address the individual by first name unless you know this person well.

## Step 3: State Why You're Writing and Get the Reader's Attention

The first paragraph of your letter should let your reader know why you are writing. Are you confirming a scheduled meeting and sending along a resume? Have you been referred by a mutual acquaintance? Are you following up on a phone or e-mail message? Were you prompted to write by a newspaper advertisement or an interesting article about the company? Don't be mysterious! Share this information up front so that your reader can place your letter in the proper context.

For the most compelling opening of all—the one that will get immediate attention—refer to your prior conversation or interview appointment, or "drop" the name of the person who referred you. If you don't have a referral and you haven't been able to make a prior connection, try to make your opening sentence interesting enough to draw the reader into the rest of your letter. We don't suggest that you get too clever or gimmicky, but do avoid dry, overused introductions such as "I am writing to inquire about positions with your company." Instead, write something that will make your reader want to know more about you and how you can help with a specific problem or challenge. Here are a few ideas for doing that:

**Tip:** Remember, the most compelling opening is a follow-up to your initial contact or the name of a person who referred you. A personal connection beats a clever opening every day of the week!

***Quote a Relevant Article***

*I was interested to read in Business Monthly that San Marcos Manufacturing plans to expand its Asian operations to Vietnam and China. With seven years of experience launching production (both plant start-up and supplier development) in both of these countries, I can help make this important venture successful for you.*

***Quote a Recent Industry Statistic***

*Health care workers are in the shortest supply since the 1950s, according to a recent article in Health Careers. If you are experiencing this shortage at County General, I believe you will be interested in my qualifications as a surgical technician and my strong desire to join your team.*

***Quote Your Contact Directly***

*“Companies succeed by hiring the right people—people who want to make a difference, not just do a job.” When I read this statement in your interview that was recently published in the Chicago Tribune, I knew that General Widget was a great fit for my energy and passion as well as my skills as a machinist.*

***Lead with One of Your Most Startling and Relevant Successes***

*Under my leadership as Sales & Marketing VP for MoneyMakers, we grew market share from 10% to 24% on a shoestring budget. I'd like to speak with you about opportunities where I can deliver this level of sales results for Acme Funds.*

As you become aware of industry statistics, interesting articles, and quotes that can help you create a compelling opening paragraph, make a note of them. This worksheet will become a ready source of information so that you can quickly put together an interesting opening statement that relates to the company and its specific needs, plans, and interests.



**WORKSHEET 1: MATERIAL FOR OPENING PARAGRAPH**

**Industry Statistics**

Statistic \_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

Statistic \_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

Statistic \_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

Statistic \_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

**Interesting Articles**

Source \_\_\_\_\_

Article title \_\_\_\_\_

Key points \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

Article title \_\_\_\_\_

Key points \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

*(continued)*

*(continued)*

Article title \_\_\_\_\_

Key points \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source \_\_\_\_\_

Article title \_\_\_\_\_

Key points \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Quotes

Quote \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Speaker and source \_\_\_\_\_

Quote \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Speaker and source \_\_\_\_\_

Quote \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Speaker and source \_\_\_\_\_

Quote \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Speaker and source \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 4: Share Information Relevant to the Reader's Needs

Here is the heart of your letter: the middle paragraph or two, or the brief list of bullet points, that tell the reader something about you that is relevant to his or her needs. Employers are not interested in you for your sake but rather because of what you can bring to the organization. This message might sound harsh, but businesspeople have an obligation to improve the success of their organization. If you consistently show how you can help them do this—in your resume, your cover letter, your interviews, and all aspects of your job search—they will be much more motivated to talk to you than if you focus on *your* needs and interests.

Let's say you are a salesperson who is interested in working for a company that pays generous commissions. There's nothing wrong with that; you certainly have the right to be interested in your compensation. But sharing this piece of information with employers will not convince them that you have their needs at heart. Instead, share how you have been successful in past sales positions and tell them you are confident and comfortable working with a commission pay structure. This way, you communicate that you will perform equally well for them and that you're not afraid to base your pay on your own performance. Do you see the difference? Of course, you do need to have a clear understanding of your personal needs and wishes, but you should not make your interests the heart of your cover letter. Focus on the employer and your value to the organization. Your cover letters will be much more effective.

If your cover letter relates to a specific job opening, you can use the job description to interpret the employer's needs. Add in your knowledge of the job function, the company, and the industry, and you will have quite a bit of information about what the employer is looking for—what kinds of problems you would be hired to solve. In this section of your letter, you will show how you can solve those problems and how you have done so in the past.

### **Sample Job Postings and Corresponding Cover Letter Sections**

Here is an example of a job posting, followed by the middle section of a cover letter that responds to the employer's needs as stated in the posting.



Here is another example.

**Transportation Manager:** Excellent career opportunity! Individual will be responsible for implementing and developing cost-saving programs, in addition to improving load efficiencies and transportation processes.

Requirements:

- \*\*3–5 years transportation supervisory experience
- \*\*3–5 years transportation industry experience servicing large retail accounts
- \*\*10 years domestic transportation (Rail, LTL, TL carriers)
- \*\*Working knowledge of U.S. Transportation regulations and comfortable with transportation practices in all U.S. regions
- \*\*Documented success of improving cost and efficiencies of transportation operations

Educational Requirement:

- \*\*Bachelor’s degree in Transportation, Logistics, or Business

Computer Knowledge:

- \*\*Proficient with MS Office
- \*\* Transportation Management Software

Interpersonal Skills:

- \*\*Success in a team-based environment, including leadership and employee development
- \*\*Demonstrated successful interaction with internal and external customers

- *As Transportation Manager for Ames’ Midwest Region, in just over a year I cut hundreds of thousands of dollars from operating costs, improved productivity 12%, and contributed to the division’s first profitable quarter ever.*
- *For automotive-supplier Klein Auto Systems, I implemented a new loading system that improved efficiency more than 35% and enabled us to achieve same-day supply status for our top 10 accounts.*

*I’m confident I can deliver similar results for your organization.*

*In brief, I am an experienced transportation manager and project leader. I understand and apply state-of-the-art methodologies for continuous improvement of the distribution process; yet I realize that it is people who ultimately deliver results, and I am strongly focused on building relationships with employees, managers, suppliers, and customers as a primary tool for business success.*



In this example you can see how the candidate shared documented successes in the areas that are most important to the employer. The last paragraph expands on the less-tangible qualities of leadership and teamwork that are also cited by the employer as essential skills.

Some job seekers prefer a side-by-side comparison of their qualifications with every requirement called for in a job description. Known as the “T-style” cover letter, this format makes it easy for employers to quickly ascertain that you have the basic job requirements.

**CRITICAL CARE REGISTERED NURSES (ICU, EMERGENCY, CARDIAC)**

**Responsibilities**

Responsible for coordinating clinical care of patient. Integrate all health care providers to ensure high quality patient/family outcomes, and establish a consistent and accountable relationship with patient/family. Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to, initiation and development of the plan of care, patient/family education, utilization management, and discharge planning.

**Qualifications:**

- Licensure: Registered Nurse, State of Hawaii
- Diploma or Associate Degree in Nursing; Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing preferred
- Current BLS/HCP card in all areas; ACLS, NALS and/or PALS in designated areas
- Ability to read, write, speak, and understand English effectively

With more than five years of experience coordinating critical care for patients in multiple hospital departments (ICU, NICU, ER, Cardiac Care Unit), I offer strong qualifications that are an excellent match for your needs.

<i>You Require...</i>	<i>I Offer...</i>
Licensure	Registered Nurse, State of Hawaii (since 2003)
Degree	BSN, University of Illinois, 1998
Certifications	Current BLS/HCP card; NALS and PALS certification
English Language	Native English speaker; also developing fluency in Hawaiian

While easy to peruse, this format is not always the best strategy. One problem is that it can shine a glaring light on areas in which you are not as strong as other candidates and therefore make it easy for the employer to eliminate you from consideration. If you like this style, we recommend that you use it only when you are a perfect match (or better) for every qualification the employer is seeking.

Of course, you will not always be able to refer to a job description when writing your cover letters. In those instances, do your best to determine what the employer's most pressing concerns are and address those concerns in your cover letter. If no position exists, refer to what you know about the company and the industry. Here is an example of the middle section of a cover letter that does just that.

*Today's manufacturing economy presents many challenges. To stay competitive, plants must constantly become more efficient. I believe that the best way to accomplish this is by involving all employees in the improvement initiatives. When production workers are invested and involved, they put their heart and soul into meeting (and often exceeding) goals.*

*I put this philosophy into action as production supervisor at Western Widgets. To keep our costs competitive, we were challenged to increase efficiency by 10% without an investment in technology. I brainstormed with all our production staff, and we broke down into teams to test three of their ideas. With a little competition, all the team members were motivated to make their idea work the best. As a result, we implemented two of the ideas on the production line, increased efficiency 12%, and rewarded every worker for his or her contribution.*

**Note:** *We don't believe it's essential that you compare your qualifications point-by-point with every requirement in a job description. Remember, your cover letter accompanies your resume, which provides much more detail. The main purpose of your cover letter is simply to create interest in talking with you to find out more. If you hit on your most important qualifications and most significant contributions—always in areas of interest to the people you are writing to—then you will pique their interest and motivate them to look at your resume and ultimately pick up the phone to contact you for an interview.*

If your cover letter can expand on a specific problem you've already discussed in your initial phone call, so much the better. With this strategy, you show employers that you listened, understood their concerns, and already have ideas for solutions. Here is an example.

*In our discussion on Wednesday you mentioned the high level of absenteeism in the call center. I have some ideas and some experience that might help—for example, at Techline we were experiencing absenteeism as high as 20% that really hurt our response times. We set up a series of incentives that increased for every week, month, and quarter of perfect attendance. Employees knew they had control over their bonus payments and therefore took responsibility for their own attendance.*

*Not only that, we added team bonuses as well, so that team members encouraged their peers to come to work. As a result, our attendance improved to a steady 95%, we cut 30 seconds from our average response time, and the increased productivity more than covered the cost of the bonuses.*

## **Show Results and Be Specific**

The theme that runs through all these examples is *results*. Employers are interested in applicants who have performed well in their past positions, and sharing specific examples will help them understand how you can add value to their organization.

Another key point is that the most credible and powerful examples are specific, not general. An employer might advertise for someone with “five years of sales experience in the medical industry,” but if you have called ahead, learned more about the company, and know that the company wants someone to sell disposable medical products to hospitals, you can make your example much more specific and relevant: “I have five years of successful experience (averaging 125% of quota) in sales of disposable medical products to hospital purchasing departments.”

Consider the difference in impact when we add specifics and results to straightforward qualifications statements:

<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
<p>My experience includes leading technical teams and projects for major clients of our consulting firm.</p> <p>I have marketing experience with several retail chains and an excellent grasp of merchandising.</p> <p>My background in the construction industry is broad. I am knowledgeable in rough and finish carpentry, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing for projects of all sizes.</p>	<p>My track record reflects 100% on-time delivery of critical client projects, leading 5- to 10-person technical teams implementing enterprise software (primarily SAP) for client companies such as Acme, XYZ, and Worldwide.</p> <p>At Federated, I developed marketing and merchandising strategies for the Southwest Region that resulted in 20% more traffic and a 12% increase in same-store sales.</p> <p>As construction supervisor, I directed the activities of all of our subcontractors (carpentry, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing) and was able to create a true teamwork environment. In fact, on the \$140 million Camp Building project, we set the lowest record in our company's 10-year history for "lost days" due to subcontractor scheduling and material problems.</p>

In all these examples, it is important to understand that the specifics provided are directly relevant to the employer's needs. For your letters to be powerful and effective, you must relate your experiences and achievements to the specific concerns that you have been able to uncover before writing your letter.

However, most organizations have similar needs in common. Every business is concerned about making money (both revenue and profit). Every business, government, and not-for-profit organization would like to improve its efficiency, productivity, and customer service. When you write about your successes and experiences for one organization, you will often be able to use those same statements in another letter, perhaps slightly editing to customize your letter to the second organization's circumstances.

## **Create a Library of Success Stories and Experience Statements**

Wouldn't it be easier to write your cover letters quickly if you had a resource where you could quickly review, select, and then edit this important "middle section" material? We recommend that you create just such a resource.

Every time you write a cover letter, copy your success stories and achievement statements (the "middle section" of the letter) into a separate document where all these sections are stored. After you've written three or four letters, rather than starting from scratch each time, go first to your "library" and see if one of your prior sections is applicable for the new letter you're about to write.

Your new library will be even more helpful if you tag each entry with keywords that relate to the specific competency, success, or experience it illustrates. You can use a worksheet like the one we provide in this section or simply create a word-processing file where you store all this information for easy access.

Here are two worksheets—one blank, for your use (you may copy as many of these worksheets as you need) and one filled in for a sales representative. The filled-in sample shows competencies in a variety of areas—individual performance, team leadership, training, customer problem-solving, and territory management and growth—that this individual will want to highlight in various cover letters, depending on the specific opportunity and the needs and challenges of the employer.

**Tip:** For your cover letters, you can expand on many of the results, examples, and success stories that are in your resume. However, it's never a good idea to transfer information word-for-word from your resume to your cover letter. Be sure that you say something different about the accomplishment, add more details, blend two or three accomplishments from your resume into one story for your cover letter, or otherwise change the information so that your cover letter is not a carbon copy of your resume. If your resume is not filled with strong accomplishments, see chapter 5 for our suggestions on how to add power and meaning to your resume.



## **WORKSHEET 2: COVER LETTER LIBRARY (MIDDLE SECTION)**

### **Competency/Quality/Experience:**

Example \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Competency/Quality/Experience:**

Example \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Competency/Quality/Experience:**

Example \_\_\_\_\_

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*(continued)*

*(continued)*

**Competency/Quality/Experience:**

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Example \_\_\_\_\_

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**Competency/Quality/Experience:**

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Example \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WORKSHEET 2: COVER LETTER LIBRARY (MIDDLE SECTION)—COMPLETED EXAMPLE**

### **Competency/Quality/Experience:**

Sales success (team leadership)

Example: As District Manager for Super Foods, I led my 6-person team to #1 in our region. We held the top spot for 4 years, and during that time I retained everyone on the team at a time when demand was high and they were getting several calls a week from competitors, inviting them to jump ship.

### **Competency/Quality/Experience:**

Sales success (individual performance)

Example: Managing a new sales territory for a start-up food distributor, I was quickly successful because of my cold-calling and relationship-building skills:

- #1 in my region, every year
- #2 in the nation, 2006
- 100% sales growth every year for 4 consecutive years

### **Competency/Quality/Experience:**

Customer problem-solving skills

Example: I understand that long-term sales success relies on solving customer problems. That is my specialty. For example, with Super Foods I developed Midwest Grocers from a \$10K to a \$100K account in one year by solving a long-standing problem it had with perishable foods spoilage.

*(continued)*



(continued)

### Competency/Quality/Experience:

Territory management and growth

Example: Having managed territories as large as three states, I understand the importance of good planning and regular sales visits. This often pays off in unexpected ways! For instance, on a regular quarterly visit to my smallest customer, I learned that it was experiencing growth of its Hispanic customer base, and I secured an additional order for new products that increased this account by 25%. With this knowledge, I cold-called two other stores in the area and gained \$200K in new business.

### Competency/Quality/Experience:

Sales training

Example: After just one year with the company, I was asked to field-train struggling reps. Keeping my territory at 120% to plan, I also helped them excel:

- Reps I trained showed an immediate 10%–20% growth in sales.
- Every one of them exceeded plan that year—some for the first time ever.
- Our region soared from #10 to #2 in the nation.

### *Two Quick Tips*

Here are two quick tips to keep in mind as you write your cover letters:

1. **Keep your cover letters brief.** You do not need to tell employers everything about yourself or include every one of your qualifications in the letter. Choose the most important, most compelling, and most relevant information for that particular circumstance. Hit the highlights. If you interest your readers and you grab their attention by showing how you can help solve their problems, they will review your resume or call you to ask for any additional details they need.
2. **Keep your cover letters readable.** Paragraphs should be no longer than four or five lines. Otherwise, the text is too dense and the letter is uninviting. If necessary, break overly long paragraphs into multiple paragraphs or separate some of the information into bullet points that make it easy for the readers to quickly skim your letter.



## Step 5: Close with an Action Statement

Thus far, your cover letter has opened on a strong, personal note and then gone on to include relevant and compelling information in the middle section. Now you must keep the momentum going by closing with an assertive yet polite request to advance to the next step.

We do not recommend that you leave it up to the employer to contact you. After all, your job search is the number-one priority for no one but you. Close on a positive note and let the employer know you desire further contact. Better yet, tell the employer you will call to follow up and be sure that you keep this promise.

In your closing, don't lose your focus on how you can help an employer solve problems. Instead of simply stating what you want, try to include information about what you can do for the employer. Here are a few examples:

*Mr. Smith, I look forward to meeting with you on Monday (I'll be there at 10:00 sharp) and sharing my ideas for your Northeast distribution center.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you on Friday. I am looking forward to learning more about your needs and exploring how my skills and experience can be of value to you.*

*I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to learn more about the challenge of expanding your Asian manufacturing capabilities. I will call you early next week to see when it might be convenient to get together, and in the meantime I will put together a few notes and ideas from my experiences in China and Korea.*

## Assertive Versus Aggressive

We recommend an assertive closing, but we don't recommend that you get too aggressive. Keep your closing polite, positive, and pleasant. Requesting is always better than demanding. Consider the difference:

### Assertive:

*I will call within the next few days to see whether we can schedule a time to meet. I'd like to share my ideas for improving the productivity of your field technicians.*

## **Aggressive:**

*I will call you at 10:00 on Tuesday. Please be available to discuss my ideas for improving the productivity of your field technicians.*

## **Assertive:**

*I eagerly await your ideas and suggestions. I will call on Thursday in hopes of setting up a brief meeting at a time that is convenient for you.*

## **Aggressive:**

*Your support is important for my job search, and I eagerly await all the leads you can give me. I will call on Thursday to see what names you have collected thus far.*

## **When Follow-up Isn't Possible**

Sometimes you might be sending cover letters and resumes in response to blind ads, and you won't know who is receiving your letter—or perhaps even what company it is going to. In those cases, your follow-up is limited—you cannot promise to call, for example. So how do you keep your closing assertive and action-oriented? Here are a few ideas:

*Because my qualifications appear to be an excellent fit for your needs, I look forward to the opportunity for an interview. You can reach me most easily on my cell phone (212-489-5612).*

*I look forward to learning more about this interesting opportunity and exploring the fit with my experience. I would be pleased to answer any quick questions you have by telephone (212-489-5612), and of course I'd like to meet with you at greater length in person. I am confident I can help your organization achieve its goals.*

*May we schedule a time to talk soon? I am a strong candidate for this position and would like to share my ideas with you while learning more about your current and future challenges.*

In most cases, your closing will be one paragraph long. Be brief, action-oriented, and focused on your ability to add value.

In some instances, you will want to include additional information before closing your letter. You might wish to convey your reasons for making a change, some personal information that makes you an exceptionally strong fit for the organization or the opportunity, or perhaps your intention to relocate. You do not need to share your entire personal history with your readers, but on occasion this added information will make you a stronger candidate or erase a concern in the employer's mind.

Let's explore these scenarios in more detail.

## Reason for Making a Change

While you do not need to share your reason for a career change, doing so might be beneficial. Let's say you are leaving your current job after a very short period of time. An employer might be concerned about job hopping. If you can eliminate this concern right up front, why not do so?

*Shortly after I started my current job six months ago, the company owner passed away unexpectedly. This caused enormous change for the family-owned business, and the family has decided to downsize to just one facility and keep the longest-tenured staff.*

*My current position is very satisfying, and my manager has said she has never seen anyone come up to speed so quickly. But my wife recently was offered a promotion to 3M headquarters in Minneapolis, so we have decided to relocate to afford her this tremendous opportunity.*

*Although I have not been actively looking—I have been in my current position for less than a year and find it very satisfying—when Dale told me about this position, I could not pass up the opportunity to return to my hometown of Kansas City. My roots are deep in the Midwest where most of my family resides.*

## Relevant Personal Information

Your cover letters should be customized for each specific opportunity or circumstance. In some cases you will have a strong personal reason for targeting a particular company or industry. Why not share this information if it helps the employer connect with you?

*Having been a model-train buff since childhood, I am very excited about coming to work for Lionel. I know that my passion for your products, as well as my expertise in sales and marketing, will help me become one of your top performers.*

*My passion for teaching special-needs children stems from my own personal experience as the sister and cousin of two developmentally disabled individuals. I have learned first-hand what a difference it makes when they are properly taught and encouraged to be the best that they can. For me, this is not just a job; it is a consuming interest.*

*As a part-time writer myself, I am enamored of the world of books and can think of nothing more satisfying than working in a bookstore. My knowledge of science fiction (even the most obscure authors and titles!) will enable me to be a resource to your customers and other staff.*

## **Intention to Relocate**

If you are applying for jobs outside your area, the employer might be concerned that you will expect a relocation package. Sometimes these benefits are just not available, and for that reason employers sometimes will interview only candidates who live in the immediate area. You might be able to put yourself in the running if you communicate that you intend to relocate, and at your own expense.

*I will be relocating to Chicago early in September, when my husband begins medical school at Northwestern. We are excited about our new city, and I will be ready to begin my next career opportunity as soon as we move.*

*Although I currently live in Sarasota, I am in the process of relocating to Austin, where I grew up. I do not expect relocation assistance, as I will be making this move on my own within the next few weeks.*

## **Disclosing Salary Information**

With our recommended approach of direct contact with people you know rather than massive ad responses, you do not need to worry about disclosing salary information in your cover letters. The question might come up in your interviews, and you will need to be prepared to answer the question, but for the most part you can appropriately ignore this issue in your cover letters.

At times, though, it is quite likely that you will be responding to ads, and some of the ads might request or even demand salary information. What should you do?

We recommend that you not share your salary history or salary requirements with employers at this stage. After all, you do not know much about the position. If you're responding to a blind ad, you have not even been able to research the company or the industry. Why should you disclose information that can work against you whether it is too high or too low?

Instead, we suggest that you choose one of these options:

- **Ignore it.** Research shows that employers will—almost 100 percent of the time—look at your resume anyway if they think you have the skills they are looking for.
- **Provide a range.** You might feel more comfortable responding to the request in some way. If so, we recommend that you first conduct salary research to learn average salaries for the position, and then state your salary requirement in the form of a range. “I understand that typical salaries for this type of position are in the mid-forties to mid-fifties range, and I anticipate a comparable salary from your company.”
- **Respond if required.** Sometimes you will see an ad that states you “must” include salary information; otherwise, your application will not be accepted. In these cases, you don't have much choice. Again, this situation underscores our recommendation that you minimize this type of approach, one that takes the process out of your control, and instead focus on contacting people you know or can get to know.

Similarly, if you are filling out an online application that won't be accepted unless you include salary information, do provide an appropriate number (or a range, if possible) that reflects your salary research. But if you can apply without quoting salary, we suggest that you do so. It is never to your advantage to disclose this information so early in the process.

## ***The Signature Line***

After you have written your one- or two-paragraph closing, end your letter with what is called a complimentary close. Two spaces below your last paragraph, type “Sincerely,” “Sincerely yours,” “Very truly yours,” or another polite and customary phrase. Then space down three or four lines and type your name, exactly as it appears on the top of your resume and cover letter.

Two spaces below your name, add in a notation that indicates you have enclosed your resume. You can use “enclosure” or “attachment”—whichever you prefer.

If you are using a P.S., it should appear two spaces below the enclosure notation.

## ***The Value of a P.S.***

Think about letters that you have received that have included a P.S. (postscript). If you are like most readers, you immediately read the P.S. and then read it again after you read through the letter. With a P.S., you can close out your cover letter on a particularly powerful, positive note. Be sure your P.S. contains information that is of value to the employer. Here are two examples.

*P.S. I was excited to learn about your planned distribution facility in Wilmington. When I opened a similar site for Custom Carriers, I built in technology and processes that made it the most efficient facility of more than 50 nationwide. I'd be happy to share these strategies with you during our meeting.*

*P.S. Congratulations on being named "Employer of the Year" for Essex County! I understand your employee retention has soared. I know some strategies that ensure that you are hiring (not just keeping) the best people—these strategies have proven to be successful in companies of all sizes. I will pass along my ideas when we meet.*

## **Step 6: Proofread and Polish**

Before sending your letter, you need to make sure that it is error-free and reads well from start to finish. Carefully proofread your letter with attention to the following:

- **Spelling.** Begin by running your word processor's spell-check feature, but don't stop there! Read your letter slowly, word by word, to be sure that you haven't inadvertently typed "there" when you meant "their" or made some other spelling or word error that will not be caught by spell-check. Be extra certain that you have correctly spelled names, addresses, and company names. If you're not sure, make a phone call to find out.
- **Grammar and punctuation.** A grammatical error will create a poor impression. Make certain that you have correctly matched subjects with verbs, used appropriate punctuation, and used the right adjective and contraction for each instance.

- **Tone and flow.** Does your letter read well? Will the reader move smoothly from one paragraph to the next? Is the writing style consistent throughout? Is it polite, professional, respectful, and assertive but not aggressive?

If writing is not your strong suit, enlist the help of a friend or family member with excellent language skills. While this step should not take long, it is extremely important to take the time to polish your draft so that it clearly communicates your message to a potential employer in a positive and professional manner.

As soon as you complete your cover letter, take a few moments to copy the relevant parts to your worksheet or separate file. Keep a list of people you've written to, dates you've sent letters, follow-up timeline, and any outcomes.

A job search requires you to organize and track a lot of material, and doing it a bit at a time is much more effective than ignoring these steps until you have a large pile to take care of.

**Tip:** *We recommend that after you write your cover letters, you take a break and then come back for the proofreading and polishing step. You will find that this step goes more quickly and you are able to spot errors and improvements more easily.*

## Step 7: Choose the Transmission Method (Mail or E-mail)

As we have mentioned, you will be sending many of your cover letters by e-mail rather than printing the letters and sending them by postal mail, messenger, or hand delivery. While most of the steps will be the same, there are a few differences between the two transmission methods.

### **Printed Letters**

Print your letter on good-quality bond paper that matches your resume. Double-check your print quality to be sure that the image is sharp, clear, and adequately dark. Custom-print an envelope to match.

Now, hand-sign your name in the space between the complimentary close and your typed name. Stack the cover letter on top of your resume, fold up one-third from the bottom and down one-third from the top, and insert your letter into the envelope.



If you prefer to mail your materials flat, place the cover letter on top of the resume and insert them unfolded into a 9 × 12 envelope. You can use a label to create the mailing address and return address (most printers can't accept 9 × 12 envelopes for direct printing).

## ***E-mailed Letters***

It is important that you take just as much care with an e-mail cover letter as you would with a printed letter. Don't let the informality of e-mail fool you into thinking it is not as important to tailor your message or proofread your document. It is! Be sure that you follow *every* step that we explained in the preceding section, except for the formatting guidelines.

We recommend that you create your e-mail messages separately in your word-processing file and then copy and paste them into the e-mail message area. This way, you won't be tempted to skip the proofreading and spell-checking stages, and you'll find it easier to file and reuse your cover letters if you keep them in a separate documents file.

When sending an e-mail, you do not need to include the inside address (the name and address of the person you're writing to), nor do you have to type the date. Just start right in with your salutation ("Dear Ms. Anderson:"). Unless you are already on a first-name basis, we don't recommend that you use the person's first name or an informal greeting such as "Hey, Dennis." In many cases your e-mail message will be printed out and attached to your resume in the company files or shared with others in the company. It's important to establish the right tone, message, and impression.

The subject line of your e-mail message is important. It will help the recipient understand why you are writing (and thus keep your letter out of the spam file) and, later, can refresh his or her memory about who you are and what value you offer. Consider a subject line like one of these:

*SUBJECT: Mtg. Mon. 11/22 – Jim Walker, Case Mgr.*

*SUBJECT: Jan Allen referral – Top sales rep (medical), Andy Smith*

*SUBJECT: Follow-up re: U.K. expansion, C. Jones*

When sending a cover letter by e-mail, we recommend that you attach your resume as a Microsoft Word file. This is the format that is preferred by most recipients.

If, for some reason, you cannot send your resume as a Word attachment, you can paste a text version of your resume in the body of your e-mail, below your cover letter. (In chapter 5, we provide instructions on how to create the text format.)

## Step 8: Send and Follow Up

Now it's time to click "send," post your letter, arrange for delivery, or in some other way get it on its way to your recipient.

As soon as you send your letter, mark your calendar to follow up within the time frame you've specified. If you have not been specific, mark your calendar for two days after an e-mail or hand delivery and four or five days after mailing a letter.

Following up is extremely important! Otherwise, you will damage your credibility. Not only that, but following up while your material is fresh at hand will make the conversation more productive. Even employers who are eager to hire find that their intended phone calls and interviews are often delayed because of the press of other priorities. Don't let your recipient forget about you; call and ask whether you can schedule a meeting. Keep your job search moving forward!

**Tip:** *In formal and informal polls of hiring authorities, we have been told over and over how few people call to follow up after sending a cover letter and resume. Most people just don't do it. Making this kind of call can be intimidating—you feel as though your career is on the line—and it's natural to avoid things we don't like. But we urge you to overcome these concerns and pick up the phone. You will make better progress in your job search, and you will immediately set yourself apart from the vast majority of job seekers who do not take this initiative.*

## Key Points: Chapter 2

Follow these eight simple steps to create and send cover letters quickly and efficiently:

- **Step 1: Create Your Format:** Design a page layout that you can use for all your job-search correspondence. Keep it simple, easy to create, easy to read, and coordinated with your resume.
- **Step 2: Add the Basics:** Start each letter with a date, inside address, and salutation. Double-check all names and spelling.

- **Step 3: State Why You're Writing and Get the Reader's Attention:** Refer immediately to your upcoming meeting or referral source. If you haven't been able to make contact before sending your letter, create a brief, interesting opening that will make your reader want to learn more.
- **Step 4: Share Information Relevant to the Reader's Needs:** This is the most important part of your cover letter. You must provide specific examples from your experience that are relevant to the needs and concerns of your recipient. Create a library of items from this section so that you can quickly pick and choose those that are right for a specific letter. Edit and customize to be sure you are addressing the needs you have uncovered.
- **Step 5: Close with an Action Statement:** Don't leave the ball in the employer's court! Be polite and positive yet assertive in your closing. Let the employer know that you want further dialogue and that you will follow up.
- **Step 6: Proofread and Polish:** Be certain that each cover letter is error-free, looks good, and reads smoothly from start to finish.
- **Step 7: Choose the Transmission Method** (Mail or E-mail): Follow the final steps to get your letter from your computer to your recipient. Print and mail, or paste and e-mail. Pay attention to details such as signing your name (in a paper letter) and creating a relevant subject line (for an e-mail message).
- **Step 8: Send and Follow Up:** Send your letter and immediately schedule your next step; then be sure that you follow up professionally and promptly, as promised.



## Chapter 3

# A Stupendous Collection of Professionally Written and Designed Cover Letters

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This chapter presents 56 cover letters in a variety of styles and for a variety of professions. Although we don't suggest you copy the content of any of these samples, they provide good ideas on how others have handled opening language, format, closing paragraphs, and overall tone and flow. Review the sample letters to find ideas on how to design and write your own cover letters. In most cases, you will see that the candidates have taken the initiative to call and perhaps even set up a meeting ahead of time, but in a few instances they have not been able to do so and are sending “cold” letters. For each letter we have identified the situation and added a few comments about the content, style, format, or circumstances of that particular letter.

Unless otherwise noted, all the letters were written by Louise Kursmark. Letters with individual credits were contributed by graduates of the Resume Writing Academy ([www.resumewritingacademy.com](http://www.resumewritingacademy.com)), a resume-training program co-created by Louise. We are proud to showcase their excellent work!

## Letter 1: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

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**Comments:** In his letter, Matt conveys both the hard skills and the intangibles that make him a great mechanic.

**Matt Young**

249 Maple Grove Road ■ East Haven, CT 06512  
203-467-1276 ■ mattyoung@gmail.com

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March 15, 2009

Stanley Cohen  
President  
Savin Industrial  
2590 East Haven Parkway  
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Mr. Cohen:

Thanks for taking my call and discussing your available mechanic position. I am very interested.

People say that I can fix anything. While that might not be true, I do have a wide range of skills and experience that can help keep your equipment and your facility running smoothly and safely.

I have spent my career building, fixing, and maintaining equipment for manufacturing and construction companies. I have a strong natural mechanical aptitude and the resourcefulness to solve any number of equipment problems, and I have continuously added to my skills through training, team projects, and the willingness to tackle just about anything.

The enclosed resume describes the breadth of my experience, but it cannot convey the creativity and energy I bring to every job nor the satisfaction I get from making machinery and equipment run well.

I look forward to our interview at 8:30 a.m. on the 8<sup>th</sup>. It will be a pleasure to meet you.

Sincerely,

Matt Young

enclosure: resume

## Letter 2: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Dion heads up this letter with a quote directly from a recent interview of Mr. Sanderson. Later in the letter, he refers to his phone call and mentions Mr. Sanderson's assistant by name.

### Dion Maxwell

119 Old Possum Way, Middlefield, CT 06455 — 860-247-0904 — dionmaxwell@aol.com

March 15, 2009

Mr. Curtis Sanderson  
President, Oxbow Industries  
25 Main Street  
Middletown, CT 06457

Dear Mr. Sanderson:

**“We’re always looking for employees who have a good attitude and a great work ethic.”**—*Curtis Sanderson, Connecticut Business Journal, 2/25/09*

When I read this quote from your recent interview, I knew that I had what you are looking for—the qualities you seek in your best employees, plus skills that are a great fit for your growing Middletown distribution center.

I have more than 20 years of experience at a small milling plant where I filled a variety of roles—changing job duties and pitching in where needed to keep our products moving out the door. I am a licensed forklift operator, capable machinery operator, experienced shift supervisor, and leader in the areas of quality and safety. My work ethic and reliability are second to none.

When I spoke with Adelyn in your office this week, she suggested that I forward my resume directly to your attention. I will call again in a few days to determine the next steps. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dion Maxwell

enclosure

## Letter 3: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Not able to connect via phone, Jack sends his resume and mentions both his phone call and his referral source. He shows he is knowledgeable about new challenges the company is facing and relates how his skills and experience can be of value.

**Electronic  
Prepress  
Production  
&  
Project  
Management**

**Jack Wallace**

2459 Arroyo Drive, Louisville, CO 80027 ■ (303) 761-8710 ■ jackwallace@gmail.com

March 15, 2009

Janice Rodriguez  
Vice President of Marketing  
Denver Graphics, Inc.  
794 Silver Street  
Denver, CO 80020

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:

Following up on the phone message I left you last week, I am forwarding my resume at the suggestion of Tom Anders, who was my manager at Mountain Prepress before he joined your company as production manager of your Boulder facility.

Tom thought that you would be interested in my 10 years of experience in all facets of electronic prepress, project management, and graphic design, especially as you ramp up to support the printing and publishing needs for XYZ Corp.'s newly relocated headquarters.

Highlights of my qualifications include:

- Eleven years in electronic prepress production for high-end commercial printers.
- Experience with both Macintosh and Windows systems and a record of leadership in integrating Mac systems into traditional high-end production processes.
- Expert knowledge of industry-standard software including Quark Xpress, Photoshop, ArtPro, Illustrator, PageMaker, and InDesign; plus additional knowledge of business software (MS Office Suite) and network computer operations.
- Education in commercial art; graphic design skills as evidenced through successful freelance work.

My recent work in network support has broadened my capabilities in all areas of computer operations, yet I am eager to return to a dedicated prepress/project management/design role where my strongest talents can benefit both the company and its customers.

May we meet to explore your needs and the value I offer your company? I will call within the next few days in hopes of setting up a meeting. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jack Wallace

enclosure: resume

## Letter 4: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Diane was unable to find out more about the company or the opportunity because this was a blind ad. However, she knew that the position was in the real-estate management industry, so she highlighted her strong, relevant experience in her cover letter.

**Diane Sanborn**

402-209-3409 ■ sanborn\_d@hotmail.com  
6753 Village Circle #5B, Omaha, NE 68125

March 15, 2009

News Box 759-B  
Omaha News-Record  
2525 Elm Street  
Omaha, NE 68101

Re: Administrative Assistant—Real Estate Management Company

Your current opening sounds tailor-made for my experience in challenging administrative/accounting roles with ABC Properties. Managing diverse projects and functions in a fast-paced environment, I helped the company increase its revenue and profits while better serving its tenants. For example—

- Our monthly rental accounting/deposit process was taking more than two full weeks due to the thousands of units we managed and an inefficient method for collecting and tracking payments. I was able to cut that time in half while also eliminating risky cash payments and better utilizing our on-site staff.
- Recognizing the need for faster and more expert response to inquiries from tenants and leasing staff, I helped create the position of Senior Administrative Assistant and became the front-line responder for all calls and inquiries. This improved tenant satisfaction and gave our leasing staff faster, more accurate information.

Having handled a high volume of detailed reporting and accounting activities, I am accustomed to a fast pace and a diverse workload. I am very familiar with tenant issues, leasing questions, and the specialized software used for property management. And I have a history of showing initiative, taking on new projects, and exercising good judgment in daily decision-making.

I would like to learn more about your current position. I am confident my skills and experience will enable me to make immediate contributions to the success of your company.

Sincerely,

Diane Sanborn

attachment: resume

■ ■ ■



## Letter 5: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Cecilia opens her letter by mentioning the name of her referral source. This technique gets the reader's attention and gives Cecilia added credibility.

**Cecilia Evans, Ph.D.**

Pianist, Composer, Teacher

4509 Prairie Street ▪ Omaha, NE 68106 ▪ 402-349-1249 ▪ cevans@aol.com

March 15, 2009

Sandra Lee, Executive Director  
Omaha Symphony & Pops Orchestra  
119 East Church Street  
Omaha, NE 68109

Dear Ms. Lee:

At the suggestion of Dina Whitman, I am contacting you to express my interest in the open position of Principal Pianist with the Omaha Pops.

With more than 20 years of professional experience as a pianist, accompanist, composer, and music teacher, I offer strong qualifications:

- Master's degree in piano performance and Ph.D. in music composition.
- Orchestral and chamber music performance experience (including extensive soloist experience) in the U.S., England, Ireland, and Holland, performing a wide array of classical and popular programs.
- Vast repertoire of both classical and nonclassical music including Broadway and jazz pieces.
- Broad experience as an accompanist and music director for dance, theater, and opera.

After you review the enclosed resume and visit with me, I think you will agree that I have the professional skills, work ethic, musicianship, and teamwork attitude that will make me a successful addition to your orchestra. I look forward to meeting with you and Maestro Schwinn; I will call early next week to schedule an appointment at a time that is convenient for you both.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Evans, Ph.D.

enclosure

## Letter 6: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Trying to break into the competitive field of pharmaceutical sales, Jamie has “gone to school” with an existing rep for the company and learned a lot about the profession. The cover letter is full of very specific sales-related achievements.

### Jamie Van Horn

253 Silverton Trail, Phoenix, AZ 85017  
602-779-1682 • jvanhorn@yahoo.com

March 15, 2009

Sally Osborne  
Southwest District Manager  
Pfizer Pharmaceuticals  
6512 Scottsdale Boulevard  
Phoenix, AZ 85010

Dear Ms. Osborne:

Sandra Lopez has suggested I forward my resume to you for consideration for a current sales opening in the Southwest District of Pfizer Pharmaceuticals.

Through conversations and ride-alongs with Sandra, I have learned what it takes to be a successful pharmaceutical sales representative, and I am confident I have the drive, dedication, and proven skills that will enable me to quickly become productive. Highlights of my career experiences include:

- **Consistent performance above goals in direct-sales positions:**
  - **130%, 2007–2008**
  - **115%, 2006–2007**
  - **141%, 2005–2006**
- **Trend of sales growth in competitive environments:**
  - **25%, 15%, and 6% growth in diverse sales departments, 2005–2007**
  - **10% growth as a result of community marketing and visibility/awareness campaigns, 2008–present**
- **25% year-over-year sales increase as sales manager**
- **Initiative and leadership in developing relationship-marketing programs**
- **Management experience and proven strengths in organization, planning, and follow-through**

I would like to meet with you to explore how my background and talents can benefit your company as a sales representative in the Greater Phoenix area, and I will call within a few days to get your thoughts and possibly schedule a meeting. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jamie Van Horn

attachment: resume



## Letter 8: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This new college graduate is assertively pursuing a position in pharmaceutical sales. His letter (shown in e-mail format) follows up on an earlier conversation and makes the case for an interview.

SUBJECT: Follow-up to discussion re: pharm. sales

Dear Ms. Andreatti:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about careers in pharmaceutical sales. Since our discussion, I have been reading and learning more about the field, and from what I have learned, Pharmedix is the right company and sales is the right profession for me!

Throughout my college career and employment experience, I have consistently thrived in demanding and results-focused assignments, proving that I can bring the following qualities to Pharmedix:

== **Outstanding leadership and communication skills**, demonstrated in diverse roles where I have shown the ability to contribute, motivate, inspire, and build consensus.

== **Sales and customer focus**, repeatedly proven in challenging business environments. I have participated in the sales process, prepared presentations, responded to customer inquiries and problems, and developed programs to meet the needs of customers and constituents.

== **Educational achievement**. I am about to graduate from the University of Virginia with a 3.43 GPA and a BS degree in Business and a minor in Biology. In leadership roles with several organizations, I have directed very successful campus-wide programs, led teams, and built support for new ideas.

I hope you will agree that I can be successful in a sales role for your company. I will call you next week to see if we can schedule a time to meet.

Again, thank you for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Troy Harris

\*\*\*\*\*

My resume is attached as a Word file.

## Letter 9: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** David has set up a meeting with the regional sales manager for a sports-related product company. In his letter he highlights his relevant experience and success. In the closing paragraph, he hints at some good ideas that can help the company.

**David Adams**

deeadams@gmail.com

2349 Bishop St., #4A, Valley Glen, CA 91405  
Home 818-978-0904 ■ Mobile 818-203-0090

March 15, 2009

Mr. James Lee  
Sales Director, Western Region  
Fourth Down Products  
2529 Alameda Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me next Wednesday. Based on our initial conversation, it seems that my ability to sell solutions rather than products is a good fit for your needs as you seek to expand your visibility in the Western U.S.

As noted in the enclosed resume, I have led an under-performing product division from "bit player" to its current performance: generating 33% of total revenue (up from 5%) at our location, and delivering, from a single location, 25% of total sales for our 20-site company.

Having completed this turnaround over the last 5 years, I'm eager for new challenges where my proven skills in sales, marketing, and program/event planning can contribute to a company's bottom line.

I have been thinking about the challenges you described in building your presence at the retail level, and I have some good ideas to share at our meeting. I'm excited about the future of Fourth Down and eager to contribute to your growth.

Sincerely,

David Adams

enclosure

## Letter 10: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Talia builds upon a chance encounter at a breakfast meeting and follows up with this executive to try to land an interview for a specific job opening.

302-349-1245	<b>Talia T. Zinn</b> 795 Chesapeake Drive Wilmington, DE 19805	tzinn@hotmail.com
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March 30, 2009

William Howe  
Regional Manager  
Shoppers' World  
25 Victory Parkway  
Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Mr. Howe:

I enjoyed speaking with you at the Chamber breakfast today and was very interested to learn of your pending managerial opening. As you suggested, I am following up with a resume.

As a successful manager for a fast-growing specialty retailer, operating three locations with distinct marketing, inventory, and customer-relations needs, I repeatedly proved my ability to deliver results, including:

- profitable sales growth
- rejuvenated customer loyalty
- effective merchandising and smart product selection
- community presence and positive image-building

I have successfully tackled the challenges of store start-up, new niche-market entry, and performance turnaround. In every location I have built loyal, dedicated, hard-working teams that share my passion for customer service and retail excellence.

After many years in the Pacific Northwest, I recently returned to the Wilmington area to be closer to my aging parents. I was intrigued to see how quickly Shoppers' World has grown in this area, and I'm eager to contribute to that growth.

I will call in a day or two in hopes of setting up a meeting.

Sincerely,

Talia T. Zinn

enclosure: resume

## Letter 11: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Ellen is seeking to make a career change from corporate marketing to a university setting. She carefully correlates her experience to the needs of the college.

**ELLEN SWANSON**

203-484-7948

25 Woodwind Drive, Northford, CT 06472

eswanson@yahoo.com

March 15, 2009

Steven Rogoff, Ed.D.  
Vice President  
Clinton College  
259 Eli Drive  
North Haven, CT 06473

Dear Dr. Rogoff:

My neighbor, Clyde Stanton, has told me that you are looking for a new Director of Development for Clinton College. As a follow-up to the voice-mail message I left you last week, I am contacting you to express my interest in this position and share some indication of the value I offer.

My track record in corporate marketing and sales provides the foundation for success as your Director of Development. Whether one is positioning products or less tangible items such as a liberal arts education, it is essential to package and present solutions that meet consumers' needs, stir their interest, and communicate a strong brand message. I am a keen advocate of liberal arts education, having graduated from Smith College, and understand its value in today's complex business environment and global economy.

These achievements are representative of the value I can bring to the college:

- Heading a company's first formal product-development function, I launched a strategically focused and aggressive development program that resulted in products that now represent more than 50% of company revenue. **Value to Clinton: bringing the right ideas to the development program at the right time and with the right message; succeeding in intensely competitive market conditions.**
- Given a turnaround challenge, I led the division to sustained growth and returned it to profitability. **Value to Clinton: continuing Clinton's recent fundraising successes and building on these accomplishments; focusing efforts on strategic priorities; energizing and leading a team to outperform expectations.**
- In a direct-sales role, I achieved sales two to three times greater than my peers. **Value to Clinton: using proven sales, communication, and relationship-building skills to achieve rapid results.**

I know you will be reviewing candidates who have lengthy experience in academic environments. Please consider my strong business background as added value, combining proven management, sales, and marketing skills with a deep commitment to liberal arts education.

Thank you for your consideration. I will call you next week to answer any questions you might have and see if we can schedule an appointment.

Sincerely,

Ellen Swanson

enclosure: resume

## Letter 12: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter responds to a blind ad and briefly highlights excellent experience that is directly related to the position.

### TRICIA BILLINGS

London, England (through July 2009)

TriciaBillings@msn.com

March 15, 2009

Re: Market Development Manager: Posting #794-MDM

Your advertised opening for a Market Development Manager describes interesting challenges. My background and accomplishments seem to be a good match for your needs, and I'd like to explore this opportunity with you.

For 18 years I have delivered strong business results for company operations in Europe and the U.S. Most recently, I took on the challenge of rapidly growing Standard Tool's business in the U.K. In two years, we increased sales nearly four-fold through highly effective market-entry strategies, brand repositioning, and organizational restructuring.

Previously, with Global Supplies, I was instrumental in successful market entry into Western and Eastern Europe, with results that outperformed goals for both sales and profits.

May we schedule a time to talk? I am always accessible via e-mail and can arrange a phone call immediately or an in-person visit during one of my frequent trips to the U.S.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tricia Billings

enclosure: resume



## Letter 13: Interview Is Scheduled, No Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** Notice how Sylvia immediately informs Mr. Barnes that she has already followed up on a lead he gave her during their phone conversation. This shows that she has initiative and good follow-through skills.

**Sylvia Brock**  
203-484-1287

94 Old River Road  
Northford, CT 06472  
sylvia\_brock@uconn.alum.edu

March 30, 2009

Alan Barnes  
Vice President, Sales & Operations  
Micro-Solution Company  
245 Peabody Street  
Hamden, CT 06517

Dear Mr. Barnes:

I am so glad that I called you this morning, and I do appreciate your very helpful ideas. I have a call in to John McManus and will let you know how that goes; and I am pleased to send along my resume in advance of our meeting next week.

As I mentioned, my background includes high-level customer and account management as well as complex project management. My eight years of professional experience have taught me that my talents and expertise are best suited to a role that involves sales, heavy customer interaction, multiple task management, and high performance expectations.

Your company's products, reputation, and growth potential are exciting. I believe my skills will be a good fit for your needs as you expand, and I look forward to exploring this in more detail when we meet.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Brock

enclosure

## Letter 14: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** In this “T-style” letter (written in response to a blind ad), notice how Joshua supplies everything the employer is looking for—and more. As we noted in chapter 2, this kind of letter is effective only if you are a perfect match for every qualification requested.

**Joshua Trent**

joshuatrent@verizon.net

4525 Parkview Crescent  
Indianapolis, IN 46218  
317-454-2094

March 15, 2009

P.O. Box 4592  
Indianapolis, IN 46201-4592

Re: **Corporate Communications Staff Writer**

My skills and experience are an excellent match for your requirements for a Staff Writer:

*Your Requirements*

**My Experience, Skills, and Value Offered**

*2 years of business writing experience .....*

**Four years of experience creating diverse business messages**, from corporate communications to feature articles and radio broadcast material.

*Ability to complete projects on deadline .....*

**Proven project coordination skills and tight deadline focus.** My current role as producer of a daily 3-hour talk-radio program requires planning, coordination, and execution of many detailed tasks, always in the face of inflexible deadlines.

*Oral presentation skills.....*

**Unusually broad experience**, including high-profile roles as an on-air radio presence and “the voice” for an on-hold telephone message company.

*Relevant education (BA or BS) .....*

**BA** in Mass Communications; 1 year post-graduate study in Multimedia Communications.

As you will note from the enclosed resume, my experience encompasses corporate, print media, and multimedia environments. I offer a diverse and proven skill set that can help your company create and deliver its message to various audiences to build image, market presence, and revenue.

May we meet to explore the value I offer your company as its next Staff Writer?

Sincerely,

Joshua Trent

enclosure: resume

## Letter 15: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** Dale called to find out more about the position before sending a letter and resume. Her effort paid off! In addition to citing relevant achievements, she includes a “teaser” in the last paragraph that communicates she is already hard at work for what she hopes will be her new company.

Subject: Prep for our mtg on 4/5 re: Acct Exec position

Dear Ms. Anthony:

Thank you for the information you shared with regard to your Account Executive position. Your need to create quick growth for your new *FLASHING* magazine is a great fit for my experience at Smythe Publications.

As Regional and National Sales Manager with Smythe, I have delivered results for every one of my multiple publications serving various audiences in the high-tech market:

- For our flagship publication, *C++ Calling*, I elevated sales 339% in the challenging 2007–2008 market.
- Taking over two niche publications, I quickly generated new revenue from key target accounts including Sun and Dell.
- Handed a “dying” publication, I doubled ad sales in five months and grew the business so much that three new staff were added to handle the volume.
- For *Joe Java Journal*, in my first high-tech publishing assignment, I became the top salesperson and increased revenue 77% in 6 months.

In brief, I am a highly accomplished sales professional who gets results by listening to my customers and developing creative solutions that meet their needs. (I have the highest account retention rate at my company.) My background selling diverse products and services gives me an exceptionally strong base in sales fundamentals, and I am driven to set and exceed aggressive goals.

I have been thinking about some ways to achieve a quick growth spurt in the emerging Flash marketplace, and I look forward to sharing these with you at our meeting at 10:30 on April 5. If you have any questions before then, you can always reach me at my mobile number, 415-292-1276.

Best regards,

Dale Gelman

\*\*\*\*\*

My resume is attached in .doc format.

## Letter 16: Pre-Interview, No Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** A chance meeting at a business function led to this follow-up letter. The headline (carried over from his resume) emphasizes Daniel's specific experience in health care, and all of his qualifications and achievements are directly relevant to the needs of his audience.

**DANIEL T. SILVER**  
203-484-2165      394 Beech Street, North Branford, CT 06471      dsilver@msn.com

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**CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGER**  
**Healthcare Facilities • Medical Equipment Installations • Special-Purpose Facilities**

March 15, 2009

Alex DaSilva  
Vice President, Facilities  
Nutmeg Healthcare, Inc.  
171 Whalley Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Alex:

I enjoyed our conversation at the Chamber of Commerce Expo and, as you suggested, am following up to share some additional information prior to getting together.

With extensive experience managing health care construction projects, I can bring valuable expertise to Nutmeg. My qualifications include both formal training (B.S. in Construction Management) and more than 15 years of construction experience. For the last five years, I have managed diverse projects within the ConnHealth organization, including:

- Complete renovation of Middletown Hospital to an administrative facility.
- Medical equipment installations (e.g., 4 Cath Labs) requiring pinpoint precision in scheduling and managing multiple contractors on a tight schedule.
- Patient floor renovation to a decentralized nursing model and to include holistic features such as sculpture, stained glass, and audio elements.

As a project manager, in addition to strong planning, organizational, communication, and leadership skills, I am a good in-field decision-maker and have frequently been able to save money, save time, and eliminate inefficiencies by coming up with practical and creative solutions to the questions and challenges that invariably arise on the site. I maintain excellent relationships with subcontractors and vendors.

In a nutshell, I am committed to meeting deadlines and budgets and delivering the best possible results to my customer. I would like to explore how I can deliver this value to Nutmeg, and I will call within a few days to schedule our meeting at a time that is convenient to you.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel T. Silver  
enclosure

## Letter 17: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Tina contacted Dr. Rodriguez by phone but was unable to secure an appointment right away. She states exactly when she will call to follow up.

**Tina McIntosh**

Home 512-654-1276 • Office 512-984-4050  
7945 Corrales Trail, Austin, TX 78745

March 15, 2009

Dr. Robert Rodriguez  
Superintendent of Schools  
Round Rock School District  
1597 School Street  
Round Rock, TX 78681

Dear Dr. Rodriguez:

I appreciate your taking the time to talk with me on Wednesday. As you suggested, I am following up with additional details of my background and credentials.

My philosophy is that strong educational performance begins with the fundamentals: student participation, teacher engagement, safe schools, and clear expectations from administrators and parents. Beginning with these fundamentals and building strong programs and policies to establish them, I have delivered a remarkable turnaround as principal of South Fork High School:

- From “academic emergency” to meeting 100% of standards on the building report card.
- From 75% graduation rate to 86%.
- From sub-par attendance to the highest in our county.

As a result, we are attracting attention and drawing more students than ever from our open-enrollment district.

From our conversation, it seems that your challenges in Round Rock require just the leadership and experience I have to offer. I am eager to prove my ability to improve performance, create cultural change, and deliver results in your district.

I will call you on Friday to follow up, and I hope we can meet soon.

Sincerely,

Tina McIntosh

Enclosure: resume

## Letter 18: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter contains quite a bit of personal information because it helps to explain Danielle's motivation for becoming a cooking instructor.

**Danielle Prince**

45 Bayview Road, East Providence, RI 02915  
401-909-1254 • dani@ri.rr.com

March 15, 2009

Philip Swansea  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Culinary Institute  
294 Roger Williams Boulevard  
Providence, RI 02909

Dear Chef Swansea:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me recently. As promised, I am sending you my resume in advance of further discussions.

I would like to tell you a little bit about myself that is not included in my resume. I have had a love of food and cooking since I was about nine and my mother bought me a cookbook called *Around the World Cooking for Children*. With my first French meal, I knew I was on my way to a career in food service.

This goal was sidetracked for about a year in college, where I studied Elementary Education. After missing my passion, I decided to go to Johnson & Wales Culinary School to pursue a degree. As I got older, I realized I could combine both passions—cooking and education—and have the best of both worlds.

Over the years I have taught cooking classes for both adults and children. Now I'd like to take it one step further. A part-time position that could lead to more involvement would be ideal.

I've heard such positive feedback about you and your chef education program. I would love the chance to meet with you and see if there is an opportunity for me in your program.

I will follow up with a phone call next week.

Thank you!

Danielle Prince

enclosure

## Letter 19: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** Sam, a veterinarian, was relocating. He planned a visit and called ahead to set up this meeting with a veterinary practice in his new location.

### Sam Granada, DVM

7949 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW, Seattle, WA 98136  
samgee@aol.com • 202-239-6543

March 15, 2009

Edward Kozak, DVM  
Montgomery Animal Clinic  
10449 Montgomery Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45242

Dear Dr. Kozak:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me during my visit to Cincinnati next week. I look forward to speaking with you about the new associate position with your clinic and how my blend of qualifications and capabilities can benefit your patients, your clients, your team, and your practice.

I have had a satisfying ten-year career as an associate with a thriving practice outside Seattle. As small-animal practitioners in a rural area, we see a diverse caseload, perform surgery daily at our facility, and work collaboratively with veterinary specialists for complex cases. I have built excellent relationships with our clients while caring for their pets.

Because I will be relocating to my hometown of Cincinnati in the next several months, I am seeking a new veterinarian position. It sounds like your clinic has a great mix of small-animal cases that would be a good fit for my skills—I look forward to learning more next week!

If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to call me at my home number (above) until the 18<sup>th</sup>; in Cincinnati I can be reached at 513-791-7632.

Sincerely,

Sam Granada, DVM

enclosure—resume

## Letter 20: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This e-mail cover letter is brief but includes a lot of valuable information.

Dear Ms. Gold:

My sister, Tracy Oswald, tells me that you are looking for a systems administrator for your growing San Francisco operation.

I am experienced, reliable, loyal, and customer focused and would like to talk with you about joining your team.

The enclosed resume describes nearly 15 years of experience with Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield, during which I advanced to increasingly responsible technical positions. Whether independently or with a team, I worked hard to provide the best possible service and support to my "customers." I was recognized for my strong technical skills, ability to guide less experienced support people, and 100% reliability.

A recent downsizing at Anthem caused my position to be eliminated, and I am looking for a new opportunity with a company like yours, where my technical abilities, positive attitude, and dedication will be valued.

I will call you next week in hopes of getting together soon.

Yours truly,

Kevin Oswald

\*\*\*\*\*

Attachment: resume



## Letter 21: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** This letter hits on the high points that will be of most interest to the target company, a provider of technology project management services to large corporations.

**Maria Dunham**

1749 Calumet Farm Drive, Loveland, OH 45140  
H: 513-742-1745 — M: 513-249-1265 — mdunham@cinci.rr.com

March 15, 2009

Vijay Krishnan  
Redhawk Technology Consultants  
75 Edwin Moses Boulevard, Suite C  
Dayton, OH 45440

Dear Mr. Krishnan:

The technical and project management opportunities at Redhawk are exciting, and I am looking forward to following up our recent phone conversation with a more in-depth discussion. Prior to our meeting at 3 p.m. next Wednesday, I am forwarding some information on how I can help your company and its clients.

Relevant to the needs you shared, I offer technical strengths and a strong background in project leadership. Currently, as the sole project manager within Midwest Bank's Electronic Forms Unit, I direct technology projects from needs assessment and technical requirement-writing through implementation, user training, and documentation. Working collaboratively with diverse project teams—made up of both technical professionals from the different business units as well as nontechnical end-users—I guide the people and oversee the project to ensure business goals are met.

Business benefits from projects under my leadership include millions of dollars in cost savings and significant reductions in labor-intensive tasks, thus freeing staff for more productive and more stimulating work.

I am accustomed to a fast-paced environment and to overseeing multiple simultaneous projects.

If you have any questions prior to our meeting, please don't hesitate to call; I am most accessible via my mobile phone, 513-249-1265.

Sincerely,

Maria Dunham

enclosure: resume

## Letter 22: Pre-Interview, No Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** This letter makes a convincing case for a career change. It is written as a follow-up to a phone call to a network contact.

**Natasha Sturtz**

7141 Jonquil Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45241 • 513-218-3076 • sturtz@gmail.com

March 15, 2009

Mr. David Tallant  
Chief Information Officer  
COM-TECH  
2525 Technology Parkway  
Cincinnati, OH 45207

Dear Mr. Tallant:

I look forward to meeting with you next week—John has told me so many interesting things about you, it will be a pleasure to meet you in person! Before our meeting, I am providing my resume, as you requested, and a bit of background that explains my current career direction.

Since 2007, I have completed my MCSE, MCP+I, and A+ certifications and am well on my way to completing the Windows Vista component of the MCSE.

What sets me apart from others who may have similar qualifications is my record of thriving in extremely challenging work environments, quickly learning new skills, and demonstrating a passion for excellence.

My background in the highly demanding restaurant industry gives me an edge in any work environment. In that competitive, high-pressure field, I consistently performed to high standards and was singled out for prestigious opportunities.

Now, I am very interested in pursuing a position in line with my recent education. I offer more than just core technical abilities. I have worked in management for many years, and although a position in management may not be what you have available, you will find that I bring to your company a higher level of maturity and responsibility than most. I am dedicated and punctual, have a powerful work ethic, and enjoy new challenges.

If given an opportunity with your company, I am confident I will continue my record of thriving and contributing in every new situation. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me; I look forward to exploring your needs and any solutions I can offer.

Sincerely,

Natasha Sturtz

enclosure

## Letter 23: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** This “T-style” letter shows how this candidate exceeds all the job requirements.

### Jon Lee Novak

11 White Oak Lane, Laconia, NH 03246  
603-349-1256 • jlnovak@gmail.com

March 15, 2009

Tom Hennessey  
Northeast Logistics  
19 Apple Street  
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Mr. Hennessey:

I appreciate the information you shared with me on the phone today with regard to your Logistics Engineer opening. As you suggested, I am forwarding my resume for your review before we meet.

Relevant to your needs, I offer engineering expertise, logistics experience, and a track record of measurable contributions to operational effectiveness:

#### **Your Requirements**

**Bachelor’s degree or 3 years of experience in warehousing/logistics**

**Operational and data analysis, problem definition, solution development**

**Report and data development**

#### **Project management**

#### **My Qualifications**

- BS Mechanical Engineering
- More than 10 years of experience in logistics, operations, and engineering project management in fast-paced distribution settings

History of developing innovative and *effective* solutions to diverse operational challenges:

- Root cause analysis
- Technology and process implementation
- Project planning and management
- Facilities and logistics systems design

Proven ability to define and produce meaningful data for business decision-making:

- Created new productivity and quality reporting using data from a new warehouse management system.
- Developed data that pointed to root cause of inventory control problems; then put in place a program that quickly improved service levels by more than 5%.

An unbroken record of delivering projects on schedule and on/under budget.

Mr. Hennessey, I look forward to meeting you at 11:30 on Friday.

Sincerely,

Jon Lee Novak

Attachment: Resume

## Letter 24: Pre-Interview, No Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** This format is a clever way to call attention to qualifications in three distinct areas.

Stephen Francis

2940 Sweet Rose Drive, Dunwoody, GA 30338  
Home 678-290-3409 ■ Mobile 678-987-1256 ■ sfrancis@yahoo.com

March 30, 2009

Ms. Edwina Forrest  
Vice President of Engineering  
Schwartz Precision Tools  
909 Peachtree Boulevard Extension  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Forrest:

Thank you for your time on the phone today. I am excited about exploring opportunities with Schwarz Precision Tools at our meeting next week.

My qualifications encompass:

- Expertise**
  - Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering.
  - International project experience (U.S., South America, Europe) with two leading German companies providing engineering, automation, and plant design in the mining and cement industries.
  - Two successful patent applications and a background in industrial R&D.
- Relationships**
  - History of restoring customer confidence through creative solutions that overcome obstacles and deliver customer benefits.
  - Effective communication skills across multicultural environments with clients, colleagues, and senior management.
- Results**
  - Record of key contributions to multimillion-dollar plant engineering projects—including saving corporate profits, cutting customer downtime, establishing best practices, and developing new engineering applications.
  - Leadership of successful market-entry engineering and project initiatives.

I have long been impressed with your company's technical expertise and ability to expand into new markets. I'd like to add to your success and look forward to exploring some possibilities. I will see you at 3 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Francis

enclosure: resume

## Letter 25: No Interview Is Scheduled

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**Comments:** Written to a network contact, this letter and the accompanying resume set the stage for an interview.

**Amanda Klein**

4509 Charlfont Street, Cincinnati, OH 45249  
513-891-3651 amanda\_klein@cinci.rr.com

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March 30, 2009

Mr. Chris Welles  
Owner  
At Your Service  
459 Lytle Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45204

Dear Mr. Welles:

Thank you for agreeing to assist me with my search. Your help is much appreciated!

To give you a bit of background—I graduated from Xavier two years ago and since then have continued to work in the restaurant business. This experience has taught me valuable skills, such as decision-making, customer service, and good communication. But I am ready to put my education (in accounting) to work, and I hope to get your insights into opportunities at your company or elsewhere in this area.

I will call you in a day or two to see when it might be convenient for us to meet.

Again, thanks!

Yours truly,

Amanda Klein

enclosure

## Letter 26: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Sharon has been unable to reach Mr. Desmond by phone, but she will persist in trying to make contact. Her letter contains solid and specific examples of her abilities.

**Sharon Steiger**

2490 Calumet Farm Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45249  
513-204-790 (Mobile)  
s\_steiger@cinci.rr.com

March 15, 2009

Mr. Brandon Desmond  
Chief Information Officer  
Cincinnati Financial Services, Inc.  
249 Vine Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mr. Desmond:

Following up on my recent phone messages, I am contacting you at the suggestion of Audra Pederson, who has told me about your expansion plans and need for experienced IT leadership.

Leading technology projects, teams, and organizations to support strategic business goals is what I do best. As Senior Technology Leader for Midwest Trust, I guided the massive technology conversion and integration projects that followed each of our 12 acquisitions—in each case, merging hundreds of financial products, systems, and services into our central technology systems, while providing a seamless transition to customers.

Just as importantly, my division supported business growth from \$500 million to \$6 billion with only a 25% increase in IT staff.

Of course, technology services are only as good as the technical staff that designs, implements, and supports them. I have found that there is no “trick” to keeping staff morale high and turnover low; rather, it relies on a top-down management attitude of respect, empowerment, continuous professional development, and teamwork. The proof of this approach can be seen in the 5% or lower turnover rate I maintained for over a decade.

I’d like to meet and discuss ways in which my leadership, technical, and managerial skills can be valuable to your organization. You may reach me at the above number; and I will try to reach you by phone again in the next few days.

Sincerely,

Sharon Steiger

enclosure: resume

## Letter 27: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Notice how this letter is a follow-up to a personal meeting at a professional association function. This is an excellent way to make initial contact that you can pursue afterwards with a more focused message. Because Allan is already on a first-name basis with Carol, he uses her first name in the salutation.

**Allan P. Raymond, CPA**

29 Brookside Drive, Mystic, CT 06433  
860.239.7671 • allanraymond@verizon.net

March 15, 2009

Carol P. Graves, CPA  
President, Graves & Andrews  
254 Court Street  
New London, CT 06320

Dear Carol:

I enjoyed our conversation at the recent CPA Society meeting and, as you suggested, I am forwarding my resume with this letter of interest in joining your firm.

You and I agreed that your clients deserve the best: the best accountants, the best strategies, and the greatest dedication to customer service. I am confident I can bring “the best” in both attitude and execution to your firm.

With more than ten years of accounting experience—the last five as a CPA and owner of an accounting firm specializing in tax—I have strong and well-proven professional skills. I thrive on the challenges and intricacies of tax accounting and stay up to date with tax code changes through both in-person and online training programs.

What satisfies me most in my professional life is the opportunity to help clients better manage, control, and benefit from their money. One of the keys to the good advice I give my clients is my deep understanding of the consequences of investment decisions on their tax situation. I have worked with businesses of all sizes from one person to complex multimillion-dollar organizations in diverse industries and have contributed strategies and planning recommendations as well as tax-related accounting services.

Having just concluded the sale of my business, I am eager for new professional challenges. I would like to explore my value as a tax accountant with your firm, and in pursuit of that objective I will call you next week to schedule a meeting. Thank you.

Best regards,

Allan P. Raymond

enclosure: resume

## Letter 28: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Impressive results are included in the first paragraph to get attention in this blind-ad response.

### **Rafael Lewis**

294 Aster Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45208  
Home: (513) 739-1265 • Mobile: (513) 230-0943 • Email: raffewis@hotmail.com

March 30, 2009

Enquirer Box 719-A  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Re: CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

Under my leadership, the customer service department of Tech-Line was transformed from a business liability to a competitive advantage for the company. We cut hold times by 75% and consistently performed at 95% of the world-class standard of 24-hour problem resolution.

As detailed in the enclosed resume, my background includes more than eight years of management experience complemented by a strong technical background in applications development. In all of my positions, I have developed solid collaborative relationships with business and technical departments of the company, and I have consistently demonstrated a customer-centric approach that is also sensitive to bottom-line priorities.

I can be a valuable addition to your team and look forward to a personal meeting to discuss how I can deliver results for your company.

Sincerely,

Rafael Lewis

enclosure



## Letter 29: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This promising contact came about as a result of a professional association meeting. The letter focuses on results and relates to the needs of the reader and his organization.

**JANINE T. MCGUIRE**

512-349-1265

749-A Whistler Court, Austin, TX 78714

jtm@austin.rr.com

March 15, 2009

Robert Smith  
Vice President of Operations  
Sanibel Systems, Inc.  
4545 Round Rock Parkway  
Austin, TX 78710

Dear Mr. Smith:

You will recall that we spoke briefly after your presentation at the Austin Business Leaders Forum last week, when I followed up on your comments about expanding your materials management organization. As you suggested, I am providing additional background material and will call in a few days to set up a meeting.

Throughout my career in materials, logistics, and procurement, I have delivered results such as these:

- 99.3% on-time delivery, \$1.5 million in cost savings, and \$2.5 million in inventory reduction in 18 months as Director of Purchasing and Materials Management for a technology supplier
- Creation of a world-class purchasing group at Apex Technology—by re-engineering functions and aligning activities with strategic business goals
- Key contributions to growth and profitability that spurred the emergence of Intelli-Tech as a world-leading technology supplier
- Consistent cost reductions in tandem with quality and service improvements through innovative value-stream, value-added strategies

My experience in lean global sourcing, value-enhanced supply-chain operations, and management of outsourcing initiatives can help Sanibel as you face tough challenges in today's competitive global economy. One of my strengths is negotiating contracts and managing relationships with contract manufacturers, consultants, and outsource technology providers (I can help you get the most "bang for the buck" both short- and long-term). I am fully conversant in all facets of Lean Materials Management, Purchasing, and Manufacturing; I excel in high-responsibility positions and am Kaizen process oriented.

I appreciate your willingness to meet with me. I will call you shortly to set it up.

Sincerely,

Janine T. McGuire

Enclosure: resume

## Letter 30: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** The focal point of this letter is the list of impressive results. The letter also provides a good explanation for why the candidate is looking for a job. Notice that Chris called the recruiting firm before sending a cover letter and resume.

### Chris Angelos

152 Elm Street, Reading, MA 01867 • (H) 781-942-0925 • (M) 781-204-9904 • angelos@verizon.net

March 15, 2009

Steven T. Edgerton  
Executive Search Consultant  
Biggs, Byers, Bailey & Bloggs  
859 Madison Avenue, Suite 21B  
New York, NY 10023

Dear Mr. Edgerton:

Thank you for spending some time on the phone with me today. Your firm's reputation as a leader in manufacturing-industry searches prompted my call, and I was glad to learn that you have several active searches that might fit my profile.

Building productivity, profitability, and efficiency in manufacturing operations is what I do best. For the past six years, I have led a custom-aluminum manufacturer to consistently high profitability while delivering strong results in all areas of operations:

- 100% key customer satisfaction
- 100% on-time delivery for our top account
- 100% environmental regulatory compliance
- 99+% quality
- 83% reduction in production downtime
- 25% reduction in inventory
- 15%, 20%, and 25% reductions in product, service, and utility costs
- 10% sales growth with all major accounts

As a hands-on manager, I have practical working knowledge of every area of operations. I have instilled a "customer first" attitude top to bottom throughout the plant. My work ethic and reliability are exceptional (I haven't missed a scheduled day of work in 15 years), and I enjoy the challenge of continuously improving an already good operation.

The owner's decision to increase his own involvement and bring additional family members into the business is the reason for my current search. My record shows what I have done for the bottom line and our customers; I'm confident I can do the same as a Plant Manager or Production Supervisor for one of your clients.

I would like to schedule a meeting with you on my next trip to New York, and I will call you on Friday to find a convenient time.

Sincerely,

Chris Angelos

enclosure: resume

## Letter 31: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Matthew “drops” the name of his referral source in the first sentence. Notice how specific he is about ways he can help the company.

### MATTHEW TAYLOR

2730 Carmel Court  
Indianapolis, IN 46213

mtaylor@earthlink.net

Home 317-249-2187  
Mobile 317-908-2376

March 15, 2009

Shandra Keeley  
Vice President of Operations  
Hoosier Building Materials, Inc.  
7619 Victory Parkway  
Indianapolis, IN 46210

Dear Ms. Keeley:

Stan Asher, store manager of the Carmel Home Depot, suggested I contact you; he thought you would be interested in my background and my ability to help Hoosier Building Materials grow.

In operations management roles with Midwest Windows, I cut inventory levels 40%, set company records for shipping volume, trimmed 15% from our fleet expenses, and more than doubled inventory turns—all in the last two years.

I could deliver similar results for Hoosier. Specifically, I can help you in four ways:

1. **Operational Improvement...** transforming underperformers to top-of-the-class operations... striving for continuous improvement through ongoing, aggressive initiatives.
2. **Team Building...** taking over entrenched organizations and creating motivated, nimble teams that quickly respond to changing business demands.
3. **Financial Performance...** driving cost from all areas of manufacturing and distribution operations.
4. **Operational Systems and Controls...** creating the essential foundation for business growth.

My experience is diverse and includes hands-on leadership of marketing, sales, product development, manufacturing, finance, forecasting/budgeting, IT, and logistics. The key to success in every role has been my ability to build relationships, both internally and externally, and to create support for new initiatives and new ways of doing business. The results have exceeded expectations and opened new opportunities for growth.

I would like to meet with you to explore how I can deliver bottom-line benefits to Hoosier in an operations leadership role. I will call you next week in hopes of setting up a meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Matthew Taylor

enclosure: resume



## Letter 33: No Interview Is Scheduled

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**Comments:** This job seeker uses a quote as an attention-getter in “cold-calling” a senior executive.

**LINDSEY CARMICHAEL**  
21 Hillside Drive, Novato, CA 94949  
415-245-1265    lindsay@home.net

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March 15, 2009

Alden Gaines  
Vice President, Operations  
Columbia Products, Inc.  
9495 Industrial Parkway  
Newark, NJ 07184

Dear Mr. Gaines:

Recently, you were quoted as saying, “Cost-effective management of your company’s supply chain operations can mean the difference between profit and loss.”

I couldn’t agree more, and I would like to talk with you about how I can help your company in this regard.

I have a track record of innovative and successful management of large-scale transportation and logistics operations. I know how to plan, implement, and manage the supply chain for maximum business benefit—both immediate and long range. Consider these highlights:

- In my current position, I have just completed laying the groundwork for a global distribution initiative that projects savings of \$5 million annually.
- With Bayou Chemical, I captured \$7 million in savings in less than two years through effective management of our logistics resources.
- Previously, charged with setting up the transportation/distribution function at a newly acquired plant, I established the foundation for a very cost-effective logistics program that has contributed to record-high profitability at that plant.

The reason I am contacting you is that family priorities dictate that I relocate to the Northeast, so I am searching for a new professional challenge. Your words inspired me to think that I could find that challenge at Columbia Products—or that you may know of another company in the area that could use my expertise. I will call next week to determine if you have an interest.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Carmichael

enclosure

## Letter 34: Pre-Interview, for a Specific Job Opening

**Comments:** The last paragraph suggests that Richard is already thinking about ways to help his prospective new company.

**RICHARD TALLANT**

rtallant@earthlink.net

206-595-2781 Home • 206-218-8712 Mobile

3909 43<sup>rd</sup> Street NE, Seattle, WA 98128

March 30, 2009

John P. Edmonds  
President, Pharmedic Networks, Inc.  
2912 Second Street  
Seattle, WA 98108

Dear Mr. Edmonds:

Thank you for taking my call today. I was pleased to discover that you might have a need for an executive with my experience and track record, and I look forward to meeting you on Wednesday.

As we discussed, I have been successful building profitable companies in today's dynamic health care market—growing revenues, outperforming profit goals, and achieving dominant market position for diverse organizations that include start-ups, multiple mergers, and regional expansions. For example:

- As Senior VP for the Northwest Region of an expanding services organization, I led a performance turnaround that resulted in 225% revenue growth and 353% increase in operating income.
- Previously, as Operations VP, I orchestrated the smooth integration of 10 companies into a cohesive organization—all the while adding new institutional customers and expanding into new service lines.
- In the emerging arena of pharmacy services to the LTC market, I played the lead role in growing a single-site company to a highly profitable regional leader with 45 sites.

I offer strong sales/marketing and operations leadership skills and the proven ability to drive growth and improvement. The result is a tightly run, clearly focused organization whose people "own" the vision and communicate the brand value at every customer interaction. My deep knowledge of the health care industry (long-term care, managed care, insurance, health care technology) is the foundation for innovative vision, practical strategy, and the ability to spot opportunities.

When we meet, I'd like to share with you some ideas I have for growing both your pharmacy services and your medical supplies operations. Thank you, again, for your interest.

Sincerely,

Richard Tallant

enclosure: resume

## Letter 35: No Interview Is Scheduled

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**Comments:** Andrea took advantage of a professional society meeting to gain an introduction to this prominent leader in her industry.

Re: Product/Project Leadership in Biomedical Informatics

Dear Dr. Taylor:

I was impressed by your address this week at the Chicago meeting of the Biomedical Informatics Society. I share your optimism about the future of our industry and believe that my background is a great fit for BioMed.

With expertise spanning research, corporate, and government arenas, I have a broad range of proven capabilities that can help BioMed capture, manage, and grow emerging opportunities in biomedical informatics. Specifically, I offer:

- **STRATEGIC BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE** derived from years of experience guiding numerous stages of health care/technology commercialization – including concept evaluation, business planning, financing, joint ventures and partnerships, product development, quality assurance, and project management. **VALUE TO BIOMED:** I can develop biomedical informatics products from the ground up or accelerate current projects.
- **INDUSTRY-ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIPS** developed and managed over twelve years at Ohio State and through active involvement in professional associations for medical informatics, pharmaceutical, and human genetics professionals. **VALUE TO BIOMED:** I can help vie for, negotiate, structure, and close deals involving academic institutions as partners and/or resources.
- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS** obtained executing simultaneous software projects and managing internal and external relationships during complex, large-scale, long-term initiatives. **VALUE TO BIOMED:** I can ensure that projects are delivered on time, on budget, and with high levels of client satisfaction.

The emerging field of biomedical informatics offers exciting opportunities for organizations that can translate research findings into marketable products – and that is precisely the value I offer. I have enclosed a resume detailing my experience, projects, and contacts that can help your organization compete and win in this vast new market.

I will follow up within the next few days to explore current or anticipated opportunities.

Sincerely,

Andrea Jurgenson

## Letter 36: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Note how this executive explains his decision to shift from entrepreneur to employee in the second-to-last paragraph. (Writer: Robyn Feldberg, AbundantSuccessCareerServices.com)

### JAMES SKLAR

973 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street • St. Augustine, Florida 32084 • jamesklar28@yahoo.com • (904) 692-1305

April 30, 2009

Andrew Jasperson  
Chief Operations Officer  
Elegant Home Furniture, Inc.  
7893 Industrial Boulevard  
St. Augustine, FL 32080

Re: Executive Vice President Position

Dear Mr. Jasperson:

Building high-profit, high-end retail, wholesale, and manufacturing operations is my expertise. Whether launching a new multi-site retail operation, penetrating the e-commerce market, developing branded products, or manufacturing fine furniture, I've consistently delivered strong and sustainable financial results. Most notably, I:

- **Drove company revenue 40% in less than 3 years** by developing and executing strategies to diversify my customer base across multiple industries.
- **Reduced monthly costs 40% by relocating my company** from the West Coast to Florida and implementing processes that significantly reduced shipping costs, delivery time, and damages.
- **Conceived and spearheaded lucrative e-commerce expansion.** Online retail accounts now comprise 30% of total revenue, with projections they will reach 45% by year-end.
- **Expanded start-up company to 4 brick-and-mortar locations** with annual sales that now average \$800 per square foot of retail space—well beyond the industry average.
- **Increased annual sales \$250,000** by negotiating and closing a lucrative deal with an online catalog company.

The greatest value I bring to your company is the depth and diversity of my executive management talent, including bankable outcomes in strategic planning, marketing, new business development, global sourcing, and new product design. Adding further weight to my candidacy, your company stands to benefit from my strong financial, analytical, negotiation, and team building skills. I'm never satisfied with the status quo but constantly working to enhance performance, strengthen quality of operations and service, and improve bottom-line profitability.

When you review my resume, you'll note my solid history of success as an entrepreneur for the past ten years. Although I've enjoyed working for myself, at this point in my career I'm ready for a new challenge and eager to accept an executive leadership opportunity with a company like Elegant Home Furniture, Inc.

Aware that you are seeking an Executive Vice President to join your management team, I would welcome the opportunity to interview for the position. I guarantee that the broad extent and quality of my experience will be of measurable value to your operation. I will call early next week to see when we might schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

James Sklar

Enclosure: Resume

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## Letter 37: Pre-Interview, No Specific Job Opening

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**Comments:** Evelyn contacted the recruiting firm to see whether it specialized in her industry, and she was then invited to forward her resume and come in for an interview.

Richard Talmadge  
RecruitSmart, Inc.  
Santa Monica, CA

Dear Mr. Talmadge:

Thank you for your time on the phone and your suggestion to forward my resume for potential opportunities through RecruitSmart. I was excited to learn of the depth of your expertise in the fashion industry — which, as we discussed, is my area of expertise as well.

The attached resume highlights my background and qualifications as a Showroom Designer / Visual Merchandiser. For the past six years I managed the start-to-finish design of ModCom's 2300-sq.-ft. New York showroom several times yearly. The results have been consistently positive: on-time, on-budget completion, excellent customer feedback, and strong sales performance. My experience and track record should be of particular interest to your clients seeking to revitalize their showroom displays.

My entire career has been spent in the fashion industry, specifically home décor, and I have excellent sales and marketing qualifications as well as visual design skills. I would be very interested in being considered for any number of positions that cross your desk that might benefit from my industry knowledge and proven capabilities.

I look forward to meeting you in person next week; I'll be there at 9 am on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Pepper

## Letter 38: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** The follow-up language of this letter makes a case for a meeting even if there is no immediately available opportunity.

### **Miguel Francisco, D.V.M.**

2390 Cherry Lane, Des Moines, IA 50312  
mfvet@gmail.com • 515-990-1210

April 30, 2009

Eleanor Gentile, D.V.M.  
North Shore Animal Care, Inc.  
491 Peabody Pike  
Salem, MA 01960

Dear Dr. Gentile:

Are you considering adding an associate to your practice? If so, I would like to speak with you about how my blend of qualifications and capabilities can benefit your patients, your clients, your team, and your practice.

I have had a satisfying ten-year career as an associate with a thriving practice near Des Moines, Iowa. As small-animal practitioners in a rural area, we see a diverse caseload, perform surgery daily at our facility, and work collaboratively with veterinary specialists for complex cases. I have built excellent relationships with our clients while caring for their pets.

Because I will be relocating to my hometown of Salem in the fall, I am seeking a new veterinarian position, preferably with a multi-doctor small-animal practice. I'm eager to find a new opportunity to contribute my professional capabilities.

I will call next week to see if it might be convenient for us to meet during my upcoming visit to Salem in mid-May; I would appreciate any ideas or referrals you can provide, even if you do not anticipate expanding your practice at this time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Miguel Francisco, D.V.M.

enclosure: resume

## Letter 39: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter focuses on results and explains the reason for transitioning from being a business owner to being an employee.

**SYLVIA PERRY**

sperry@aol.com • 312-994-0117

109 Barnside Drive, Naperville, IL 60565

April 30, 2009

Edward Anderson  
President  
Acme Products, Inc.  
299 Lakeshore Drive  
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Mr. Anderson:

If your company is experiencing growth challenges—flat or shrinking sales revenue, declining market share, increased competition—I can help. As a leader in all facets of sales, I have expertise in driving revenue growth by building efficient, effective, consultative sales organizations that get results.

For the past four years I have worked closely with CEOs, presidents, and business owners to strengthen sales performance within diverse organizations, industries, and sectors. Through my sales training company, I have developed the skills of front-line sales people, sales managers, and senior executives, instilling a consultative approach company-wide to build strong customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth.

Previously, over more than a decade in sales and sales management, I “walked the talk” and delivered results like these for Com-Tech, Inc. and Apex Manufacturing:

- \$3.5M revenue, \$10M VC funding, and \$22M market valuation for start-up Com-Tech.
- 135% of sales goal, National Rep of the Year at Apex.
- 65% sales growth in targeted product lines.

My sales training company is successful, and I have enjoyed its diverse challenges. However, I miss the satisfaction that comes from seeing sales strategies through to conclusion and nurturing long-term customer relationships. I want to be more directly involved in the growth and performance of a sales staff and create the strategies that will drive business revenues to the next level.

I would welcome the opportunity to explore how I can help you tackle your current business challenges—and win. I will call within a few days to see when it might be convenient to meet.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Perry

enclosure: resume

## Letter 40: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This e-mail letter starts off immediately with a referral that is sure to capture the reader's attention. (Writer: Cathy Alfandre, [www.cathyalfandre.com](http://www.cathyalfandre.com))

Re: **Operations/HR Leader with Start-up Expertise**

Dear Mr. Little:

David Smith suggested I contact you to discuss the contribution I can make as an operations and human resources leader at XYZ Technologies. With direct start-up experience and nearly 15 years in operational, HR, and in-house counsel roles, I have become a "back-office entrepreneur" with a talent for creating processes and systems that facilitate growth and long-term sustainability. Some highlights of my career:

- **Start-up impact:** I co-founded and created the operational, HR, and legal infrastructure for a start-up organization that now, after 4 years, employs 350 people in six states. In addition to this dramatic growth, my track record includes significant and continuing impact on cost reduction and efficiency improvement.
- **Operations and HR leadership:** Over the past 4 years, I have overseen the operations of Human Resources, Legal, Information Technology, and Procurement, directing 20 department heads. In current and previous roles, I have also been an invaluable HR business partner, meeting critical business and employee needs through effective hiring, performance management, employee relations, compensation, and benefits.
- **Diverse expertise/capabilities:** Beyond operations and HR, I have worked extensively as in-house counsel, mediator, and expert project manager, among other roles. I have managed diverse challenges and crises and have effectively worn multiple "hats" to serve the needs of rapidly growing companies.

I am inspired by the opportunity to support the dynamic products and discoveries at XYZ and motivated to take on the challenge of contributing to your company's growth and success. I look forward to talking with you further at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Jane Thomas

Attachment: Jane Thomas resume

## Letter 41: Pre-Interview

**Comments:** An introductory phone call yielded the immediate opportunity for a meeting.

**Patrick Kelly, CPA**

909 Longmeadow Street, Longmeadow, MA 01106  
413-900-0141 • kellycpa@comcast.net

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April 30, 2009

Cynthia Anderson, CPA  
Managing Partner  
Anderson, James & Matthews  
409 Hightower Lane  
Springfield, MA 01104

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Thanks for taking a few minutes to speak with me by phone today; I certainly look forward to meeting you next week to discuss my potential with your firm.

In a nutshell, your clients deserve the best: the best accountants, the best strategies, and the greatest dedication to customer service. I am confident I can bring “the best” in both attitude and execution to Anderson, James & Matthews.

With more than ten years of accounting experience—the last five as a CPA and owner of an accounting firm specializing in tax—I have strong and well-proven professional skills. I thrive on the challenges and intricacies of tax accounting and stay up to date with tax code changes through both in-person and online training programs.

What satisfies me most in my professional life is the opportunity to help clients better manage, control, and benefit from their money. One of the keys to the good advice I give my clients is my deep understanding of the consequences of investment decisions on their tax situation. I have worked with businesses of all sizes from one person to complex multimillion-dollar organizations in diverse industries and have contributed strategies and planning recommendations as well as tax-related accounting services.

Having just concluded the sale of my business, I am eager for new professional challenges such as those I would find at your firm—certainly one of the most highly regarded in the Central Massachusetts area. I am excited about the possibilities and eagerly anticipate our meeting on Thursday.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kelly

enclosure: resume

## Letter 42: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** After first making a connection, this individual then crafts a letter that is all about results and value.

### MARSHALL SHELDON

43 Maple Avenue  
Wellesley, MA 01801

msheldon@verizon.net

Home 617-781-0823  
Mobile 617-249-1109

April 30, 2009

Ellen Marcus  
CEO  
Ace Distributing, Inc.  
249 Industrial Parkway  
Woburn, MA 01801

Dear Ms. Marcus:

In operations management roles with Champion Windows and Doors, I cut inventory levels 40%, set company records for shipping volume, trimmed 15% from our fleet expenses, and more than doubled inventory turns—all in the last two years.

If you have a need, I could deliver similar results for your organization. Specifically, I can help you in four ways:

1. **Operational Improvement...** transforming underperformers to top-of-the-class operations... driving continuous improvement through ongoing, aggressive initiatives.
2. **Team Building...** taking over entrenched organizations and creating motivated, nimble teams that quickly respond to changing business demands.
3. **Financial Performance...** driving cost from all areas of manufacturing and distribution.
4. **Operational Systems and Controls...** creating the essential foundation for business growth.

My experience is diverse and includes hands-on leadership of marketing, sales, product development, manufacturing, finance, forecasting/budgeting, IT, and logistics. The key to success in every role has been my ability to build relationships, both internally and externally, and to create support for new initiatives and new ways of doing business. The results have exceeded expectations and opened new opportunities for growth.

I would like to meet with you to explore how I can deliver bottom-line benefits to your company in an operations leadership role. To that end, I will call you on Monday in hopes of setting up a meeting.

Sincerely,

Marshall Sheldon

enclosure: resume

## Letter 43: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** The bullet points in this letter concisely highlight impressive and entirely relevant achievements. The reason for making a move is included toward the end.

### MAXWELL CUFFE

545 Woodleigh Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70810

wet1\_80127@yahoo.com

Home 225-751-3762  
Mobile 225-229-1428

April 30, 2009

Katherine Miles  
Partner  
Miles & Montana Executive Recruiters  
549 Third Avenue, Suite 7J  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Ms. Miles:

Thanks for taking my call this morning; as you suggested, I am following up with details of my experience and my value to your clients.

Bottom-line performance is the yardstick by which executives are measured. By this standard, I have been an exceptional leader, consistently delivering profit growth and revenue increases for manufacturing and distribution companies over more than two decades in senior leadership roles.

But perhaps more important is the manner in which these results were achieved—by developing strong management teams, empowering employees from corporate offices to the factory floor, and gaining buy-in for strategic initiatives and new directions. Highlights include:

- Leading a dramatic turnaround for Compex, a privately held industrial-equipment company with stalled growth, serious employee-retention problems, and poorly functioning corporate operations. In just two years, we transformed the company into a collaborative organization with clear direction, efficient operations, healthy profit margins, and a highly desirable working environment.
- Devising and executing strategies that led a \$200 million division of United Technologies to profitable growth—strategies that encompassed every corner of the division, from acquisition and international expansion to lean manufacturing, quality improvement, and customer-focused product development.

In brief, I am a seasoned executive with a track record of revitalizing and improving every facet of operations, building thriving organizations, and wringing maximum benefit from corporate investments in people, technology, and capital equipment. In fact, the results I delivered at Compex re-energized the business owners, and their decision to become more actively involved in day-to-day operations is what prompts my current search. I am amenable to relocation anywhere in the U.S., eager to make similar contributions for your client's organization, and interested in speaking with you about appropriate opportunities. I will call in a day or two to determine the next steps.

Sincerely,

Maxwell Cuffe

enclosure: resume

## Letter 44: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This is a classic cold-call letter to a recruiter, providing impressive career successes and clearly spelling out areas of interest.

**AMANDA GRANVILLE**

617-293-2156 • amandagee@gmail.com  
149 Marlboro Street #3A, Boston, MA 02116

April 30, 2009

Ms. Elizabeth West  
Executive Recruiters, Inc.  
29 High Street, Suite 7B  
Boston, MA 02109

Dear Ms. West:

In IT leadership roles with Techsmart, Charles Schwab, and IBM, I have repeatedly been called on to tackle challenges that were critical to the health of the business. Time after time, I devised business and technology solutions that paved the way for revenue and profit growth and positioned my companies and clients as innovators and industry leaders.

Consider these highlights:

- When I was named VP of Techsmart, my Northeast region was the worst-performing in the company. In one year, I led the region to 150% sales growth and 300% profit surge by energizing the team, revamping processes and technologies, and strengthening datacenters to meet the demands of our high-volume customers.
- Originally hired to help Techsmart break into the enterprise sector, I led a sales engineering organization that grew the business to more than \$25 million in annualized revenue. Key to this success was repeatedly finding the right technology solutions to a vast array of customer problems. Through this approach, we grew our original small contract with Consolidated Industries to the #1 account at Techsmart, serving more than 30 Consolidated divisions worldwide.
- When I joined Charles Schwab, we were “eating the dust” of our competitors in the growing arena of online brokerage services. I led a rapid development effort to produce an online trading platform that was quickly recognized as the best in the industry and enabled us to transition 80% of customers to online services.

Most recently, I have been working with Techsmart’s VP of Sales to strengthen performance and increase revenue with our largest accounts through a combination of technology service improvements and relationship-building. While this challenge has been satisfying, I find that I miss directing the day-to-day technology operations of an IT organization—delivering best-in-class services and solutions to internal or external customers.

As a result, I am currently seeking a new role as Director of Infrastructure, Director of Technology Operations, or CIO for a Boston-based company that requires high availability, capacity, security, and reliability in its technology systems. If you know of such an organization, I would appreciate speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Amanda Granville

enclosure: resume



## Letter 45: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This candidate's initial call yielded a referral that she uses in the opening sentence of her letter. Even new grads have a lot to offer, as she makes clear in this letter.

**ARLENE SANDERSON**

PERMANENT ADDRESS:  
9420 Juniper Hill  
Carmel, IN 46033  
317-249-0014

sanderson.17@osu.edu

PRESENT ADDRESS:  
2495 Iuka Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201  
614-798-1109

April 30, 2009

Mr. Richard Williams  
General Manager  
Midwest Homes  
2549 Skyline Drive  
Columbus, OH 43200

Dear Mr. Williams:

At the suggestion of Stan Willis from your Indianapolis office, I am forwarding my resume for consideration for a position with Midwest Homes. I am about to graduate with a degree in communications/marketing from Ohio State, and for several years I have been interested in the residential home-building industry. I would like to begin my professional career with a company like Midwest Homes that stands for quality, integrity, and excellence.

In addition to my education, I offer knowledge of the residential mortgage industry, the legal profession, and effective sales and marketing strategies. In a part-time position with Buckeye Financial, I revamped the telemarketing message and immediately increased my success in developing leads for the mortgage lenders. When I shared my ideas with the rest of the team, they improved their performance as well.

I believe I have a lot to offer your company. I am a hard worker with a lot of ideas and initiative, and I would like to contribute to your success.

Thank you for considering my qualifications. I will call next week in hopes of scheduling an in-person meeting.

Sincerely,

Arlene Sanderson

enclosure

## Letter 46: Pre-Interview

**Comments:** This college student used her peer network to connect to an executive at one of her target companies. As a result, she has been able to schedule an informational meeting.

Elizabeth Smith

206-949-1010 • elizasmith@mac.com  
6309 45th Avenue SW • Seattle, WA 98136

April 30, 2009

Richard McKay  
General Manager  
International Concepts, Inc.  
45 Pike Place  
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. McKay:

Thank you for taking my call this morning. Rick has been a good friend throughout our college years, and I am especially grateful for his effort to connect us!

As I briefly mentioned, I am a soon-to-graduate International Business major eager to help your company thrive and grow in emerging Latin American markets.

Please consider these qualifications:

- International marketing and business education (BS expected in December 2009).
- Spanish language skills and in-country experience: Working, studying, and traveling in several Latin American countries, I easily adapted to each new culture and became a leader among my peers because of my language fluency, decision-making skills, and ability to communicate and build relationships.
- Marketing abilities: As an intern, I designed an entire marketing program for a residential community and met the owner's goal of selling 75% of properties within 2 years.

My track record shows that I perform exceptionally well in a team environment and can think on my feet to make important decisions quickly when needed. I enjoy challenges, I'm not afraid to work hard, and I am eager to begin my career in a part of the world that has captured my interest and admiration.

I realize that you do not have any positions open right now, but I look forward to meeting you in person and discussing our common interest in international marketing. Perhaps some of my ideas will be of value to you as you launch into Brazil and Chile this spring. I will see you at 10 a.m. on May 9. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Smith

enclosure: resume

## Letter 47: No Interview Is Scheduled

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**Comments:** This individual connects first by letter with a former coworker to set the stage for the promised phone call.

**Kaushik Singh**

212-900-1214

394 Avenue Q, Unit 3F

New York, NY 10017

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April 30, 2009

Mr. Adam Pierce  
VP Premium Sales  
Acme Cigar Company  
249 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Adam:

Congratulations on your recent promotion! Having observed your sales and leadership skills from our earliest days together at both Excel Tobacconist and Acme Cigar, I was very pleased to hear of your latest, well-deserved advancement.

In the nearly three years since I left Acme Cigar, I have gained a great deal of management experience — first as Region Director for a start-up specialty cigar company, and most recently as National Sales Manager for Cigars.com. Capitalizing on my deep knowledge of the cigar industry and strong sales background, I was successful in developing marketing strategies, creating incentive programs, improving product merchandising, and delivering measurable results.

This experience, combined with nearly 10 years at Acme Cigar and my strong record of contributions with the company, leads me to believe that I might be a good fit for a management or training manager's position at Acme Cigar. It would be a pleasure to return to the company where I spent the greatest part of my career, and I feel confident that I can again become a highly productive and valued member of the sales team.

Adam, I'd appreciate the opportunity to explore this idea with you. I'll follow up with a phone call within the next few days and look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

Kaushik Singh

enclosure: resume

## Letter 48: Pre-Interview

**Comments:** This letter references not only relevant skills but a strong passion for the industry he is targeting.

**CHRISTIAN THORPE**

891 Carolinas Drive  
Winston-Salem, NC 27117

336-471-1267  
christian.thorpe@duke.edu

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April 30, 2009

Mr. Rafael Fernandez  
Vice President of Operations  
Air Taxi, Inc.  
249 Research Triangle Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27616

Dear Mr. Fernandez:

Thank you for taking my call this morning. I am excited about our meeting next week and eager to share my enthusiasm and qualifications for a position with your company.

As we discussed, more than ever before, airlines need problem-solvers who can overcome the most challenging circumstances to get results.

With diverse project experience in far-flung international locations, I have faced problems as mundane as getting workers to show up and as complex as creating a new national standard for an industrial product. In each case, I have met the challenge and delivered results that far exceeded expectations.

Having recently completed my master's degree in Aerospace Engineering, I am eager to put my knowledge and skills to work for an airline that is facing tough challenges and needs proven performers to help it thrive and grow. In brief, my qualifications include:

- Master's degree in Aerospace Engineering from Virginia Tech.
- Ability to lead quality, maintenance, and operations functions with strict attention to quality, safety, and reliability.
- More than 5 years of engineering and project-management experience with a history of getting the job done despite overwhelming odds:
  - In Rwanda, severely cut absenteeism by creating meaningful incentive systems and selecting the right team leaders.
  - In India, built a quality control laboratory for a new manufacturing operation and completed the project well ahead of schedule.
  - On an island off the coast of Africa, met "impossible" deadlines for 18 straight months and successfully avoided economic penalties for late delivery.

In brief, I understand the challenges facing your business and have the knowledge and skills to help solve them. What I offer, as well, is a deep, lifelong passion for the airline industry and an unshakable belief in its value and promise. I am open to relocation anywhere in the world.

I will see you at 2 p.m. next Wednesday and certainly look forward to our discussion.

Sincerely,

Christian Thorpe

enclosure: resume

## Letter 49: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This response to a blind ad uses the T-style to show strong correlation with the qualifications detailed in the position description.

**Mariel Santos** \_\_\_\_\_

73 Elm Street, Reading, MA 01867 ■ msantos@verizon.net  
Home 781-942-1211 ■ Mobile 781-449-1331

April 30, 2009

Re: PHARMACEUTICAL SALES POSITION  
Monster Posting #M12017HH094

Success in sales can be easily measured—by numbers, results, and performance against goals. My resume shows that I have achieved those results, year after year, in competitive markets and diverse industries.

The way that I have done so seems to be an excellent fit for the type of person you are seeking as a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative:

**Professional** ..... Using a consultative sales approach, I have built rapport and relationships with diverse people from elderly individuals to business executives. I value my customers, respect their time, and develop solutions that fit their needs.

**Articulate** ..... Currently my #1 method for generating new sales is the educational presentations I developed and deliver to prospective clients bimonthly.

**Quick Learning** ..... In the ever-changing world of insurance and investments, I quickly master the details of new products and break down complex information into clear, effective sales messages that highlight product value and benefits.

**Organized, Thorough, and Methodical** ..... I have successfully managed large/changing territories, maintained a large book of businesses, and delivered top sales performance while mentoring a sales team. And as the owner of an independent sales firm, I understand bottom-line priorities and the importance of good time management.

**Goal Driven** ..... My record shows that I thrive on new challenges and have consistently exceeded established goals. Each new challenge presents new opportunities to excel.

Relevant to your requirements, I possess a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. I work well both independently and with teams, and I have a positive and enthusiastic personality and a strong customer focus. I would like to meet with you to discuss the value I offer your organization.

Sincerely,

Mariel Santos

enclosure: resume

## Letter 50: Pre-Interview

**Comments:** Although no specific meeting has been scheduled, it is presumed that one will occur as a follow-up to a professional club meeting.

**Richard Wysocki**  
513-249-1120      9811 Evening Shade Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45241      rwysocki@cinci.rr.com

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April 30, 2009

April Tunstall  
Executive Vice President  
Regions Bank  
129 Fifth Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear April:

I enjoyed speaking with you at the Bankers' Club last evening and, as promised, am following up with some details of my background.

My career in the banking industry has been marked by continuous challenge, change, and growth—in diverse product/service lines and through the turmoil of start-up, acquisition, merger, and innovation. In every role, I have exceeded expectations and delivered measurable value.

If Regions Bank has a need, I can provide proven leadership to achieve goals like these:

- **Explosive growth in revenues, assets, and loans.** At Midwest Bank, I was the driving force behind 21% growth in net deposits in just one year after flat results the prior year. As COO at EXim Bank, I was instrumental in boosting net income 83% in 3 years. And at National Bank, I consistently outpaced double-digit growth objectives.
- **Leadership for the future**—planning management succession, recruiting key executives, and building bench strength to enable the achievement of growth objectives. My first-hand knowledge stems from my own recruitment to succeed the CEO of a \$500M commercial bank.
- **Flawless execution of business plans**—incorporating performance analysis and making tactical changes to meet changing conditions. Specifically, I have spearheaded key initiatives in technology and business process improvement, and I have repeatedly built high-performing teams through strategic staffing plans and recruitment/selection of the right people with the right talents.

Following two major career challenges and growth successes, I have enjoyed a brief sabbatical the last few months and am now eager to return to a senior leadership role with a banking institution that seeks accelerated growth and improved financial performance. I would like to discuss our mutual interests and explore some ideas I have for your expanding presence in the marketplace. To that end, I will call you on Monday to set up a time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard Wysocki  
Enclosure: resume

## Letter 51: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter clearly shows the candidate's expertise in his field and passion for the field of municipal government. (Writer: Reya Stevens, reya@firstimpressionsresumes.net)

**Kent Willis**

34 Deerfield Road, Affton, MO 63123 ■ (617) 983-5972

### **Communications, Public Relations & Project Management on the Cutting Edge of Municipal Issues**

May 6, 2009

Janice Blackwell  
Greater St. Louis Development Association  
Manager of Human Resources  
46 Treasury Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63115

Dear Ms. Blackwell:

Communications Management is what I do best. With a prior career in journalism and a current career in municipal planning and communications, I have high-level writing skills appropriate for press releases, website text, annual reports, grants, newsletters, brochures, and more. I am an informative, charismatic public speaker. I relate easily with residents, coworkers, stakeholders, regulators, and vendors in casual conversations and contractual negotiations. As a project manager, I am organized, efficient, and dedicated. More than that: I believe in what I do. And because I believe in what GSLDA does, I would love the opportunity to bring all of my skills and energy to the position of GSLDA's Communications Manager.

Please note some relevant experience and achievements:

- Negotiated a high rebate rate for the Town of Affton's paper recycling program, which helped to generate \$110,000 in annual reimbursement revenue when averaged over four years.
- Overhauled Affton's solid waste customer service program, which reduced resident complaints by 50%.
- Developed and updated marketing collateral for municipal, state, and federal organizations.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss GSLDA's needs with you in person and how I can best meet—and exceed!—your expectations.

Sincerely,

Kent Willis

Enclosure: résumé

## Letter 52: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** Notice the reference to this individual's VisualCV (web portfolio), promising richer and more in-depth career background. (Writer: Lucille Sanchez Pearson, [www.visualcv.com/GlobalResources](http://www.visualcv.com/GlobalResources))

**ANTHONY ROBERTS**

234 COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 92347  
PHONE 415.729.8345 • E-MAIL AROBERTS@GMAIL.COM

April 30, 2009

John Simpson  
Simpson & Associates  
566 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1250  
Los Angeles, CA 90072

Dear Mr. Simpson:

Best described as a business executive with a successful record for dramatically improving results, I offer a background in both senior operating and finance positions with **Digital Cinemas International** and **Southgate Studios**.

In my current role as **Chief Financial Officer** with DCI, I am viewed as a hands-on manager, and an action-oriented leader who encourages a company to think creatively. I have provided both immediate and long-term improvements in a number of key areas, some of which are highlighted below.

- Coordinated the successful bank-led sale of the European operations that encompassed 92 cinema locations and 936 screens in 9 countries.
- Managed the disposition of assets yielding \$173M in net proceeds.
- Supervised the successful syndication of a \$1.5B securitized film financing fund.
- Managed a team of finance professional and outside consultants to re-engineer the procurement, financial reporting, and participation/residual function, resulting in annual savings in excess of \$125M.
- Improved operating efficiencies, restructured operations, and leveraged procurement activity with total annual savings of \$5.3M.

I am confidentially investigating new opportunities in the **entertainment industry** where I can serve as the **Chief Financial Executive**. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my background and the financial challenges and success that I have achieved for my employers in greater detail.

There are additional areas of accomplishments in my background that may be of interest to you. Please view my VisualCV at [www.visualcv.com/aroBERTS](http://www.visualcv.com/aroBERTS).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anthony Roberts

enclosure



## Letter 53: No Interview Is Scheduled

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**Comments:** This letter starts strongly with a referral and makes a powerful case for the value and capabilities of this candidate. (Writer: John-Michael Auron, [www.auroncareerservices.com](http://www.auroncareerservices.com))

**John Smith**

111 First Street, Brooklyn, NY 10023 / 212 945 7949 / johnsmith123@gmail.com

April 30, 2009

Tom Jones  
XYZ Company  
1234 Madison Avenue, Suite 509  
New York, NY 10015

Dear Tom:

Max Reynolds suggested that I write concerning the Manager of Strategic Business Development at XYZ. I worked with Max closely during my graduate work at Columbia; he can give you some background on my skills and my character.

I like to think of myself as working at the intersection of the creative world of music and the bottom line. My artistic and technical background is strong, but I'm also fully grounded in the real world of business. This experience comes both through my own company, JSmith, LLC (which I founded in 2004), and through my MA in Music Business at Columbia. I'm looking to take the next logical next step in my career: combining my hands-on experience and my academic training in a strategic business development/analysis role in the music industry

My quantitative and analytical skills are solid—my thesis focused on research on the market space for digital music in France and gave me invaluable insight into effective strategies for business penetrations for new markets. My analytical strengths are further supported by my advanced technical abilities with Excel and other tools; I'm able to break down data effectively and meaningfully and present that information in a clear, understandable graphic presentation.

My ingenuity also manifests in fresh approaches to the problems of business and marketing; I'm adept at developing new strategic market penetration methods. My background includes several markets, both domestic and international; I recognize the unique challenges presented by each.

Finally, I have a history of creating positive and productive relationships both with teams and with senior management.

I'm confident that I can make a rapid and dramatic contribution to XYZ Co. I will follow up with you by phone early next week.

Sincerely,

John Smith

## Letter 54: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter of application for a police department promotion clearly expresses a strong commitment to the job, the department, and the citizens. (Writer: Carol Altomare, [www.worldclassresumes.com](http://www.worldclassresumes.com))

**PETER RIVERA**

4 Marsh Road  
Madison, CT 06443  
(203) 245-7467

April 30, 2009

Frank Morello, Chief of Police  
Madison Police Department  
750 Boston Post Road  
Madison, CT 06443

RE: Sergeant Position

Dear Chief Morello:

Please accept the attached résumé as an expression of my interest in the position of Sergeant as posted in your recent memorandum. I believe that my training, years of experience, and proven record of leadership and service as a police officer make me an excellent candidate for this position.

As someone with a keen enthusiasm for law enforcement and a demonstrated passion for service, I pride myself on maintaining the highest standards when performing my job. As sergeant, it would be my goal to instill the same passion and commitment in others.

I truly believe that our job as police officers is to serve the community and that all members of the public deserve to be treated with respect. This is something I emphasize in my training activities with new recruits, and it is the guiding principle that I would want to communicate to my squad.

Already recognized as a valued resource by my fellow officers, I am confident that I have the knowledge and skills to be a stand-out sergeant, someone who can inspire and motivate others to achieve superlative results that will make the department proud. I would be pleased to have the opportunity to prove myself in this role.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Officer Peter Rivera

Attachment

## Letter 55: Pre-Interview

**Comments:** Crisp and to the point, this letter highlights key value statements in brief bullet points. (Writer: Marjorie Sussmann, GreaterResumes@aol.com)

**RITA CALDWELL**

77866 Mount Habit Road, Louisville, KY 42987  
270-999-1871 • rcaldwell@bellsouth.net

April 30, 2009

Mr. Steve Larson  
Managing Director  
Field Corporation  
54 Spring Lane  
Louisville, KY 42988

Dear Mr. Larson:

Thank you for your time on the phone today; I look forward to learning more about your Strategic Accounts Manager position at our meeting next Thursday.

With 20 years of creating strong business relationships through comprehensive account management and strategic sales, I offer a level of expertise that will bring your organization profitability and bottom-line success—guaranteed. Currently, as National Account Manager with an industry leader, I meet diverse challenges and consistently deliver stellar results:

- Oversee a territory that encompasses nearly one-third of total organizational sales.
- Manage the company's largest account with 1,600 locations and \$1M in annual sales.
- Added 1,000 new customers in the first year alone as I took the company nationwide.
- Started up a division that now generates 12 distribution routes, each averaging \$230K in sales.

The strength of my experience and track record of success will add measurable value to your organization. I look forward to further discussing this exciting opportunity, your expectations, and my solutions.

Sincerely,

Rita Caldwell

Enclosure: resume

## Letter 56: No Interview Is Scheduled

**Comments:** This letter “sings” with the personality of the applicant, and the graphic is perfectly on target. (Writer: Rosa Vargas, [www.creatingprints.com](http://www.creatingprints.com))

*Ashlee E. McConner*

Tel: 323-555-5555  
Email: [a.mcconner@email.com](mailto:a.mcconner@email.com)



3799 Millennia Blvd  
Orlando, FL 32839

April 30, 2009

Alex Medina  
Vice President  
Electronic Entertainment  
2490 Universal Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32839

Re: Management Training Opportunity – Electronic Media Department

Dear Mr. Medina:

Music and entertainment are my passion! I have known I wanted to work in the entertainment industry since the age of eleven. At age four, I began to demonstrate an affinity for music and entertainment. I loved to perform in front of the TV, watch all the award shows, memorize the choreography to the latest music videos, and was always curious about how it all worked behind the scenes. I am lucky to have realized so early in my life what I was born to do! When I was old enough, I religiously started going to concerts, obsessively reading anything remotely related to the entertainment industry, networking, and investigating media-oriented programs and colleges.

As a college student, I have been a media management major the entire time and never second-guessed it. In class, I listened attentively and absorbed as much information as possible. Moreover, my education at California State University is comprehensive and will easily blend with my work and internship experience to provide you with the assistance you seek.

At work, I am extremely loyal, honest, organized, and creative but very pragmatic in my approach. Superiors have benefited from my excellent coordinating, management, and people skills, which will easily transfer into a new career in the entertainment media. During my tenure as a sales associate, I excelled at analyzing and improving in-place operations, identifying problems, and determining wise solutions.

Personally, I have numerous subscriptions to entertainment magazines; have always watched MTV daily; kept up with the world of media pop culture and listened to music critically; have attempted to discover new bands, conceptualized ideas, and imagined them on TV! (Does this sound like commitment?)

Mr. Medina, may we meet at your convenience to discuss how I can be of service? Thank you in advance for your time. I am extremely excited about this opportunity and look forward to meeting you in person.

Sincerely,

Ashlee E. McConner

Enclosure

# **Additional Job Search Correspondence: Thank-You Letters, Quick Notes, JIST Cards, Job Proposals, and More**

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Much of the information in this chapter is often overlooked in resume books and by job seekers. That is too bad, because in our experience thank-you notes are a very effective job search tool. So are JIST Cards, a mini-resume that you will soon learn about. Other related correspondence can also play an important part in a quick, successful job search.

## **Thank-You Notes**

While resumes and cover letters get the attention, thank-you notes often get results. That's right. Sending thank-you notes makes both good manners and good job search sense. When used properly, thank-you notes can help you build on the positive impression you created during your interview or phone discussion. They make you more memorable to hiring managers. And they might even sway a hiring manager who is "on the fence" to include you in the next round of interviews.

## ***Three Times When You Should Definitely Send Thank-You Notes—and Why***

Thank-you notes have a more intimate and friendly social tradition than formal business correspondence. We think that is one reason they work so well: people respond to those who show good manners and say thank

you. Here are some situations when you should use them, along with some sample notes.

## 1. Before an Interview

In some situations, you can send a less formal note before an interview, usually by e-mail unless the interview is scheduled for a fairly distant future date. For example, you can simply thank someone for being willing to see you. You might or might not want to send your resume with your note.

As a rule, your note should offer sincere thanks for help and not strike an assertive tone. Your correspondence also serves as a way to confirm the date and time of the scheduled interview and as a gentle reminder to the recipient that you will be showing up at that time. Figure 4-1 is an example of a thank-you note written for such an occasion.

### Figure 4-1: Sample Thank-You Note Sent Before an Interview

---

*April 5, 20XX*

*Ms. Kijek,*

*Thanks so much for your willingness to see me next Wednesday at 9 a.m.*

*I know that I am one of many who are interested in working with your organization, but I'm confident that you'll find my qualifications are a good fit for the role. I've enclosed a JIST Card that presents the basics of my skills for this job and will bring my resume to the interview.*

*I appreciate the opportunity to meet you and learn more about the position. Please call me if you have any questions at all.*

*Sincerely,*

*Bruce Vernon*

## 2. After an Interview

One of the best times to send a thank-you note is right after an interview. Here are several reasons why:

- Doing so creates a positive impression. The employer will assume you have good follow-up skills—to say nothing of good manners.
- The thank-you note creates yet another opportunity for you to remain in the employer’s consciousness at an important time.
- The thank-you note gives you a chance to get in the last word. You get to include a subtle reminder of why you’re the best candidate for the job and can even address any concerns that might have come up during the interview.
- Should they have buried, passed along, or otherwise lost your resume and previous correspondence, a thank-you note and corresponding JIST Card provide one more chance for employers to find your number and call you.

**Tip:** *Enclose a JIST Card with your thank-you notes when sending your note through the mail; you can find JIST Card samples and writing tips later in this chapter. JIST Cards fit well into a thank-you-note-sized envelope, and they provide key information an employer can use to contact you. JIST Cards also list key skills and other credentials that will help you create a good impression. And the employer could always forward the card to someone who might have a job opening for you.*

For these reasons, we suggest you send a thank-you note right after the interview, and certainly within 24 hours. Figure 4-2 is an example of such a note.

## Figure 4-2: Sample Thank-You Note Sent After an Interview

*August 11, 20XX*

*Dear Mr. O'Beel,*

*Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the position available in your production department. I want you to know that this is the sort of job I have been looking for and I am enthusiastic about the possibility of working for you.*

*Now that we have spoken, I know that I have both the experience and skills to fit nicely into your organization and to be productive quickly. The process improvements I implemented at Logistics, Inc., increased their productivity 34%, and I'm confident that I could do the same for you.*

*Thanks again for the interview; I enjoyed the visit.*

*Sara Smith*

*(505) 665-0090*



### 3. Whenever Anyone Helps You in Your Job Search

Send a thank-you note to anyone who helps you during your job search. This includes those who give you referrals, people who provide advice, or simply those who are supportive during your search. We suggest you routinely enclose one or more JIST Cards in these notes because recipients can give them to others who may be in a better position to help you. Figure 4-3 is an example of such a note.

**Tip:** Send a thank-you note by e-mail or mail as soon as possible after an interview or meeting. This is when you are freshest in the mind of the person who receives it and are most likely to make a good impression.

#### Figure 4-3: Sample Thank-You Note to Someone Who Helped in the Job Search

October 31, 20XX  
2234 Riverbed Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 17963

Ms. Helen A. Colcord  
Henderson and Associates, Inc.  
1801 Washington Blvd., Suite 1201  
Philadelphia, PA 17963

Dear Ms. Colcord,

Thank you for sharing your time with me so generously yesterday. I really appreciated talking to you about your career field.

The information you shared with me increased my desire to work in such an area. Your advice has already proven helpful—I have an appointment to meet with Robert Hopper on Friday.

In case you think of someone else who might need a person like me, I'm enclosing another resume and JIST Card.

Sincerely,

Debbie Childs

## ***Nine Quick Tips for Writing Thank-You Notes***

Here are some brief tips to help you write your thank-you notes.

### **1. Decide Whether E-mail or Snail Mail Makes More Sense**

Consider the timing involved and the formality of the person and organization you're sending your thank-you note. If you need to get a letter out quickly because it has to arrive before an interview that's coming up soon, or if it's a thank-you note after an interview and you know the employer will be making a decision soon, then e-mail is your best bet. Use regular mail if there's no rush and if you sense that the other person would appreciate the formality of a business letter printed on nice paper and received in the mail.

### **2. Use High-Quality Paper and Envelopes**

Use good quality notepaper with matching envelopes. Most stationery stores have thank-you note cards and envelopes in a variety of styles. Select a note that is simple and professional; avoid cute graphics and sayings. A blank card or simple "Thank You" on the front will do. For a professional look, match your thank-you note paper to your resume. We suggest off-white and buff colors.

### **3. Handwritten or Typed Is Acceptable**

Traditionally, thank-you notes were handwritten, but most are typed (word-processed) these days. If your handwriting is good and your thank-you note is short, writing it is perfectly acceptable. In fact, this can be a nice touch. But if your handwriting is hard to read or if your letter includes more than a couple of sentences, you will create a better impression by using your word processor. Be sure to match the style and format to your cover letter and resume.

### **4. Use a Formal Salutation**

Don't use a first name unless you are already on a first-name basis with the person you are thanking. Use "Dear Ms. Smith" or "Ms. Smith" rather than the less formal "Dear Pam." Include the date.

## **5. Keep the Note Informal and Friendly**

Write in a friendly tone. Remember, the note is a thank-you for what someone else did, not a hard-sell pitch for what you want. Make sure, though, that in a thank-you note after an interview you remind your audience of your skills or other qualifications that are relevant to the job. This lets the thank-you note serve not only as an expression of appreciation but also as a chance to get the last word on why you should be hired. The more savvy members of your competition will be doing this, so you had better do it, too.

Also, make sure your thank-you note does not sound like a form letter. Put some time and effort into it to tailor it to the recipient and the situation.

## **6. Tell How You Will Follow Up**

As appropriate, be specific about when you will next contact the person. If you plan to meet soon, still send a note saying you look forward to the meeting and say thank you for the appointment. And make sure that you include something to remind the employer of who you are and how to reach you, since your name alone may not be enough to be remembered.

## **7. Sign It**

Sign your first and last name. Avoid initials and make your signature legible.

## **8. Send It Right Away**

Write and send your note no later than 24 hours after you make your contact. Ideally, you should write it immediately after the contact, while the details are fresh in your mind.

## **9. Enclose a JIST Card**

Depending on the situation, a JIST Card is often the ideal enclosure to include with a thank-you note. It's small, it's soft sell, and it provides your contact information, should the employer wish to reach you. It is both a reminder of you, should any jobs open up, and a tool to pass along to someone else. Make sure your thank-you notes and envelopes are big enough to enclose an unfolded JIST Card.

## More Sample Thank-You Notes

Following are a few more samples of thank-you notes and letters. They cover a variety of situations and will give you ideas on how to structure your own correspondence. Notice that they are all short and friendly, and typically mention that the writer will follow up in the future—a key element of a successful job search campaign.

Also note that several are following up on interviews where no specific job opening exists—yet. As we've mentioned elsewhere in this book, getting interviews before a job opening exists is a very smart thing to do.

### Figure 4-4: After an Informational Interview

This letter is a follow-up to an informational meeting with a person who has already provided some referrals and might be in a position to provide even more.

*March 30, 2009*

*Dear Mr. Smith:*

*Thank you so much for meeting with me on Wednesday. The information you shared about growth opportunities in the accounting field made me want to pursue it more than ever!*

*I will follow up with Ms. Edwards and Mr. Catalonia, as you suggested, and I will keep you up to date as my search progresses. As I mentioned, I will be graduating from UConn in about six weeks and would like to start my first professional position soon after that.*

*Just in case the occasion arises, I am enclosing two copies of my resume that you can share with anyone who might be seeking an entry-level accountant. I do appreciate your support!*

*Very sincerely,*

*Tamara Winston*

## Figure 4-5: To Someone Who Has Been Helpful

Notice how Allan has been able to return the favor to this person who was helpful in his job search.

**Allan P. Raymond, CPA**

29 Brookside Drive, Mystic, CT 06433  
860.239.7671 • allanraymond@verizon.net

March 30, 2009

Ellen Farmer  
President, Sound Financial  
112 Front Street  
New London, CT 06321

Dear Ms. Farmer:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Your ideas were excellent, and I have already reached out to both of the contacts you suggested. Like you, both Mr. Avenida and Mr. Stroman felt that my background makes me a great fit for a small- to medium-sized CPA firm that needs an experienced professional. I am vigorously pursuing all leads and hope that you will keep me in mind as you interact with various business leaders in the New London area.

To that end, I have enclosed a few JIST Cards that are a convenient way for you to pass along my credentials.

As a small way of returning the favor, I have given your name and business cards to two people I know who are in financial transition (Mary McCormick is getting a divorce, and Chris Taylor recently came into a small inheritance) and suggested they give you a call. From what you told me, your services would be a great fit for their special circumstances.

If I can be of further help to you, please let me know. And as you suggested, I will follow up with you from time to time to keep you informed of my progress. Thanks so much!

Best regards,

Allan P. Raymond

enclosures

## Figure 4-6: No Opening Currently Exists

In this letter, Janine makes the case for hiring her even though an opening does not currently exist. Her “pitch” is soft-sell, professional, and focused on the employer’s and client’s needs.

**JANINE T. MCGUIRE**

512-349-1265 749-A Whistler Court, Austin, TX 78714 jtm@austin.rr.com

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March 30, 2009

Robert Smith  
Vice President of Operations  
Sanibel Systems, Inc.  
4545 Round Rock Parkway  
Austin, TX 78710

Dear Bob:

The information you shared at our meeting today was extremely helpful, and I am very grateful.

I appreciate that you will keep me in mind for a project leadership role with your company. I am quite willing to start on an interim, as-needed basis; I am sure I will be able to prove very quickly that I offer great value to your firm and your clients.

In particular, Bob, your upcoming work for Bedrock Systems is very close to my experience with Apex. As you will recall, I led a re-engineering project with the purchasing department to bring activities and initiatives in line with the company’s strategic goals. The results were remarkable (\$4 million in cost savings in 18 months) and are directly related to Bedrock’s current needs and challenges.

I will keep in touch, Bob, and hope you will call on me if there is some way I can be of help.

Most sincerely,

Janine T. McGuire

## Figure 4-7: To Build a Relationship

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With this letter, Jamie is building a relationship that can be of help—if not immediately, then in the future. Note the P.S., which shows creative thinking while providing some helpful information to the company.

**Jamie Van Horn**

253 Silverton Trail, Phoenix, AZ 85017  
602-779-1682 • jvanhorn@yahoo.com

March 30, 2009

Sally Osborne  
Southwest District Manager  
Pfizer Pharmaceuticals  
6512 Scottsdale Boulevard  
Phoenix, AZ 85010

Dear Ms. Osborne:

You have confirmed my belief that a pharmaceutical sales career is a great fit for my talents and interests! I really appreciate the time and information you shared with me today.

I understand that there are no current openings in your Southwest District. Of course, I would be pleased to remain here in Phoenix, but I am very open to relocating, and I understand that it is often necessary to move around a bit as one gets established in this field.

Thank you for offering to share my information with others at your company. To make this easy for you, I am enclosing extra copies of my resume.

Again, thank you. I will keep in touch.

Very truly yours,

Jamie Van Horn

enclosures

P.S. Thinking about the marketing challenges we discussed for your new drug Top-ex, it seems to me that a good way to gain exposure while doing good would be to provide samples for homeless shelters. Foot problems related to diabetes are a real issue for the homeless population. Perhaps you have thought of this already—but if not, I think it is worth studying!

## Figure 4-8: Reinforcing “Fit”

This brief note reinforces the candidate’s “fit” with the culture of the company he is targeting. It is always a good strategy to keep in touch with your contacts and to get their permission to do so during your meeting, even if they do not think they will be able to hire you.

March 30, 2009

Dear Samantha,

I know how busy you are, and I am extremely grateful that you were willing to share some time with me on Monday.

I realize that you do not have an opening for me at this time, but I am very interested in joining the Armanda team. From my research, backed up by what you told me on Monday, it is a great fit for not only my skills and expertise, but my preferred work style as well. There is nothing that motivates me more than a tough challenge and a tight deadline!

As you suggested, I will touch base with you in about a month to see if things have changed.

In the meantime, if there is any way that I can be of help to you, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Ryder Wilson



## Figure 4-9: Asking for the Job

In keeping with the need for salespeople to be assertive, this letter is a rather bold request for the job.

*Kathy Miller*

2943 Hillside Street, Unit 2-B ■ Oakland, California 94624 ■ 510-245-7450 ■  
kathymiller@verizon.net

March 30, 2009

Steve Rostakoff  
Western Regional Manager  
NuTraders Network  
9090 Mile High Drive  
Denver, CO 80209

Dear Steve:

NuTraders has an exciting future, and I would like to help the Institutional Services division skyrocket to a market-dominant position in the West.

NuTraders' new offerings put the company in a short-term position of market advantage. To seize this advantage requires a "hit the ground running" sales approach. As we discussed, my experience with Schwab closely parallels your new Western Sales Manager position. I know the market... I know the key players... I know the industry and the products... and I have the experience and track record to deliver both immediate revenue results and sustainable long-term growth.

With the right person at the helm, the first-year goal of \$100 million in sales is easily reachable. I believe I am that person. I hope you agree.

As you requested, I am attaching a list of professional references, and I will follow up with you on April 6 to see if you have any additional questions. Thank you for sharing so much time and information with me this week; I am inspired by your enthusiasm and eager to play a part in building a strong Western Region for NuTraders.

Sincerely,

Kathy Miller

enclosure

## Quick Notes Versus Formal Cover Letters

Most of this book addresses how to write the formal cover letters that will accompany your resume on most occasions. Earlier we mentioned that a quick note can take the place of a cover letter and be just as effective.

A quick note (or e-mail message) can be sent, along with your resume, to a friend or network contact after a conversation. A quick note can accompany a newspaper article or other item that you send to someone you know or someone you've met with. Quick notes are informal and short. Here are a few examples.

*Jerry, thanks for suggesting I speak with Reggie Tyler. We are meeting next Friday, and I will keep you in the loop! In the meantime, I am attaching my resume in case you have the occasion to pass it on. I appreciate all your help.*

*Laura, congratulations on the great press coverage! You might like this extra copy for your files. I am eager to share my job search progress with you; I will give you a call soon.*

*Bob—Thought you'd enjoy this article. It is right in line with our recent conversation. Would you have a few minutes to talk later this week? I will call to set it up.*

*Terri, it was good to see you today. As you suggested, here is my resume. I'll call to see whether you might be able to get away for a cup of coffee on Friday. I'd love to get your ideas and insights.*

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind as you write and use quick notes:

- **A quick, informal note should never be sent to someone you don't know.** In those instances, a formal cover letter is more appropriate.

**Note:** You should consider sending quick notes or letters to anyone who helps you in your job search. This includes those who simply give you the name of someone to contact or who speak with you on the phone. Besides showing good manners, these notes give you an opportunity to provide additional information about yourself via an enclosed resume or JIST Card (which people can pass along to others). They will also help to keep your needs in others' minds.

- **Quick notes must be short.** If you are writing more than three or four sentences, use a letter instead.
- **Quick notes are a great way to stay in contact with people in your network.** They are no-response-required communications that put no pressure on your contacts.

## **JIST Cards—A Mini-Resume and a Powerful Job Search Tool**

JIST Cards are a job search tool that gets results. I (Mike Farr, one of this book's authors) first developed them many years ago, almost by accident. I helped job seekers create them to get attention and “leave something behind” after dropping in without appointments to ask for interviews with employers. Many thousands of job seekers have used them in every imaginable print and electronic format, and they still get attention—and interviews—that more traditional tools do not. Think of a JIST Card as a Very Small Resume.

A JIST Card is carefully constructed to contain all the essential information most employers want to know in a very short format. It typically uses a 3 × 5-inch card format but has been designed into many other sizes and formats, such as a folded business card.

Your JIST Card can be as simple as handwritten or created with graphics and on special papers. You create a JIST Card in addition to a resume because a JIST Card is used in a different way.

### ***JIST Cards Get Results***

What matters is what JIST Cards accomplish: They get results. In our surveys of employers, more than 90 percent of people receiving JIST Cards form a positive impression of the writer within 30 seconds. More amazing is that about 80 percent of employers say they would be willing to interview the person behind the JIST Card, even if they did not have a job opening now.

### ***How You Can Use Them***

You can use a JIST Card in many ways, including the following:

- Attached to your resume or application
- Enclosed in a thank-you note

- Given to your friends, relatives, and other contacts—so they can give them to other people
- Sent out to everyone who graduated from your school or who are members of a professional association
- Put on car windshields
- Posted on the supermarket bulletin board
- In electronic form as an e-mail or e-mail attachment

We are not kidding about finding JIST Cards on windshields or bulletin boards. They can be included on Web sites along with your resume or included as text or attachments in e-mail to people you know, with a request to forward them to others. We've seen them used in these ways and hear about more ways people are using them all the time.

## **Writing Your JIST Card**

A JIST Card is small, so it can't contain many details. It should list only the information that is most important to employers. To write your card, follow these steps:

1. **Type your name at the top of the card.** You can center it and use bold text to make it stand out, as you would on a resume.
2. **Give two ways for the employer to contact you.** Space down a few lines and right-align this information. Generally, all you will need to include is your daytime phone number or cell phone number and your e-mail address.
3. **Give a broad job objective.** Space down another line or two and left-align this information. A broad objective will allow you to be considered for many jobs.
4. **List your years of experience.** Space down again and add one sentence that summarizes how long you have been working in this field.
5. **Detail your education and training.** In the same paragraph, add a sentence that tells what degrees, certifications, diplomas, and other relevant training you have.

**Note:** *JIST Cards are harder to write than they look. The foundation for a JIST Card is an effective resume. Be sure to check out chapter 5 for quick ways to improve your resume; then create your JIST Cards and use them by the score. They work, but only if they are in circulation.*

6. **Showcase your job-related skills.** Still in the same paragraph, add up to four sentences that tell what you can do and how well you can do it. Be sure to include accomplishments and numbers to support them.
7. **State your availability and preferred working arrangements.** If applicable, space down and add a sentence that states any special availability you might have, such as “interested in part-time work” or “available with two weeks’ notice.”
8. **End with your key adaptive skills.** Space down a few more lines and add one last sentence that tells what personality traits you have that make you a good employee.

## ***JIST Card Paper and Format Tips***

Many office-supply stores have perforated light card-stock sheets to run through your computer printer. They will then tear apart into 3 × 5–inch cards. Many word-processing programs have templates that allow you to format a 3 × 5–inch card size. You can also use regular-size light card stock, available at office-supply stores; you can print several cards on a sheet and cut it to the size you need. Print shops can also photocopy or print them in the size you need. Get a few hundred at a time. They are cheap, and the point is to get lots of them in circulation.

## ***Sample JIST Cards***

The following sample JIST Cards use a plain format, but you can make them as fancy as you want. So be creative. Look over the examples to see how they are constructed. Some are for entry-level jobs, and some are for more advanced ones.

Sandy Nolan

Position: General Office/Clerical

Message: (512) 232-9213

More than two years of work experience plus one year of training in office practices. Type 55 wpm, trained in word processing, post general ledger, have good interpersonal skills, and get along with most people. Can meet deadlines and handle pressure well.

Willing to work any hours.

Organized, honest, reliable, and hardworking.

**Joyce Hua**

**Home: (214) 173-1659**

**Message: (214) 274-1436**

**Email: [jhua@yahoo.com](mailto:jhua@yahoo.com)**

**Position: Programming/Systems Analyst**

More than 10 years of combined education and experience in data processing and related fields. Competent programming in Visual Basic, C, C++, FORTRAN, and Java, and database management. Extensive PC network applications experience. Have supervised a staff as large as seven on special projects and have a record of meeting deadlines. Operations background in management, sales, and accounting.

Desire career-oriented position, will relocate.

Dedicated, self-starter, creative problem solver.

**Paul Thomas**

**Home: (301) 681-3922**  
**Message: (301) 681-6966**  
**Cell phone: (301) 927-9856**

**Position: Research Chemist, Research Management  
in a small-to-medium-sized company**

Ph.D. in biochemistry plus more than 15 years of work experience. Developed and patented various processes with current commercial applications worth many millions of dollars. Experienced with all phases of lab work with an emphasis on chromatography, isolation, and purification of organic and biochemical compounds. Specialize in practical pharmaceutical and agricultural applications of chemical research. Have teaching, supervision, and project management experience.

Married more than 15 years, stable work history, results and task oriented, ambitious, and willing to relocate.

**Richard Straightarrow**

**Home: (602) 253-9678**  
**Message: (602) 257-6643**  
**E-mail: RSS@email.cmm**

**Objective:** Electronics installation, maintenance, and sales

Four years of work experience plus a two-year A.S. degree in Electronics Engineering Technology. Managed a \$360,000/year business while going to school full time, with grades in the top 25%. Familiar with all major electronic diagnostic and repair equipment. Hands-on experience with medical, consumer, communication, and industrial electronics equipment and applications. Good problem-solving and communication skills. Customer service oriented.

Willing to do what it takes to get the job done.

Self motivated, dependable, learn quickly.

**Juanita Rodriguez**

Message: (639) 361-1754  
Email: jrodriguez@email.cmm

Position: Warehouse Management

Six years of experience plus two years of formal business course work. Have supervised a staff as large as 16 people and warehousing operations covering over two acres and valued at more than \$14,000,000. Automated inventory operations resulting in a 30% increase in turnover and estimated annual savings more than \$250,000. Working knowledge of accounting, computer systems, time and motion studies, and advanced inventory management systems.

Will work any hours.

Responsible, hardworking, and can solve problems.

**Deborah Levy**

**Home: (213) 432-8064**  
**Pager: (212) 876-9487**

**Position:** Hotel Management Professional

Four years of experience in sales, catering, and accounting in a 300-room hotel. Associate degree in Hotel Management plus one year with the Boileau Culinary Institute. Doubled revenues from meetings and conferences. Increased dining room and bar revenues by 44%. Have been commended for improving staff productivity and courtesy. I approach my work with industry, imagination, and creative problem-solving skills.

Enthusiastic, well-organized, and detail-oriented.



Jonathan Michael

Cell phone: (614) 788-2434

E-mail: jonn@pike.org

Objective: Management

More than 7 years of management experience plus a B.S. degree in business. Managed budgets as large as \$10 million. Experienced in cost control and reduction, cutting more than 20% of overhead while business increased more than 30%. Good organizer and problem solver. Excellent communication skills.

Prefer responsible position in a medium-to-large business.

Cope well with deadline pressure, seek challenge, flexible.

## Other Job Search Correspondence

Besides thank-you notes and JIST Cards, you can send a variety of other items to people during your job search. Following are brief comments about some of these ways of communicating with potential employers.

### ***Follow-Up Letters After an Interview***

You might want to send follow-up correspondence after an interview to solve an employer's problem, present a proposal or an idea, or reinforce the case for hiring you. Earlier in this chapter you saw some examples of letters and notes that were sent following an interview, whether or not it was for an available opening. Remember, you want to stay in contact with people who might be able to hire you in the future even if they cannot now. A good way to keep the connection going is to present a proposal or idea that will be of interest to the person you met. Then you can follow up again to discuss your idea of how to solve a problem for them. The sample letter from Jamie Van Horn (page 114, Figure 4-7) shows one way to suggest an idea.

When you have interviewed for a specific job, your follow-up letter is a prime opportunity to reinforce that you are the right person for that job.

What have you done in the past that makes it likely you will succeed in the new position? These are the items you should emphasize in your follow-up letter. Also share ideas for helping to meet the specific challenges that you discussed during the interview. The sample letter from Kathy Miller (page 116, Figure 4-9) demonstrates effective follow-up to an interview.

## ***Job Proposals***

In some cases, you could submit a much more comprehensive proposal that would essentially justify your job. If a job opening were available, you could submit an outline of what you would do if hired. If no job is available, you could submit a proposal that would create a job and state what you would do to make it pay off.

When writing such a proposal, you must be specific in telling an employer what you would do and what results these actions would bring. For example, if you propose to increase sales, how would you do it and how much might sales increase? Tell the employer what you could accomplish, and he or she might just create a new position for you. This situation happens more often than you probably realize.

Here are two simple job proposals that clearly show that there is more *benefit* than *cost* to hiring each employee.

## Figure 4-10: A Job Proposal for an Installation Assistant

### Job Proposal Installation Assistant for Acme Shutters

*Save \$100 per day, serve customers faster,  
and improve the efficiency of your installation team.*

#### Summary of Situation

Currently your delivery and installation team consists of two people, senior installation specialists who can professionally install both interior and exterior shutters. They earn approximately \$30 per hour and average two complete installations per day.

While most of the work on each shutter installation can be done by one person, there are several steps where two people are required for measuring, lifting, and visually checking the installation for evenness and aesthetics.

#### Proposal

I propose that Acme add a third person to the team: an Installation Assistant. In this role I would fetch and carry hardware and supplies to the installers. I could drive back to the shop to eliminate down time when equipment breaks or is missing from their supply. I would make each of them more efficient because they would not be pulled off their own job to measure, lift, or check the work of their installation partner.

I am an experienced construction assistant, used to ferrying tools and supplies. In my last job I helped experienced finish carpenters and was recognized for “making our work more efficient.” I am a licensed driver and have an excellent work record for attendance and punctuality.

#### Benefits

Adding an assistant would cost \$80 per day, assuming an hourly rate of \$10 and an 8-hour day. Based on my observation of the installation team, my services would save them 2 hours per average installation, for savings of \$60 per installation (two hours at \$30/hour) or \$120 per day. Not only that, but their increased efficiency would allow them to start and possibly complete three installations per day rather than two, for added savings and greater customer satisfaction.

I would be pleased to discuss this proposal in more detail at your convenience.

**Lawrence Rusk**  
312-459-1276

## Figure 4-11: A Job Proposal for an Outside Sales Representative

**Employment Proposal:**  
**Outside Sales Representative, Ferris Printing**

**Proposed by:**  
**Thomas Matthews**  
75 Swan Terrace, Pittsfield, MA 01201  
413-754-6612  
tom\_matthews@aol.com

**BENEFITS TO FERRIS PRINTING:**

- Bring in at least \$100,000 per year in new business.
- Improve service to your best customers through on-site printing consultation.
- Become primary point of contact for customers, freeing up time of specialized production workers now spent on the phone with customers (at least one hour per day per worker).
- Smooth out business ups-and-downs that currently occur because company owner is unable to devote full time to sales.

**MY BACKGROUND:**

I am an experienced print-shop worker (7 years) who knows how to present print material to the customer. Most recently I have gained sales experience and have been successful in the extremely challenging environment of office-supply sales.

I understand that your customers value quality and efficiency as well as the right price, and I know how to ensure that projects are profitable for you.

I will call you on Friday to discuss this proposal in more detail.

Thank you.

Thomas Matthews

## Enclosures

In some cases, along with your correspondence you might want to include items such as a writing or graphic design sample. This can be appropriate, although we advise against sending too much material unless the employer requests it. Never send originals unless you are willing to lose them. Assume, in all cases, that what you send will be kept.

## Self-Sticking Notes

You have surely used those little notes that stick to papers, walls, and other things. There's a size usually called flags that are smaller and narrower than most of the square stick-on notes you probably use. Some even have an arrow design on them. These flags can be useful when calling attention to specific points on attachments or to provide additional details.

**Tip:** Use one or two self-sticking notes at the most. Avoid making your correspondence look like a patchwork quilt.

## List of References

Once employers begin to get serious, they may want to contact your references as part of their final screening process. So that you can respond immediately when asked for your references, we suggest that you prepare a list of people to contact. This list should include the complete name, title, organization, address, e-mail, and phone number for each reference. You should include information about how each person knows you. For example, indicate that Ms. Rivera was your immediate supervisor for two years.

If you have any question whether a person will provide you with a positive reference, discuss this in advance so that you know what the individual is likely to say about you. If it is not positive, drop this person from your list.

### *Lining Up References*

Some job seekers are concerned about providing references because their prior employers have strict policies not to disclose anything except dates of employment. No matter what the policy at your prior employers is, it is your responsibility to find four, five, or six people who can provide a detailed reference about your work abilities.



Your references do not have to be prior supervisors or employers. They can be colleagues, subordinates, vendors, customers, prior employees, people who have worked with you on a volunteer effort, or anyone else who has genuine insight into your work abilities. Be sure to ask permission before providing their names and contact information!

We recommend that you take the time to prepare your references by sending them information on the types of jobs you now seek, a current resume, JIST Card, and other details. Give them a reminder call when you anticipate that there is going to be a reference check.



## **Letters of Reference**

To supplement your list of telephone and e-mail references, we suggest you request previous employers and other references to write a letter that you can submit to others when asked. Again, we do not recommend that you provide references or other supplemental information unless you have been asked.

If the letters of reference are positive, the advantages are clear. If a letter is negative or so-so, at least you now know that there is a problem with this reference. Depending on the situation, you might contact this previous employer and negotiate what he or she will say if and when called during a pre-employment check.

## **Unsolicited Letters Requesting an Interview or Other Assistance**

We want to discourage you from sending out unsolicited letters as a primary technique. Even though many job search books recommend sending out lots of unsolicited resumes and cover letters, the evidence is overwhelming that this method does not work for most people. Doing the same thing on the Internet often results in the same outcome. The rare exception is if your skills are very much in demand.

We do think that sending a letter or e-mail to people with whom you share a common bond, such as alumni or members of a professional group, can be reasonably effective. This is particularly so if you are looking for a job in another city or region and you send a letter asking someone to help you by providing names of contacts there. Several of the sample cover letters provide examples of this technique, and it does work, particularly if you follow up by phone and e-mail.

Here is an example of a “broadcast” letter that was sent to members of an alumni group.

### Figure 4-12: A Sample Broadcast Letter

**SHAWNA TAYLOR**

shawna@att.net

4540 Riverview Terrace, Covington, KY 41016  
Home 859-245-0290 – Mobile 859-304-2094

March 30, 2009

Larry Anderson  
VP Sales & Marketing  
Sensational Software  
259-A Research Boulevard  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Larry:

May I ask your advice and assistance? I was given your name by the Fuqua alumni office and am hoping to tap into your local network as I seek to return to the Raleigh area.

Since graduating from Fuqua, and completing a 16-month MBA Enterprise Corps assignment in Ghana, I've spent an enjoyable five years in software marketing—developing strategy, evaluating marketing channels, and building strategic alliances.

Now I'm looking for a new challenge, where my proven strengths in strategic market planning can add value to a dynamic organization.

If you know of:

**An opportunity...** in strategic marketing for a technology company...

**A company...** that has aggressive growth plans and needs marketing leadership...

**An individual...** at a technology or other high-growth company who would be interested in my background...

I'd greatly appreciate hearing your ideas and referrals.

My resume (enclosed) gives a comprehensive synopsis of my experience and accomplishments. I welcome your advice and value your expertise as I look for the next exciting career opportunity.

Many thanks... I'll phone in a few days to hear your thoughts.

Best regards,

Shawna Taylor

enclosure

## Key Points: Chapter 4

Here's a summary of the key points of this chapter:

- Send thank-you notes to everyone you meet with and everyone who has helped you during your job search.
- Send your thank-you notes immediately—within 24 hours of your meeting.
- For a post-interview note, take the opportunity to build on points made during your meeting. Remind your reader why you are a great fit for the job or the organization.
- Use quick notes as informal communications with people you know or people you've met.
- Create and use JIST Cards—small but powerful communicators that have been proven to get results.
- Compile your reference list carefully and let your references help you with your job search.
- Use additional materials such as enclosures, self-sticking notes, job proposals, and broadcast letters and e-mails as appropriate. When used with discretion, they can be effective.
- Keep in touch with people who have helped you during your job search to stay at the top of their minds and receive ongoing assistance.



# Improve Your Resume in 15 Minutes

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We assumed that you had already developed your resume before choosing this book to help you with cover letters. For that reason, we're not going to tell you step-by-step how to write a resume. We do, however, want to give you some ways to quickly improve your resume and really boost its power and effectiveness.

From looking at literally thousands of resumes every year, we have identified some of the most common problems that cause a resume to be ineffective. And we have concentrated our advice in this chapter on how you can address these specific problems if they exist within your resume.

## Sources of Additional Information

You can get more help from published sources of resume information, as well as professional writers and career counselors.

### **Resume Books**

If you want more help than the resume overview this chapter provides, we suggest you consider one or more of the following books by the authors:

- ***30-Minute Resume Makeover***: Part of the *Help in a Hurry* series and similar in format and approach to *15-Minute Cover Letter*, this book offers to-the-point advice and good examples to quickly “rev up” your resume (Louise Kursmark, JIST Publishing).
- ***Expert Resumes series***: A series of books with solid advice and lots of sample resumes related to specific fields and situations, including health care, managers and executives, teachers and educators, engineers, career changers, computer and Web jobs, people returning to work, and others (Wendy S. Enelow and Louise M. Kursmark, JIST Publishing).

- ***Executive's Pocket Guide to ROI Resumes and Job Search:***  
Addressing the specific needs of executives, this slim book provides superb examples of executive resumes and additional documents such as leadership addenda, executive job proposals, and executive biographies along with a six-week action plan to jump-start your career transition (Louise Kursmark and Jan Melnik, JIST Publishing).
- Other helpful JIST-published resume books include *America's Top Resumes for America's Top Jobs*, *Résumé Magic*, *Gallery of Best Resumes* (series), and others.

All these and many other JIST resume books are available at [www.jist.com](http://www.jist.com) or at any bookstore or online retailer.

## **Professional Resume Writers and Career Counselors**

If you want professional help with writing your resume, we suggest that you consult with an expert who belongs to one of the internationally recognized professional resume writer associations noted here. A member directory on each Web site will help you find the help you need.

- Association of Online Resume & Career Professionals ([www.aorcp.com](http://www.aorcp.com))
- Career Directors International ([www.careerdirectors.com](http://www.careerdirectors.com))
- Career Management Alliance ([www.careermanagementalliance.com](http://www.careermanagementalliance.com))
- Career Professionals of Canada ([www.careerprocanada.ca](http://www.careerprocanada.ca))
- National Resume Writers' Association ([www.nrwaweb.com](http://www.nrwaweb.com))
- Professional Association of Resume Writers & Career Coaches ([www.parw.com](http://www.parw.com))

For detailed information on how to choose the right resume writer for you, consult the *Directory of Professional Resume Writers: How to Find and Work with a Pro to Accelerate Your Job Search* (Louise Kursmark, JIST Publishing). This book also contains a list of recommended resume writers in many specialty areas.

## Three Ways to Improve Your Resume

The issues we see most often in ineffective resumes relate to clarity, focus, relevance, and appearance. Our advice to counteract these problems is quite simple:

1. Be sure your objective is clear.
2. Highlight your achievements.
3. Format for readability, impact, and clarity.

In the following sections, we explore these areas of advice in more detail and provide samples that illustrate each point. And so that you can improve your resume in about 15 minutes, we've created an exercise for each point.

### ***Be Sure Your Objective Is Clear***

Your contacts and employer prospects are often extremely busy. They will appreciate it if you give them a resume they can quickly skim to gather essential information. Right from the top, be sure that your readers can easily understand who you are, what you are good at, and what you want to do.

One way to accomplish this task is to lead off your resume with an Objective statement. If you choose this format, *be specific!* A vaguely worded resume is of no help to readers, and it doesn't add any value to your document. Your Objective statement should be crisp and clear. It should include some indication of the benefit you offer, not just the job you want.

Job seekers who "don't want to eliminate anything" or want to "leave themselves open" to whatever comes along usually find that employers are not very responsive. Busy hiring authorities just don't have the time or the interest to figure out what kind of work you can do; that's what you need to know and need to tell them in your job search documents, phone calls, e-mails, and meetings.

## A Before-and-After Example

Here is a sample Objective statement:

### *Before:*

**OBJECTIVE:** *A challenging, rewarding position where I can use my education, skills, and experience and where there is opportunity for advancement.*

**What's wrong with it:** It is vague. What kind of job do you want? It does not state clearly what you have to offer (everyone has some kind of “education, skills, and experience”). It does not communicate value to the employer; instead, it talks about what *you* want (“opportunity for advancement”).

### *After:*

**OBJECTIVE:** *A position as claims adjuster where my deep knowledge of claims processing will result in faster turnaround, smaller payouts, and greater agent and client satisfaction.*

**What's right with it:** It is clear and concise, communicates specific expertise, and includes information of value to the employer.

**Tip:** *If you are not sure what kind of job you want, consider exploring your possibilities at greater length before putting together your resume and starting your job search. At the very least, identify the specific skills you want to use so that readers understand at least generally the type of work you want to do. Otherwise, if you don't know what you are looking for, they won't be able to help you.*

## Consider an Alternative to an Objective Statement

Today's resumes usually start off with a Summary of Qualifications or other type of introduction rather than a Job Objective. There are several benefits to using this strategy:

- You can more fully express the value that you have to offer.
- A summary can be longer and more detailed than an Objective.
- You can carefully present just the right information that will position you for the type of jobs you are seeking—in a sense, setting up your reader to expect the information that will follow in the rest of the resume.
- You will appear to be more up to date with current trends.

If you choose to use a Summary, once again be certain that your expertise is crystal-clear and related to the job you seek now. Upon reading your summary, your audience should be in no doubt about who you are, what you're good at, and how you can help them. Consider the difference between these two Summaries for the same person:

**Before:**

**Qualifications Summary**

- *Superior record of growing sales and increasing profitability*
- *Functional experience in sales, marketing, and logistics*
- *Industry experience in automotive, hospitality, health care, and logistics*

**What's wrong with it:** We don't know what type of position this person wants or at what level.

**After:**

**General Manager**

**Operations • Sales • Marketing • Logistics**

Track record of exceeding goals and building top-performing operations in every assignment during progressive career with national, international, and Fortune 500 companies in automotive, hospitality, health-care, and logistics industries. Strategically focused on profit enhancement through performance improvement. Repeatedly successful meeting diverse challenges including turnaround, integration, ownership change, and structural overhaul.

**Tip:** A "headline" format (like the one used in the General Manager example) is a great way to quickly communicate who you are. You can use a job title ("Sales Manager") or a broader functional heading ("Advertising / Marketing / Public Relations"). Use sub-headings to call out more specifics that will clue the reader in to your areas of expertise. Most of the resume samples later in this chapter use the headline format. It's attractive and very effective.

**What's right with it:** We now know that this individual is a General Manager. Areas of functional responsibility are spelled out below the title to help the reader. The brief paragraph is loaded with value and benefits for the employer.

## 15-MINUTE EXERCISE

Review your objective or introduction. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my objective clear, precise, and specific? (Does it jump off the page?)
- Can readers immediately tell who I am and what I'm good at?
- Have I shown ways that I can benefit an organization?

If not, fill in the blanks of the following formula to create a quick introduction that will be more powerful and clear than your current version.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Position title) with \_\_\_\_\_ (years) of experience in \_\_\_\_\_ (function or industry). Track record of \_\_\_\_\_ (key accomplishment areas) and proven ability to \_\_\_\_\_ (more accomplishment areas). \_\_\_\_\_ (intangible skills area) that \_\_\_\_\_ (value offered).

### **Example 1:**

*Mechanical engineer with 12 years of experience in the automotive industry. Track record of successful, cost-effective product development and proven ability to rapidly adapt designs to meet evolving customer needs. Strong management, communications, and team-building skills that ensure on-time, on-budget project completion.*

### **Example 2:**

*Radiologic technician with 5 years of experience in both hospital-based and standalone facilities. Proven ability to manage a high patient volume while delivering excellent customer service. Strong technical skills, patient skills, and teamwork abilities that contribute to successful operation of a first-class radiology department.*

(continued)

(continued)

**Example 3:**

*Retail manager with 15 years of experience with major retailers (Macy's, The Gap, K-Mart) and a track record of increasing profitability, reducing staff turnover, improving community relations, and designing creative marketing and merchandising programs. Strong leadership skills and proven ability to create a team culture.*

**Example 4:**

*Purchasing professional with 9 years of experience in manufacturing industries. Track record of reducing costs at least 10% per year and proven ability to implement Six Sigma methodologies within the procurement organization. Strong supplier relationship and negotiation skills that result in both immediate benefits and favorable long-term agreements.*

This “fill-in-the-blanks” exercise shows one way to write and present your summary. The sample resumes later in this chapter demonstrate several different approaches. If this exercise doesn't give you the results you want, review the other examples to see whether another style better fits your circumstances. There are no hard-and-fast rules about how to present this information; what's important is that your message is clear, concise, and sharply focused.

## **Highlight Your Achievements**

Consider this: When you write a job description in your resume, you are writing about the duties, tasks, and responsibilities that are assigned to anyone holding that particular job. In fact, any person holding that job could have the identical paragraph on his or her resume! How different it is when you write about the *achievements* that are unique to you. You not only customize your resume but also communicate to a future employer that you performed your job effectively—not just what you were “responsible for,” but what you actually did.

A resume that includes only job descriptions is bland and uninformative. A resume that highlights your achievements sizzles! It will put you head and shoulders above the average job seeker.

When describing your accomplishments, once again *be specific*. Include numbers, percentages, and other hard evidence of results. Without these quantified results, your achievements will lack power.

## Achievement Statement Examples

Consider the difference between these before-and-after examples.

### **Before:**

- *Closed multimillion-dollar deals with top-tier companies.*

### **After:**

- *Closed 60+ deals with top-tier companies (DaimlerChrysler, Hallmark, Disney) and generated more than \$100 million in revenue in first year of product launch.*

### **Before:**

- *Improved accounting processes to increase efficiency and speed up the monthly closing process.*

### **After:**

- *Cut 9 days from monthly close (15 days to 6) and saved \$50K in annual labor costs (one full-time employee) by partially automating the close process to eliminate the need for double manual entry of branch accounts.*

### **Before:**

- *Led numerous Kaizen events to dramatically improve production time and inventory turns.*

**Tip:** We recommend that you just briefly describe your actual job scope/job duties. It is important to put readers in the picture so that they understand the context of your achievements. But you don't need to spell out all the details of your day-to-day job activities. Hiring authorities understand the general responsibilities of most jobs; what they want to know is how you performed in that job. It is far more effective to expand on your achievements and minimize the description of your job duties, rather than the other way around.



**After:**

- *Led 6–9 Kaizen blitz events and 80+ improvement projects yearly. In four years, reduced total production time from 50 days to 3 days and improved inventory turns from 4 to 11.*

**Before:**

- *Consistently met or exceeded monthly, quarterly, and yearly sales goals.*

**After:**

- Met or exceeded every sales goal for 4 straight years:

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Performance to Goal	125%	121%	101%	126%

## Questions to Ask Yourself

Every position has specific expectations for performance. When you are considering your achievements and how best to present them, think about how your performance was evaluated and specific ways you were able to help the organization. These questions will help get your ideas flowing:

- Did I make money for the company? (Increase sales or other source of revenue?) If so, how much? How does that compare to what was expected of me? How does it compare to my peers or to industry averages?
- Did I save money? How much? How?
- Did I improve efficiency or productivity? How much? How?
- Did I save time? How much? How?
- Did I help the organization achieve a specific goal? What was it, what did I do, and what were the specific outcomes?
- Did I complete projects or assignments faster than expected? What are some examples?

- Did I solve a specific problem? What were the specific benefits that resulted?
- Did I attract new customers or retain existing customers? How many? How did my effort benefit the organization?
- What specific performance goals were established for me when I took the position or at the start of each year? How did I perform against those goals?
- Did I go “above and beyond” my job description to achieve something? If so, what was it, and what was the specific outcome?



### **15-MINUTE EXERCISE**

Review your resume and see if you have written very specific, quantified achievements. If not, use the preceding questions to come up with three or four specific achievement statements for your most recent position. Then move backwards to earlier positions as time allows.

#### **Most Recent Position**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Next Most Recent Position**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Next Most Recent Position**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Quick Tips for Writing Achievement Statements

Here are a few tips for putting together effective achievement statements for your resume:

- As you move backward in time, as a general rule you can include less detail and fewer achievements for each position.
- Be sure that your achievement statements support your current goal. You do not need to write about everything you've done. For example, if you are a retail sales manager who wants a job in human resources, your achievement statements should relate to your HR-related successes in your job (perhaps recruiting, training, and motivating your staff), not your sales and merchandising activities.
- If you plan to write a functional- or skills-based resume rather than a chronological format, we suggest that you first organize the material by chronology and write achievement statements for each position. Then you can reorganize the most powerful and relevant achievements under functional headings.

## Format for Readability, Impact, and Clarity

Good design not only improves the appearance of your resume but also makes your resume more readable, draws attention to the most important information, and guides the reader from one section to the next so that key information can be picked up in a quick skim.

With word-processing software, formatting options are endless. However, that doesn't mean you have to include an "endless" number of design elements or formatting enhancements in your resume. Keep in mind that your resume is a business document that should look professional. Readability, impact, and clarity are the key goals.

Here are a few quick formatting tips:

- **Use bold type to emphasize important information**—perhaps job titles, company names, numbers, and other important achievements. Be careful not to use too much bold type because you will reduce its effect.
- **Allow ample white space between sections of the resume.** White space lets the reader "breathe" before moving on to the next section.

- **Keep your paragraphs short** (three to five lines maximum). If a paragraph is too dense, it is uninviting to read, and good information will be skipped over.
- **Keep your bullet lists short** (five to six items maximum). More than that, and the reader will absorb only the top few items and lose focus when moving down the long list.
- **Clearly distinguish one section of the resume from the next.** You might use large or different type for section headings or perhaps insert a horizontal rule (line) between sections.
- **Be consistent in how you format similar information.** For example, all your job titles should be presented the same way; all company names should appear the same; section headers should be distinct from the rest of the resume but consistent for all headers; and so forth. When you are consistent, you provide clues to your reader about what kind of information you are presenting. A consistent presentation helps them read faster and understand more quickly.
- **Use a readable type size,** typically between 9 and 12 points for body copy. Some fonts (such as Verdana) are very readable at 9-point size, whereas others (such as Times New Roman) are quite small and rather hard to read at 10-point size. Therefore, adjust the point size in accordance with the fonts you use so your letter can be easily read.

## ***Adapt Your Resume for Electronic Transmission***

Because so much business correspondence takes place electronically, it is essential that you be able to use your resume appropriately for e-mail, online applications, and other electronic methods. There are several different formats you can use, each with its advantages and limitations.

### **Microsoft Word**

Microsoft Word is the standard word-processing software used by most businesses. It is important that you be able to send your resume in MS Word (.doc) format so that your recipients can easily open and view it.

If you do not have Microsoft Word on your computer, you can try saving your file in Rich Text Format (.rtf). This kind of file usually can be opened by MS Word. Be sure you test this out by sending the RTF file to a friend who has Microsoft Word.

You can also visit your library or a local copy shop (such as FedEx Kinko's) where you can use the computer and convert your resume to MS Word format. Then save the file on a disk or flash drive, bring it home, and send it as an attachment from your home computer.

## **PDF**

Adobe's Portable Document Format (.pdf) is a helpful means of converting your file to a graphic that can easily be opened and read by anyone who downloads Adobe's free Acrobat Reader from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

The advantages to this format are that your page layout remains intact and you don't have to worry about matching up word-processing programs with employers. Downsides are that the graphic format is not "readable" as a text file into resume storage systems, and it is a little more awkward for recipients to deal with this format compared to the MS Word style they are likely accustomed to.

If you do not own the full version of Adobe Acrobat Distiller, you can access several sites on the Internet for free conversion of your resume to PDF format. Two we like are [www.pdfonline.com](http://www.pdfonline.com) and [www.k2pdf.com](http://www.k2pdf.com). The Adobe site itself, <https://createpdf.adobe.com/index.pl/>, offers a subscription service. Mac-based versions of MS Word as well as newer versions of MS Word for Windows offer PDF creation capabilities right within the software, so no additional software or service is necessary.

After converting your file, take the time to open and view it before sending it anywhere. Sometimes formatting glitches occur, so you will have to make adjustments and reconvert the file.

## **Text-Only (ASCII)**

Many Web sites require that you submit your resume as a text file without any formatting, boldfacing, or other design elements. This version, although plain and essentially unformatted, is entirely readable by any computer.

You will need to follow a few simple steps to create the plain text version of your resume:

1. Create a new version of your resume using the "Save As" feature of your word-processing program. Select "text only," "ASCII," or "Plain Text (\*.txt)" in the "Save As Type" option box.
2. Give a new name to this version and close the new file.

3. Reopen the file, and you'll find that your word processor has automatically reformatted your resume into Courier font, removed all formatting, and left-justified the text.
4. The removal of all formatting is likely to create some appearance problems that you will need to correct. To promote maximum readability when sending your resume electronically, reset the margins to 2 inches left and right, so that you have a narrow column of text rather than a full-page width. (This margin setting will not be retained when you close the file, but in the meantime you can adjust the text formatting for best screen appearance. For instance, if you choose to include a horizontal line [perhaps something like this: +++++] to separate sections of the resume, by working with the narrow margins, you won't make the mistake of creating a line that extends past the normal screen width. Plus, you won't add hard line breaks that create odd-length lines when seen at normal screen width.)
5. Review the resume and fix any glitches such as odd characters that may have been inserted to take the place of "curly" quotes, dashes, accents, or other nonstandard symbols.
6. Remove any tabs and adjust spacing as necessary. You might add a few extra blank spaces or move text down to the next line.
7. If necessary, add extra blank lines to improve readability.
8. Consider adding horizontal dividers to break the resume into sections for improved skimmability. You can use a row of any standard type-writer symbols, such as \*, -, (, ), =, +, ^, or #.

When you close the file, it will be saved with the .txt file extension. When you are ready to use it, just open the file, select and copy the text, and paste it into the online application.



## 15-MINUTE EXERCISE

Take a look at your resume. What do you want to stand out? Go through with a highlighter and mark those sections or words that you want to emphasize—the most important, most impressive information that is included in your resume. Then edit your resume onscreen, adding formatting enhancements as appropriate to emphasize the areas you highlighted. Be sure you have included only the most important information and that you have been consistent. When you are done, print the resume and review it again to be sure that the right information, and the right amount of information, is highlighted and now catches your attention. If you want to spend some more time, use the samples that follow to get some new ideas for ways to organize, highlight, and present information in your resume.

## Sample Resumes

The 12 resumes that follow represent a broad variety of professions in diverse industries. But they follow all our rules of resume writing. The objective is clear, accomplishments are highlighted, and each resume showcases a clean, effective design in which the important information stands out. Overall, the resumes are well organized and easy to skim for key information.

You can use these resumes to help you increase the readability, impact, and clarity of your resume—so that your resume will complement your cover letter and build on the positive impression you worked so hard to establish in your cover letters, e-mail follow-ups, and initial phone calls.

All the sample resumes were written by Louise Kursmark.



## Resume 1

**Comments:** For a maintenance mechanic who is a true “jack of all trades” and wants to show the diversity of his skills and experience.

### Matt Young

249 Maple Grove Road, East Haven, CT 06512  
203-467-1276 ■ mattyoung@gmail.com

#### MAINTENANCE MECHANIC

A true “handyman,” mechanically inclined and extremely versatile, with more than 20 years of experience successfully handling a wide range of maintenance functions. Creative, quick, and resourceful in troubleshooting problems and finding solutions that minimize cost and downtime without sacrificing safety. Professional in workmanship and work ethic.

#### Areas of Experience

Mechanical Systems	Welding & Fabricating	Plant Maintenance
Gas Metal Arc Welding (Mig)	Hydraulics & Pumps	Plant Modifications
Electrical Mechanical Equipment	Pipefitting	Gas & Diesel Engines
Gear Drives & Chain Drives	Insulation	Railroad Equipment
Fleet Maintenance	Skid Loaders	Specialty Equipment

#### EXPERIENCE

##### **Production Welder, 11/08–5/09** (temporary position) Nutmeg Medical, New Haven, CT

- Completed 80-hour weld training program to meet stringent FDA requirements for the fabrication of health care equipment.
- Delivered high volume of top-quality work, welding 55 beds a day and averaging 15 seconds per weld.

##### **Shop Foreman ■ Mechanic ■ Welder, 1998–2008** Short Line Construction, Branford, CT

- Managed projects and crew to keep railroad construction company fully productive and operating smoothly.
- Scheduled and managed maintenance for fleet of 11 vehicles, 23 pieces of small-engine equipment, 17 railroad apparatus, and a semi truck.
- Designed, fabricated, built, and modified equipment.
- Ordered parts and managed inventory.

#### **Performance Highlights**

- Quickly solved equipment breakdowns and emergencies, keeping downtime to a minimum.
- Dismantled and rebuilt tie-inserter machine, avoiding need for new purchase (\$150K).
- Custom-built a truck to fit unusual demands of railroad equipment installation. Saved time and installation costs on every project thereafter.

##### **Maintenance Mechanic, 1991–1998** Chem-Tech Industries, Inc., East Haven, CT

- Worked both independently and on team projects to keep chemical plant running smoothly, with minimal downtime and a low rate of preventable accidents.
- Involved in both routine maintenance and special projects such as motor replacements and pipe repairs that required production shut-down.

##### **Journeyman, 1986–1991** Reinforced Concrete Ironworkers Local 459, New Haven, CT

- Worked on the construction and repair of major power plants along the East Coast.

#### EDUCATION / TRAINING / CERTIFICATION / LICENSE

- Basic Welding, Advanced Welding, Metallurgy—Connecticut Mechanical Institute, 2 years
- Local 459 Ironworker Apprenticeship—2 years Basic, 1 year Welding
- Certified in Welding for Aircraft Hardware (Titanium, Inconel, Hastelloy, Rene, etc.)
- Certified to weld Nuclear Stainless Steel
- Class B CDL (Commercial Driver’s License)

## Resume 2

**Comments:** For a new grad whose education is a primary qualification; his prior experience is included to show his work ethic and ability to take on new challenges.

<p><b>Anthony T. LaMacchia</b> 84 George Street, Apt. 6B, San Francisco, CA 94117      415-795-0094 — tonylama@aol.com</p>	
<b>JOB TARGET</b>	<b>Software Design / Programming / Testing / Technical Support</b>
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ BS Computer Science</li> <li>■ Technical curiosity; satisfaction in operating “behind the scenes” to make things work</li> <li>■ Strong analytical, design, programming, and math skills</li> <li>■ Teamwork experience and record of working effectively on both group and individual projects</li> <li>■ Proven abilities to set and achieve goals, devise effective solutions, and defend opinions firmly and professionally</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<p>BS Computer Science / Minor in Math      2009 University of California at Berkeley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Senior Design Project: With 3 teammates, created program to analyze blood samples for the University of California Medical School.</li> <li>■ <b>Challenges:</b> Open-ended design challenge called for abstract thinking, extensive pre-programming analysis, and team discussions to clarify approach and objectives before writing code.</li> </ul>
<b>COMPUTER SKILLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Languages: C++, C, Java, Pascal</li> <li>■ Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, Windows XP and Vista</li> <li>■ Keyboarding: 85 wpm</li> </ul>
<b>LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<p>Selected for highly competitive Officer Candidate School, Quantico, VA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Challenges:</b> Completed math and technical academic testing, passing all components with grades of 80% or higher.</li> </ul> <p>Embarked on structured, rigorous fitness regimen to reach high level of physical fitness prior to entering demanding training program.</p>
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	<p>TDY Industries, San Mateo, CA      Mill Operator (Summers 2007, 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Challenges:</b> Rapidly completed training to operate large equipment including forklift truck and recycling machinery for firm that recycles plastics into blasting materials for military and aircraft customers.</li> </ul> <p>Only employee (other than owners) entrusted to work alone on site, operating all equipment. Also worked in a cooperative team environment to promote efficiency and productivity.</p> <p>Road Builders, San Francisco, CA      Field Technician (Summer 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Challenges:</b> As certified concrete tester, assessed quality of all freshly made concrete and made “go” or “no go” decisions that affected major construction projects.</li> </ul> <p>To ensure highest degree of quality and safety, stood my ground in enforcing quality decisions.</p> <p>Earned certification as ACI Concrete Field Testing Technician Grade I.</p>

## Resume 3

**Comments:** For a law-enforcement professional who wants to move from the sheriff's office to the police force of a large city.

### Peter M. Quinn

7509 Maple Drive  
East Haven, Connecticut 06555  
203-467-8585 peterquinn@snet.net

#### Law Enforcement Officer

- Graduate of Connecticut Police Officer Training; certified 2007.
- Proven ability to deal effectively with prisoners, establishing respect for authority while treating individuals fairly.
- Thorough, hard working, disciplined, and reliable, with a serious attitude and a career commitment to law enforcement.

#### Professional Experience

NEW HAVEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT 2006–Present

**Corrections Officer** ■ County Correctional Facility

Maintain inmate control over 100-plus prisoners in a dormitory-style jail. Supervise inmate behavior and respond to infractions. Count and lead prisoners to meals and recreation. Maintain detailed hourly logs and records of inmate transfers and other activities. Transport felons to higher security jails. Assume responsibility in other areas of the jail on an occasional basis.

- Developed skills in dealing with individuals of all types.
- Gained experience in effectively handling tense situations.
- Consistently achieved excellent performance evaluations.
- Member of Sheriff's Power Lifting Team; hold an American record in bench press.

#### Other Experience

RYDER'S, New Haven, CT 2005–2006

**Doorman/Bouncer**

GRANT ASSOCIATES, New Haven, CT 2003–2005

**Field Representative**

Negotiated and sold the services of a collection firm to business clients such as mortgage companies, doctors, and other health-care providers.

#### Education

**Connecticut Police Officer Training and Certification** (2007), CONNECTICUT POLICE OFFICERS ACADEMY, Storrs, CT

**Criminal Justice Degree Program** (2006–Present), QUINNIPIAC COLLEGE, Hamden, CT

**Graduate** (2003), NORTH HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL, North Haven, CT

- Member of Wrestling Team

## Resume 4

**Comments:** For a person who has performed both sales and service roles but wants to focus on client services.

<b>Cynthia Evans</b>	
	317-249-7590 Home • 317-217-9076 Mobile • evans@indy.rr.com 2594 West Allen Road, Indianapolis, IN 46218
<b>PROFILE</b>	<b>Client Services Professional</b>
<b>Value Offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record of top performance in demanding, high-volume customer-service roles.</li> <li>Strengths in organization, time management, and the development of efficient processes.</li> <li>Expert project management including meticulous note-taking and persistent follow-through.</li> <li>Customer-service orientation and effective communications skills at all levels.</li> <li>Impeccable record of attendance, timeliness, and dependability.</li> </ul>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>Midwest Health Partners, Indianapolis, IN</b> 2006–2009
	<b>PROVIDER RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVE, 2006–2009:</b> Promoted to sales/client services role, balancing cold-calling/outbound sales with attentive response to existing client inquiries. Tasked with expanding Midwest's network by securing contracts with medical groups, individual physicians, and hospital-based specialists. Efficiently scheduled and executed sales calls and marketing projects while managing heavy load of daily inbound service calls.
<b>Sales &amp; Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently achieved customer-satisfaction scores in the high 90s.</li> <li>Led the region in sales to hospital-based groups of specialty physicians—secured 10 new groups in 3 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization &amp; Project Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained detailed records of call history and created a foolproof follow-up system that ensured a consistent, persistent approach and led to excellent sales and service results.</li> <li>Wrote sales letters and executed mass-mailings to target physicians.</li> <li>Planned and coordinated meetings, events, and educational programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation &amp; Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represented Midwest Health at hospital-based health fairs.</li> <li>Delivered informational presentations in the offices of newly contracted physicians; thoroughly explained the Midwest network and its operational procedures to ensure compliance and minimize problems.</li> </ul>
	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/OFFICE MANAGER, 2004–2006:</b> Ensured smooth running of regional operation, managing all facets of office as well as a high volume of incoming calls.
<b>Special Sales Assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personally handled special projects for the Regional Director, such as cold-calling clients for contract updates and executing mass mailings for physician marketing. Finished all projects on or ahead of schedule and with consistently high quality and accuracy.</li> <li>Following merger, initiated hundreds of phone calls to introduce new doctors to Midwest Health and educate on policies/procedures.</li> </ul>
	<b>R.L. Stevens, Indianapolis, IN</b> 2000–2004
	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/WORD PROCESSOR:</b> Provided expert word processing support to 40–60 candidates in various stages of job transition.
<b>Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently met or exceeded goal of 24-hour turnaround while client load <i>doubled</i>.</li> <li>Twice nominated for Shining Star Award, the company's top performance award.</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Liberal Arts: Indiana University

## Resume 5

**Comments:** For a mortgage professional who wants a job with less emphasis on selling and more on servicing loan accounts.

### Casey van Horn

513-791-1265

6843 Thoroughbred Trail, Cincinnati, OH 45239

cvanhorn@aol.com

#### MORTGAGE LOAN PROCESSOR

Experienced loan processor, office manager, and sales leader, repeatedly successful in achieving goals, completing challenging assignments, and managing processes and projects requiring close attention to detail and follow-through. Ten years of progressive experience and a record of solid performance when taking on new challenges and special assignments.

#### EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

MORTGAGE LENDERS OF OHIO, Lebanon, OH

2007–Present

##### Processing/Office Manager

Manage fast pace of loan applications and office operations for branch of established mortgage firm. Interact extensively with clients both by telephone and face to face, gathering and recording personal and credit information to complete the loan application process. Schedule and attend closings.

- Accountable for timely submission of completed loan applications and supporting documents.
- Keep mortgage process on track and moving forward through heavy phone contact and persistent follow-up with attorneys, real estate agents, appraisers, and lenders.

VERIZON WIRELESS, Cincinnati, OH

2002–2006

##### Manager, Indirect Accounts, 2005–2006

Managed relationships with 37 retail accounts statewide. Conducted in-store visits and training sessions to boost product knowledge, educate on sales strategies, and ensure the attainment of monthly sales goals.

- Established new Cash & Carry account with a national retailer. Involved in entire project including store build-out, product merchandising, and inventory procurement.
- Recognized as expert resource by retailers—repeatedly requested to assist with special events.
- Twice earned Retail Sales Award for top monthly performance.
- VIP Sales Award, 2006.

##### Telesales Manager, 2004–2005

Directed all activities of Telesales unit, managing 14 customer-service staff with a focus on efficiency and customer satisfaction. Created weekly staffing schedules; processed weekly payroll and exception reports.

- Collaborated with marketing team to plan and implement a successful outbound-calling campaign.
- Procured, installed, and implemented Telecheck system in the department.

##### Account Executive, 2002–2004

Provided inside-sales support for retail locations, including special sales campaigns and events.

- Consistently met or exceeded individual sales goals, ensuring group achievement of sales objectives.
- Earned recognition for "Extraordinary Customer Satisfaction."

#### EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AA degree in Business, Raymond Walters College (University of Cincinnati).

Ongoing training in management techniques, sales skills, new products, and computer use.

## Resume 6

**Comments:** For a nurse with diverse experience; the list of skills and experience at the top shows broad capabilities.

### Ann-Margaret O'Leary

2479 Oceanview Terrace, Miami, FL 33132

(305) 491-1010 • ann-margaret@hotmail.com

#### REGISTERED NURSE: Critical Care / Medical / Oncology

Dedicated, hard-working nurse with 7 years of diverse healthcare experience and recent nursing education/RN certification. Recognized by supervisors, peers, and professors for team orientation, high-level critical-thinking skills, and desire for continuous learning. Record of initiative in alerting healthcare team to changing patient status. Exceptional work ethic.

Hospital and clinic experience includes:

- Monitoring vital signs
- Administering EKGs and X-rays
- Initiating oxygen therapy
- Caring for ventilated patients
- Bathing and tube-feeding
- Administering injections
- Educating patients and families
- Providing compassionate end-of-life care
- Using cardiac monitors/interpreting cardiac rhythms
- Drawing blood and initiating intravenous lines
- Assisting MDs with examinations and sterile procedures
- Operating autoclave/conforming to sterilization protocols
- Training new healthcare and administrative staff
- Communicating patient information to the healthcare team

#### HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

**MEDICAL ASSISTANT: Hialeah Urgent Care and Family Clinic, Hialeah, FL** 2006–Present

Serve a diverse patient population, beginning with triage and covering full range of urgent and ongoing care. Work cooperatively with physicians and other members of the healthcare team. Provide extensive patient education.

- Took on added responsibilities: taking X-rays and EKGs, performing lab work, calling in medication renewals, and arranging consultations with specialists.
- Selected to train all new employees, identifying and filling in knowledge gaps to build overall staff capability.

**PATIENT CARE ASSISTANT (CNA II): Miami-Dade Community Hospital, Miami, FL** 2006–Present

On a combined medical/oncology unit, provide high level of care to patients — monitoring vital signs, bathing and tube-feeding patients, communicating patient status to the nursing team, and delivering end-of-life care with empathy and compassion.

- Recognized for ability to identify significant changes in status based on observation, intuition, and patient interaction.
- Effectively prioritized care during periods of staff shortages, dealing appropriately with patient concerns and complex medical issues.

**CNA I, UNIT SECRETARY: South Florida Memorial Hospital, Miami, FL** 2005–2006

Assisted nurses with care of critically ill patients on an emergency unit.

- Monitored cardiac monitors, interpreted rhythms, and notified nursing staff of changes in rhythm, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate, and blood pressure.
- As unit secretary, input physician orders into computer, answered phones, and paged physicians.

**MEDICAL SPECIALIST: United States Army Reserves, Miami, FL** 2000–2006

Provided preventative and emergency care including air and land evacuation of injured soldiers.

- Earned EMT certification.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN: Dade County Rescue Squad, Miami, FL** 2003–2004

#### EDUCATION

**Associate Degree in Nursing/RN Certification, May 2007**

Miami-Dade Community College (NLN-accredited program), Miami, FL

- Held full-time nursing positions while carrying full course load.

**Medical Specialist Course, 2002**

Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Center and School, Ft. Sam Houston, TX

Fluent in Spanish. Proficient in a variety of computer applications.

## Resume 7

**Comments:** For a marketing professional, this resume clearly emphasizes numbers, brand names, and results.

### ROXANNE LOWE

617-823-4949

249 Marlborough Street, Boston, MA 02116

rolowe@comcast.net

#### MARKETING

##### PRODUCT MANAGEMENT ▶ PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ▶ PACKAGING

Track record of revenue growth, profit enhancement, and successful product-line management during 9 years in progressively challenging marketing roles. Strong foundation in market research and technology paired with creativity and the ability to innovate. Talent for leading and inspiring teams to top performance.

- ▶ **Set new business directions** by recognizing and seizing market opportunities.
- ▶ **Improved performance in all products and brands managed;** grew revenues, cut costs, developed unique retailer programs and packages, and improved brand image.
- ▶ **Effectively prioritized multiple projects** to align results with business objectives.

#### EXPERIENCE

CORE CORPORATION, INC., Woburn, MA

2000–2009

*(\$180M public company manufacturing and marketing consumer comfort products. Marquee brand is HappyFeet; key accounts include Wal-Mart, Federated, and other national retailers.)*

**SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER, 2006–2009**—Led marketing strategy and programs for 3 product lines totaling \$150M sales. Coordinated the efforts of design, product development, and manufacturing to deliver products for seasonal deadlines. Managed \$2M marketing budget. Also directed the development of sales brochures and marketing materials; developed and gave sales-force presentations on seasonal product lines; and managed national sales meetings for upper management and national sales organization.

##### Increased sales and profitability in all 3 brand segments:

- ▶ **Value Brands:**
  - Boosted profit margins from **25% to 39%** through continuous improvement efforts that removed cost from every point of production—sourcing, production, packaging, distribution.
  - Grew Wal-Mart program from **\$3M to \$7M** by identifying and capitalizing on sales trends.
- ▶ **HappyFeet™:**
  - Created and launched Premier Collection, increasing total brand sales **60% (\$5.8M to \$9.3M)**.
  - Redesigned product displays to accommodate **20%** more product without increasing costs.
- ▶ **CoreComfort™:**
  - Worked with manufacturing on technology-based line restage; product sales increased **31%**.
  - Developed new packaging that increased inventory flexibility and saved **\$95K** in first year.

**PRODUCT MANAGER, 2002–2006**—Recruited to join newly strengthened marketing team and challenged to improve performance of both private-label and branded products.

- ▶ Contributed to record sales performance, 2000: **\$148M, 9%** growth over prior year.
- ▶ Developed POP sales program that increased retail space by more than **200%**.
- ▶ Spearheaded a packaging restage that generated **\$8.1M** in incremental sales, reduced packaging costs **15%**, and improved packaging image and brand identification.

**MARKETING ASSISTANT, 2000–2002**

#### EDUCATION

**MBA**—Concentration: Marketing Management

Babson College, Wellesley, MA, 2006

**BSBA**—Concentration: Management

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, 2000

## Resume 8

**Comments:** For an accounting manager, this resume avoids repetitive lists of job duties and focuses on unique achievements.

### Sean L. Thomas, CPA

7529 Beech Avenue, Naperville, IL 60564  
(847) 555-1234 • seanthomas@yahoo.com

#### ACCOUNTING MANAGER / FINANCIAL ANALYST

Finance professional with a track record of cost savings and tight fiscal administration in both corporate and manufacturing environments. Verifiable accomplishments in corporate finance, plant accounting (both start-up and ongoing), and automated systems implementation.

Results-focused manager with proven ability to strategize, create project plans, implement, and follow through to completion. Effective communicator, skilled at gaining team support for key projects. Rapidly productive in new environments.

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PLANET INDUSTRIES, INC., Detroit, Michigan, 2001–Present  
*Global manufacturer of plastic films, aluminum extrusions, and vinyl extrusions.*

**Accounting Manager**, 2006–Present *Plant Start-up, Evanston, Illinois*  
Established all financial systems and controls for new manufacturing operation. Provided financial oversight during growth to \$60 million in annual sales, with monthly operating budget of \$700K.

- Spearheaded project to implement MRP II system. Oversaw in-house customization of software, system documentation, initial implementation and testing, and ongoing training to ensure active and appropriate use throughout the organization. Project completed on schedule and 5% under budget.
- Piloted an activity-based accounting program and prepared numerous cost/benefit analyses. Identified opportunities for increased efficiency and reduced operating costs, successfully quantifying criteria for capital projects.

**Project Analyst, Fixed Assets**, 2003–2006 *Corporate Headquarters, Detroit, Michigan*

- Implemented a fixed asset component to the company's mainframe system. Served as key project coordinator, tracking and documenting team activities to ensure successful completion — 3 weeks ahead of schedule, meeting all budget and performance parameters.

**Staff Accountant**, 2001–2003 *Corporate Headquarters, Detroit, Michigan*

- Performed cost accounting, budgeting, capital budget preparation, month-end closing, P&L statements, and full spectrum of corporate accounting functions.

#### PRIOR EXPERIENCE

- **Manager of Financial Reporting**, Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1999–2001
- **Fixed Asset Accountant**, GPA Packaging, Detroit, Michigan, 1998–1999
- **Cost / Budget Accountant**, Vinyl Corporation, Detroit, Michigan, 1995–1998

#### EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

**B.S. Accounting**, 1995: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
**CPA certification**, 1995



## Resume 9

**Comments:** For a marketing and sales professional, this resume uses the challenge-action-results (CAR) format to tell relevant “success stories.”

**Maria Trujillo**

29-A Primrose Court, Nashville, TN 37211  
(615) 455-4555 • mjtrujillo@hotmail.com

### MARKETING & SALES PROFESSIONAL

**Out-of-the-box thinker who devises innovative marketing and sales strategies that deliver results in competitive markets.** Expert in low-cost, high-ROI programs and fresh approaches to traditional projects. Well-organized and efficient manager who guides concepts to successful conclusion, with clear project plans and well-documented outcomes/results. Strong networker, relationship builder, and problem solver.

- B2B and B2C Marketing & Sales
- Dynamic Presentations
- Persistent Cold-Calling & Tenacious Follow-up
- Problem-Solving & Creative Workarounds
- Customer Relationship-Building
- Revenue & Profit Growth
- Contract Negotiations
- New Concept Introduction
- Benefits & Solution Selling
- Referral Network Development

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Primrose Path Residential Community**, Nashville, Tennessee 2006–Present

**MANAGER** Maintain high occupancy rates through effective marketing and sales activities for residential apartment community for senior adults. In addition, manage day-to-day operations, supervise staff, and oversee facility maintenance.

*Challenge* *Maintain occupancy in a niche market with constant attrition.*

*Actions*

- Through aggressive cold-calling and relationship development, established active referral network with professionals in health care and elderly services.
- Adapted sales presentation to focus on relevant features and benefits for individual audiences. Demonstrated excellent follow-through during lengthy, multi-step sales cycle.
- Increased response to advertising through new classification in rental-property publication; persistently pursued this idea to successful conclusion.

*Results*

**Reduced vacancy rate from 51% in 2006 to steadily maintained range of 1%–10% today. In first month on the job, conducted aggressive marketing campaigns that achieved occupancy for 90% of available units.**

**OC Apartments**, Nashville, Tennessee 2002–2006

**MANAGER** Oversaw all aspects of day-to-day operations of 128-unit apartment complex occupied by university students. Recruited, trained, supervised, and scheduled 4 full-time employees.

*Challenge* *Improve occupancy rate and stability of student-occupied complex; restore operating efficiency to poorly run facility.*

*Actions*

- Developed and implemented innovative marketing strategies to achieve goals for occupancy and stability. Created incentives for good grades and responsible occupancy; improved overall reputation of complex by increasing caliber of residents.
- Reorganized financial record-keeping, totally restructured the maintenance department, and tightly controlled and monitored expenses.

*Results*

**Improved occupancy from 80% to 100% within 5 months; consistently maintained high rate during tenure. Increased profitability by significantly reducing operating expenses.**

### EDUCATION

**Vanderbilt University**, Nashville, Tennessee

B.S. Communications/Management, 2000

## Resume 10

**Comments:** For a nightclub manager, this resume uses a bold format and functional headings to create eye appeal and draw attention to the most significant information.

# FRANKIE DURAZO

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## Nightclub General Manager

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**Fifteen-year track record of leading world-class establishments that achieve:**

- Consistent popularity
- Robust revenue and profit performance
- Exceptional safety records
- Strong revenue-security practices
- Positive community relationships
- Dedicated long-term staff

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<b>General Manager: Club Koko, Miami Beach, FL</b>	<b>1999–Present</b>
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Direct all business operations for world-renowned nightclub—a 15,000-sq.-ft. dance club with the world’s top DJs and weekly revenues exceeding \$100K. On board since start-up, put in place the operating procedures, security standards, and revenue safeguards pivotal to long-term success and profitable operation.

Recruit, train, and manage 42 staff. Manage financial operations—monthly budgets, payroll, assessments, and inventory. Ensure compliance with all building and safety codes; oversee building maintenance including A/C, plumbing, and electrical. Remain highly visible on the floor and personally handle all VIPs.

- Site selection & construction:** Assisted owners in locating and selecting site in up-and-coming South Beach neighborhood. Oversaw building construction and club layout. Represented owners at community meetings and before licensing boards.
- Revenue protection:** Established foolproof ticketing system that eliminates non-paying guests and guarantees revenue accountability. Set demanding standards for door staff and hold them accountable.
- Guest safety & security:** Created effective security system that minimizes use of illegal substances and promotes a safe environment—since launched, zero incidents. In demand as consultant to introduce similar systems in other New York clubs.
- Community relations:** Instituted street-side crowd control to minimize neighborhood disturbances. Personally visible and accessible to all neighbors.
- Special events:** Oversee highly profitable special events entailing club rental, custom decorating, and catering. Steadily grew special-event revenue 20% or more each year.
- City agency relations:** Personally secured and maintained up-to-date city licenses for fire safety and building security. Built excellent relationships with city fire and police departments.
- Staff loyalty & reliability:** In high-turnover industry, retained staff long term. Constantly improve staff skills through training. Create a positive, team-oriented culture.

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<b>Manager: Parrott’s Porch, Key West, FL</b>	<b>1994–1999</b>
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Turned around unprofitable, inefficient, poorly managed facility and created a lucrative restaurant/ nightclub that was so successful, owners invested in South Beach club (Club Koko) and brought me on as GM from day one.

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**Licenses / Certifications / Technical Skills**

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- Miami Fire Department certifications: Fire Drill Conductor, Maintenance, Public Assembly.
- Miami Health Department License for Food Service.
- Certified auto mechanic—sheet metal work, fabrication, and installation.
- Former union carpenter—scaffolding and rigging experience on high-rises.
- Licensed refrigeration and air conditioning technician—electrical and plumbing experience.
- Florida Real Estate License. Managed commercial property with zero tenant loss.

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Mobile: 305-209-8003	2532 Flamingo Lane, Coral Gables, FL 33146	FDurazo@hotmail.com
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## Resume 11

**Comments:** For an operations manager who has several stellar career achievements that are highlighted front and center.

### Paul Fontaine

(513) 555-0808

4725 Kemp Grove Road, Loveland, OH 45140

pfontaine@fuse.net

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#### Expertise: Technology Services Operations Management

Strategic Analysis and Planning – Management – Performance Improvements  
Marketing & Sales – Staff Development

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#### Career Highlights

- Led across-the-board operational improvements that helped a computer company grow 35% per year, outperforming aggressive goals and successfully positioning the company for acquisition. Retained as Operations Director following buy-out.
  - Developed service and customer focus as strong competitive advantages. Motivated staff and successfully instilled a strong client-first orientation in sales and service teams.
  - Juggled multiple challenges while maintaining peak performance. (Completed MBA while working full time.) Used exceptional multitasking skills to maintain a high level of personal productivity.
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#### Professional Experience

TECHNO-SOLUTIONS, INC., Cincinnati, OH

2003–Present

*Full-service computer solutions firm; purchased by Xy-Tech in 2004 for \$52 million*

##### Operations Director, 2004–Present

Direct all activities for rapidly growing computer services firm offering hardware, software, and network solutions to Fortune 100 clients. Accountable for sales, profitability, customer satisfaction, and all aspects of operations (inventory, purchasing, shipping & receiving), overseeing 12 direct and 60 indirect reports. Develop and implement strategic plans to achieve corporate goals for growth and profitability.

- Increased sales 35% annually, outperforming goal of 30%.
- Improved company-wide skill levels, morale, and teamwork through training, judicious hiring, and weeding out under-performing staff. Developed expert technical staff as a competitive advantage.
- Promoted company image as customer problem-solver able to deliver both long-range solutions and “fast fixes” for immediate productivity.
- Slashed product delivery time from 4 days to 1–2 days by realigning staff schedules and communicating urgency to vendors.
- Created and implemented aggressive sales, marketing, and advertising campaign targeting our key audience, MIS professionals.
- Consistently delivered excellent quality, value, and service, to the point where volume of referral business eliminated the need for costly advertising.

##### Management / Operations Consultant, 2003–2004

Challenged to develop operational improvements to deliver 30% annual growth. Analyzed entire operating structure; identified opportunities for significant improvement in customer service and business development.

- Offered permanent position as Operations Director as a result of findings and contributions as consultant.

AMERICAN CANDY, INC., Erlanger, KY

1999–2003

##### Production Supervisor

Over 4 years, achieved savings of \$175,000 through cost control and productivity enhancements; decreased absenteeism 75%; reduced defective product rate 10%.

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#### Education

MBA, 2005

BS Management Operations and Systems, 1999

XAVIER UNIVERSITY, Cincinnati, OH  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, Bloomington, IN

## Resume 12

**Comments:** For a senior executive, this resume emphasizes hard numbers and results with enough detail to explain how they were achieved.

<p><b>Dana T. Singer</b></p> <p>dtsinger@austin.rr.com</p>	<p>7551 Texas Trail Austin, TX 78728 Home: 512-555-8345 Office: 512-555-0904</p>
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**Senior Management Executive**

**Driving Strategic, Profitable Growth for Start-up to Fortune 500 Organizations**

Creative business strategist with a strong record of career achievements that include:

- Leading fast-growth start-ups
- Revitalizing flagging operations
- Delivering strong and sustained revenue growth
- Consolidating and cost-cutting to improve profit performance
- Repositioning sales strategies for long-term growth

Multimillion-dollar P&L responsibility for Fortune 500 and early-stage companies with U.S. and international operations. Extensive M&A experience, from assessment through integration. History of identifying and capturing beneficial strategic partnerships.

Unquestionable integrity and total commitment to providing outstanding customer service and creating value for shareholders.

**Experience and Accomplishments**

**Safety Software (Subsidiary of Software Central, Inc.),** Austin, TX 2007–Present

*World's largest provider of public-safety software and consulting services — \$500M revenue, 12 global locations*

**PRESIDENT**

Brought on board to spearhead rapid, profitable growth — to create and execute growth strategies, develop a strong management team, acquire and integrate complementary businesses, negotiate strategic alliances, and drive sales/business development. Manage P&L, operations, and sales. Directly manage 4 VPs who oversee 400 employees in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

- Grew revenues from \$120M to \$500M through acquisition and organic growth.
- Increased EBITDA from 10% to 17% through consolidation strategies.
- Spearheaded active acquisition drive and managed due diligence, negotiations, and integration for 5 acquisitions in 2 years.
- Retained experienced, entrepreneurial managers in each location, successfully renewing management contracts of more than 80% of original business owners into second year of Safety Software ownership.
- Vigorously pursued strategic partnerships to build visibility, support the development of complementary products and services, and firmly position Safety as the industry leader. Partners include:
  - Manufacturers of handheld and in-vehicle data terminals
  - Professional associations within the law-enforcement and fire-prevention fields
  - Leading online training companies specializing in public-safety training
  - Major web portals with high visibility and credibility in the public-safety industry

**CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT, SOFTWARE CENTRAL, INC.** (concurrent role)

Participate in strategy and business planning as a member of the executive team of Software Central, a fast-growing \$200M conglomerate of niche software providers.

- Instrumental in acquisition of P-Plus, the market-share leader in PDA peripherals.
- Leveraged Safety Software's law enforcement expertise to position Software Central for growth opportunity in public-safety database enhancement.

(continued)



## Key Points: Chapter 5

Here are the key points of this chapter:

- Many resumes lack power and effectiveness because of a few key problem areas.
- You can quickly improve your resume by evaluating these areas and editing, organizing, and formatting to be sure that
  - Your objective is crystal clear.
  - You have highlighted your unique achievements.
  - Your format promotes readability, impact, and clarity.
- Sample resumes provided in this chapter will give you good ideas for content, style, design, and overall presentation that you can adapt for your own unique resume.



## Chapter 6

# Find a Job Fast

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This chapter is designed to provide you with an overview of career management and job seeking skills. It illustrates quick but helpful techniques you can use to shorten the time it takes to get a job.

You might have jumped to this chapter right away or perhaps after swiftly reviewing the strategies we suggest for quick yet effective cover letters and resumes. We hope that is the case, because the value of your resume and cover letter is in what they will help you accomplish—which is getting a good job.

In this chapter we'll address a variety of avenues you should follow to find out about job opportunities. Then we'll share a few interview strategies to help you make your best impression during those all-important meetings. Next we'll discuss organizing and managing your job search, and in closing address the importance of lifelong career planning and steps you can take now to continuously advance your career in the directions you choose in the future.

**Tip:** *You'll almost certainly change jobs many times throughout your life, and you'll likely change careers a time or two. So it makes sense to master the fundamentals of finding a job. If you do, you'll find each transition less traumatic and probably more successful. You'll know how to deal with unexpected opportunities that come your way and be prepared for layoffs or downsizings. Most important, you'll feel in control of your career and your life.*

## Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Basket

The single smartest strategy in looking for a new job is to pursue many different avenues. You never know where your next job is going to come from! You can find statistics about how *most* people find jobs, but that doesn't mean your transition is going to be like *most* people's. Also, there is no specific A-to-Z path you can follow to your next job. The more lines you have in the water, the better chance you have of catching a fish.

So let's examine five diverse avenues and how you can best use them to learn about job opportunities:

- Networking
- Internet job boards and resume-posting sites
- Newspaper ads (print and online)
- Executive recruiters
- Direct application to employers

## **Networking**

Every survey of every population we've ever seen has shown that, by far, most people find their jobs through a personal connection—someone they know tells them about a job, or someone they know refers them to another contact who is the eventual source of a new job.

What this means to you is that you should get your network working for you.

Let's first define the term. *Networking* means, pure and simple, talking to people—telling them about your career plans, letting them know how they can help you, soliciting their advice, and asking for referrals to people at your target companies and in your target industries.

Notice we don't say "asking them for a job." Asking everyone you know for a job is the best way to turn off your network and make people uncomfortable about talking to you. Instead, rely on your friends, relatives, coworkers, and all your personal and professional contacts to give you their advice, ideas, leads, and referrals. If they know of a job, don't worry—they'll tell you.

To capture the extraordinary job-finding capabilities of your network, follow these simple rules:

- Be prepared. Before you initiate contact, prepare your message so that it is unambiguous, concise, and focused. Your contacts should come away with a clear understanding of what you're looking for, what you're good at, and the kinds of leads and referrals that will be of help to you.
- Offer to help your contacts. Networking is a two-way street, and if you go into it with a spirit of giving, you are much more likely to get help in return.



- Accept all ideas, leads, and referrals—and follow up on them.
- Don't expect your network to find a job for you or do the work of your job search for you.
- Don't whine about unfair treatment, complain about what a hard time you're having, or say anything negative about your former boss or coworkers. Although you're not expected to be upbeat all the time, remain professional and don't burden your network with your personal issues. (But do have a sounding board—a spouse, close friend, or professional counselor—to whom you can express all the emotional upheaval that often accompanies a job transition.)
- Report back periodically to your network to let them know how you're doing, how helpful their ideas were, and what you need as your next step. Taking this action helps rejuvenate your network and keeps the good ideas flowing.

## ***Internet Job Boards and Resume-Posting Sites***

To many job seekers, the online job boards are a “black hole”—a bottomless pit into which they keep throwing resumes with no response. In truth, it can feel this way. Because applying for jobs this way is so easy, many people do; therefore, the competition is fierce. And because automated scanners review those resumes for keywords, you must be a perfect match to rise to the top.

However, recent evidence suggests that results from the job boards are improving. In particular, entry- to mid-level professionals, technical people, and salespeople seem to get better-than-average results from this activity.

Because this option is viable, free, and easy, using it certainly makes sense. Just be cautious that you don't spend all your time throwing resumes into the void and praying for results. Follow these guidelines to maximize your success rate:

- **Customize your resume.** When applying for a specific job, take the time to cross-check your content against the posting and adjust as necessary so you have a word-for-word keyword match—as long as it is accurate and appropriate to your background, of course.
- **Include a cover letter.** This step may be optional, but because it can give you a decided advantage, don't overlook it. Use the strategies

we've discussed in this book to write cover letters that are concise, on point, and convey value to the employer.

- **Create a quick, easy process to get your resume and cover letter out quickly.** Don't worry about following up; just send it and forget it. If they're interested, they'll be in touch.
- **Use some restraint.** Don't submit massive quantities of applications for jobs for which you are only marginally qualified. It's a waste of your time and the company's time.
- **Don't apply repeatedly to the same company** (either different jobs or the same job). More is not better. If you are really interested in the company and your resume and cover letter don't draw a response, look for other ways to get in contact. Your network is the first and best place to start.
- **Use niche boards.** In addition to the major job boards (CareerBuilder.com, Indeed.com, Craigslist.org, Monster.com), don't overlook the many niche boards that serve your profession or your industry. You can find a great primer on online job searching at [www.job-hunt.org](http://www.job-hunt.org), one of the Web's most informative career sites and a source for carefully vetted resources.
- **Protect your privacy.** If you post your resume online, be protective about personal information such as your home address and telephone number and your Social Security number. The best approach is to list simply your e-mail address and perhaps your cell phone number. Refresh your resume every two or three weeks so that your online presence doesn't become stale.

## ***Newspaper Ads***

Traditional printed newspapers, business weeklies, and professional association publications can be excellent sources of job ads and job leads, particularly if you want to stay in your local area. Most major daily newspapers publish their careers section online as well as in print, so you have the option to look in either place—or in both. Sometimes scanning a dozen pages in the Sunday paper is easier than pumping in keywords and sorting through dozens or hundreds of irrelevant online listings to find the ones you want.

Here are several guidelines for the paper pursuit:

- Go through your publications with a highlighter and identify appropriate job openings, hiring trends, and other news related to your industry or your career.
- For blind ads, follow the advice given regarding job boards (see “Internet Job Boards and Resume-Posting Sites” earlier). Customize your resume; include a cover letter; get your resume out quickly; send it and forget it.
- For ads that reveal the name of a local employer, before you send out a resume, contact your network to see whether you can get a referral to the hiring manager. If so, go directly to the source instead of or in addition to sending your resume to HR.
- Be alert to news about your target companies. You might learn something that will help you make a connection or make a great impression during the interview.

## **Recruiters**

The most critical fact to remember with regard to recruiters (also known as headhunters) is that they don’t work for you; they work for the hiring company. So they are not “your” recruiter and won’t try to “find a job for you.”

But executive recruiters can be your best friends during a job search—provided you have the precise set of skills, experience, and industry expertise their client (the employer) is looking for. Follow this advice to get the most from the recruiter relationship:

- Take the time to find out the recruiter’s specialty areas before getting in touch. Otherwise, you’ll create a poor impression, not to mention wasting the recruiter’s time and your own. You can look through recruiter directories (check your local library) to find a list of appropriate recruiters, or simply phone the recruiters in your local area to ask about their specialty areas.
- When writing to recruiters, refer to “your client” or “your client’s organization” rather than “your company.”
- Send an e-mail cover letter with a resume attached and call the next day to follow up. The purpose of this call should be to determine whether that recruiter is a good fit for you and to establish the basis

for periodic contact. Be prepared to introduce yourself concisely with relevant information and some “wow” achievements.

- Don't expect to hear back from recruiters unless they have a job that's a potentially good fit for you.
- Understand the realities of recruitment. The recruiter has a mandate for the ideal candidate. If that recruiter doesn't think you are the right fit, there is nothing you can do to change his or her mind. Move on to the next opportunity!
- If you can help the recruiter by referring good candidates, do so. It's a win-win for all involved.

**Tip:** *Never work with a search firm or employment agency that charges you a fee to get a job. Legitimate firms are paid only by the employer for whom they fill jobs. There should be no cost to you. (But don't confuse this advice with the fees you pay to private-practice career counselors, coaches, or resume writers; they provide their services for a fee and don't promise you a job.)*

## Direct Application

Most employers of any size have dedicated career Web sites, where you can peruse jobs and submit your application directly to the company. Sometimes this process is easy and satisfying: You get immediate feedback and can always track the status of your application. More often, it is time-consuming, frustrating, and resembles the same “black hole” as the job boards. Still, it's certainly worth your while.

These guidelines will help you navigate the company career sites:

- Customize your resume. Take the time to cross-check your resume against the posting; then adjust your content as necessary.
- Include a cover letter mentioning why you want to work at that particular company.
- If you receive a confirmation number or other information related to your application, make note of it! If an individual's name is provided, be sure to write it down so you can follow up accordingly.
- Don't apply repeatedly to the same job and don't apply to dozens of jobs at the same company.

- If you apply to more than one job, be sure your resume is customized for each, but make sure that comparing the two side-by-side won't reveal major differences or discrepancies.

## ***Diversify Your Activities***

As you create the plan for finding your next job, include all five of these avenues and make sure your daily and weekly action plans include some efforts in each area.

Additional avenues you might pursue include—in decreasing order of effectiveness—career fairs, alumni associations and college career centers (for both current students and alumni of any age), temporary or permanent placement agencies, billboards or other public postings, and of course, simply walking into a company and applying.

Whatever you choose to do, bear in mind—always—that looking for a job is hard work, and no one can do it but you. That's not to say you can't take advantage of professional services and automated tools to make things a bit easier and faster. But ultimately it is your responsibility, and you must be the one doing the bulk of the legwork, phone calls, e-mails, research, and evaluation of companies and opportunities. Beware of any person or company that promises to “find a job” for you or deliver access to the “hidden job market.” For most of these services, the price is high and the customer satisfaction low.

But develop a diversified plan, pursue it vigorously, and you will end up with a great opportunity and a satisfying career. The experience and knowledge you gain during this transition will be valuable every time you make a move throughout your career.

## **Ace the Interview**

The job search action happens in interviews. You have to get them; then you have to do well in them. If you have done your homework, you will seek out interviews for jobs that are a good fit for your skills and experience. That is a good start, but keep in mind that every person selected for an interview will have similar skills and experience. Therefore, your ability to communicate your value in the interview makes an enormous difference.

## Prepare for the Expected

Although every interview is different, you can expect to hear certain questions in most interviews. So be ready to answer these questions with accurate, positive, and on-point responses.

Review these common interview questions and use our guidelines to prepare your responses.

- **Tell me about yourself.** Here is your opportunity to share a 60- to 120-second introduction that should include who you are, the highlights of your experience, and your greatest value to the company. Don't make the mistake of repeating your entire life history and don't get bogged down in too many details. Present an overview that is relevant to the job at hand.
- **Why should we hire you?** The emphasis here is on "you." Why should this employer choose you over other candidates? You must give a reason, something that will distinguish you from everyone else interviewing for the job. Is it your track record of success in similar situations? Your impeccable integrity? Your reliability? Your ability to hit the ground running? Tell the employer the benefits he or she will gain if you become an employee.
- **What are your strengths?** This question seems easy. Just be sure that the strengths you are sharing relate as closely as possible to the job at hand.
- **What are your weaknesses?** Everyone has areas of greater and lesser strength, and it's perfectly okay to discuss areas that are not your strongest points. Just don't name anything as a weakness that might be a requirement for success on this particular job. If possible, show how you have worked to improve your weakness.

**Tip:** Consider every interview as a business meeting. In essence, you are sharing something of value (yourself) with another business professional. In turn, you should be evaluating whether the opportunity and the company are right for you. With this approach, you enter the meeting on an equal footing rather than hat-in-hand, begging for a job! You'll feel and convey confidence and professionalism.

- **What salary do you expect?** For many reasons, we recommend that you “dodge” this question in a professional manner during your early interviews. At this stage, you don’t know much about the position and therefore can’t accurately estimate an appropriate salary. Refocus the discussion on the job and your qualifications by deferring salary discussion until later. Then be sure to do some salary research and reply with an appropriate range that gives both you and the employer some wiggle room.

## ***Prepare for the Unexpected***

You won’t be able to predict or prepare for every question that you might receive during an interview. What you can do, though, is spend some time constructing the “success stories” that illustrate your past experiences and future capabilities. Armed with this powerful and distinguishing information, you’ll be able to respond in an appropriate and positive manner to many different interview questions.

For example, if you are asked about your experience with a specific job function, you can enhance your answer with an example illustrating when you performed that function successfully. If asked about your project management skills, you can share a story of how you overcame obstacles to deliver a project on time.

Too many candidates rely on “canned” or generic responses—in effect, saying what they think the interviewer wants to hear. With that approach, it’s difficult to distinguish yourself from other applicants. But by employing your unique success stories, you immediately make yourself more memorable and more credible. Try it at your next interview!

## ***Tips for Preparing Your Success Stories***

A tried-and-true approach for interview preparation is to develop “CAR stories.” CAR stands for Challenge-Action-Result and gives you the format and structure you need to describe your accomplishments in a concise, focused, and compelling manner.

- First, describe the Challenge or the situation: “I was asked to take over a software implementation project that was three months behind schedule and over budget. The team members couldn’t agree on the best approach, and there was a lot of resistance from the business

units; people were worried about the time needed for training and afraid the new software would make their jobs harder.”

- Next, discuss the Action—what you did about the situation. “The first thing I did was hold a team meeting to get all the concerns out on the table. I found there was a power struggle between team members but that underneath it everyone agreed on the best approach. I spoke individually to the two key members who were at loggerheads and made it easy for them to resolve their differences, and I energized the team to move forward and catch up with our original schedule. Within the business units, I held demo days so they could see the new software in action and showed them how smoothly it would integrate with their existing activities, and I set up a ‘hotline’ that they could call 24 hours a day for immediate help with any integration problems. My team worked to make the training fun, with lots of incentives and rewards for quick adoption.”
- Finally, be specific about the Results. “We ended up completing the implementation a week ahead of schedule and allotted the extra week for training and familiarization. The new software saved the company \$2 million a year by avoiding duplicate reporting, and most department managers told me that their productivity soared as a result. My team felt really proud of their efforts, and in fact the two warring team members asked to work together on a subsequent project. My manager told me that this was the first on-time completion of a major software upgrade in company history.”

Regardless of your job function or level, you can find specific examples highlighting when you did your job well, overcame obstacles, solved a

**Tip:** *Thorough preparation is key to a good interview. Take the time to find out as much as you can about the company, industry, and people with whom you are interviewing. Good sources of information are the Internet, industry publications, local newspapers, reference books, and of course, your personal network. Think about the challenges the company faces and be prepared to discuss your experience and abilities as solutions to those challenges. Where does the company want to go, and how can you help it get there? With this approach, you can go well beyond “standard” interview questions into a substantive business discussion.*



problem, delivered an unexpectedly good result, or otherwise contributed to the success of your organization. In fact, these examples can come from volunteer or classroom experience as well as on the job (although we recommend that you use job-related examples as much as possible). Success stories are a powerful way to illustrate the skills and competencies that you want to use in your next job. And, as mentioned, because they are specific, they are memorable to hiring managers and therefore will help you stand out from the other candidates.

Another important area to think about is interview etiquette. As our society becomes increasingly informal, it seems that interview behaviors are matching this casual behavior. We hear stories of candidates who chew gum, answer cell phones, send text messages, dress in too casual or too revealing outfits, or otherwise confuse private behavior with proper interview etiquette. Don't make these mistakes!

Remember that your interview is a business meeting; in fact, it's a sales meeting, and you are trying to convince the employer that you would be a great addition to his or her company. Don't let your attire or your behavior become a reason to dismiss you from serious consideration. Just follow these simple guidelines:

- **Dress up.** For interviews, dress at least one step above what you would normally wear on the job. For most professional positions, this means a business suit or at least a jacket (for both men and women). Be sure your clothing conveys your professionalism. This means it fits you well, is appropriate in style and color, and is not too revealing.
- **Clean up.** Be certain your hair is neatly trimmed, nails clean and neat, shoes shined, teeth flossed, makeup (for women) subdued. You want the interviewers to remember you for your capabilities, not your wild hair or purple lipstick!
- **Straighten up.** This advice refers to your physical posture (don't slouch or put your feet up), your demeanor (be alert and attentive), and your message (leave the jokes at home and focus on getting across the message of your capabilities and value).
- **Show up.** Arrive at your interview about 10 minutes before the appointed hour; being late means an automatic strike against you. Turn off your cell phone, iPod, laptop, BlackBerry, or pager and mentally place yourself 100 percent into the conversation. You will be evaluated from the minute you arrive at a company, so be sure you

act professionally the entire time (even when you think you're out of earshot and eyeshot).

Your goal is to earn the job offer. This places you in control; you can accept it or reject it. So do everything you can to keep yourself in the running.

## Organize and Manage Your Search

During your job search, you will come in contact with scores of people, investigate dozens of companies and opportunities, and send out hundreds of communications—resumes, cover letters, quick notes, thank-you letters, and more.

Keeping track of everything can be quite a challenge! Yet it is essential that you appear to be sharp, well organized, and “on top of your game” when potential employers contact you. You don't want to torpedo your chances of landing a job by fumbling to find the correct correspondence or calling your interviewer by the wrong name. So organization is key!

You can use a system as simple as a three-ring binder and as sophisticated as contact management software. The point is to choose a method and *use it*—thoroughly and consistently. Record *all* your job search activities and contacts. Make notes of your conversations. Schedule your follow-up activities with built-in reminders. Always be aware of the image you're projecting and be smart about how you handle the various interactions of a typical job search.

- When you receive a phone call in response to one of your letters or other outreach efforts, be certain that you are in an environment that will allow you to appear 100 percent professional. If there is family noise, a blaring TV, or a dog barking, don't be afraid to tell the caller, “I'd like to get to a quieter spot. May I call you back in five minutes?” Similarly, if you are distracted and don't have all your materials immediately at hand,

**Tip:** *Technology can help! In selecting the right tools to help you organize and manage your search, look for the ability to track appointments, send follow-up reminders, store contact information, and input notes. You can purchase standalone CRM (contact relationship management) software such as ACT! or GoldMine, acquire extensions to your e-mail management system such as Zoho CRM or Prophet, or sign up with an online relationship management tool. One we especially like, [www.jibberjobber.com](http://www.jibberjobber.com), was created specifically to manage your career and career transitions.*

ask whether you can call back in five minutes and take that time to gather your notes and assume your professional persona.

- To create a consistently positive impression, be sure that your voice-mail message is brief and professional—no kids, songs, voice impressions, jokes, or group greetings.
- Your e-mail address, too, should reflect your professional image. Best of all is “yourname@email.com.” Such an address helps your recipients find and keep track of your messages. In fact, consider creating a separate e-mail address to use just for your job search. It will enable you to keep all your job search correspondence in one place and help you respond quickly and appropriately to messages.
- Before every interview, gather and review all your material about the company, opportunity, people, and industry. Make notes of any challenges and opportunities you can identify from your research. Print several sharp copies of your resume on good-quality resume paper (available at any print shop or office supply store). Enclose everything in a professional-looking leather portfolio and be sure to include a high-quality pen. This becomes part of your “interview suit,” a key element of your professional preparedness and presentation.

Well organized and sharply presented, you exemplify the professional persona you will carry with you to your new job.

## Plan for the Future

Your current job transition is not likely to be your last. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median tenure with current employers is only four years, and the average “Young Baby Boomer” (born between 1957 and 1964) held an average of 10.5 jobs from ages 18 to 40. So, as previously mentioned, it’s smart to learn how to go about finding a new job—and that’s what this book is all about.

But perhaps even more important than “job finding” is “career finding.” What do you want to do for the 40 hours or more that you spend working each week? What jobs make the best use of your unique talents? What tasks give you the most satisfaction? What industries capture your interest and passion? You should consider all these elements as you evaluate the job you take today and those you vie for tomorrow.

An entire profession of career coaches and counselors exists to help you unite your talents and interests with your job. If you are truly in “career

pain”—terribly unhappy in your present job, feeling stuck and totally unsure of where to go, never mind how to get there—then it’s definitely time to find a pro who can guide you through the exploration, decision making, and pursuit.

But assuming that you enjoy your work and are fairly satisfied with your career, you can still take steps to ensure that your career continues to be fulfilling as you age, evolve, learn, and grow. Here are some ideas:

- **Keep career topics on your radar.** A wealth of career information is available in traditional print and online publications. You can read about different “dream jobs,” “best companies to work for,” job-search sagas, career paths, and many more aspects of finding satisfying work. Stay tuned to these articles and continually evaluate your own career based on new findings.
- **Stay in touch with your university career center.** Available to alumni and not just to new grads, many of these centers are staffed with knowledgeable professionals who can provide expert advice to you throughout your career...free! Plus, they can grant you access to tools, resources, and publications that might be cost-prohibitive if purchased independently.
- **Find a mentor.** Ideally, this would be an influential person at your place of employment who can give you sound advice about advancing your career. If you’re lucky, the mentor relationship will last for many years and provide you with insightful information as you move up and out to new roles.
- **Become active in professional associations.** Gain access to respected professionals in your field as well as educational and networking opportunities. You might be surprised to know how many job opportunities come about through these kinds of contacts.
- **Establish your online presence.** Begin with a profile on [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com) and a web portfolio at [www.VisualCV.com](http://www.VisualCV.com)—two smart, low-cost or free tools to build your visibility online. Expand that visibility through published articles, book reviews, professional papers, perhaps your own blog as well as comments on other blogs. Your ultimate goal is to become a sought-after candidate rather than a job seeker. You do this by becoming known in your field and easily findable online.
- **Keep your resume up to date.** Once or twice a year, sit down and update your resume with your latest accomplishments. Review the

entire document to see whether it is congruent with your current career goals. Be ready to respond to any opportunity that comes your way at any time.

- **Be consistent and professional in an online world.** Think twice before posting suggestive photos on MySpace or publishing that party video on YouTube. Of course, you want to be genuine, but it would be foolish to assume that personal activities won't affect your professional career. Be smart about what you do and assume that anything and everything may be publicized (online or off).

The primary advantage to ongoing career planning is that it gives you ultimate control over your career and your life. Rather than being buffeted by fickle employment markets or at the mercy of your employing company, you are always prepared for change and confident of your skills and value to past and future employers.

## Key Points: Chapter 6

Here are the key points of this chapter:

- Use a diversified strategy for your job search, pursuing opportunities in many different channels.
- Spend the bulk of your time in networking activities because this is the proven “king” of all search strategies.
- Craft a careful message so that you give your network contacts everything they need to know to be able to help you.
- Create a fast and easy process to respond to job board and newspaper listings; don't spend too much time in this activity, which typically yields poor results.
- Understand how recruiters work to make them an effective part of your search activities.
- Master interview strategies for expected and unexpected questions.
- Organize and manage your search using old-fashioned or up-to-the-minute tools; always be prepared for interviews and phone calls.
- Be wary of people or companies that promise to do the work for you; you must manage your own job search and ultimately your career.
- Consider career management as a lifelong process, not simply finding your next job.

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