Resumes, Cover Letters & Other Job Search Correspondence

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Effective self-marketing includes well-written job search correspondence. Read further to learn more about:

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THE PURPOSE OF A RESUME

A resume is a summary of your skills and qualifications for a specific type of work. Whether you are responding to an advertised posting, inquiring about opportunities with a specific employer or following-up on a networking contact, one way employers learn about your skills and experiences is through your resume.

Successful Resumes

- **Are self-marketing tools** allowing you to focus on the highlights within your experiences that relate to the position(s) for which you are applying.
- **Provide specific detail** about what you did, how you did it and the outcome of your work.
- **Maintain an employer-focus** highlighting what you can do for the employer, rather than what the employer can do for you.
- **Lead to interview opportunities** when you may further describe your skills, experiences and accomplishments to employers.

The suggestions below provide guidelines for resume writing, outlining general themes Career Services staff suggest based on resume research and feedback from employers. These guidelines are not meant to be 100% prescriptive: part of the critical thinking in resume writing involves determining how these suggestions will work for you and the level of risk you wish to take in your self-marketing. For example, flashy formats may be appreciated in one industry and frowned upon in another. Assessing your preferences and talking with professionals in your field or a career counselor can help as you develop your self-marketing materials.

Career Services is here to help with resume questions and reviews.

- Email your resume to Career Services (career@stritch.edu) and we will reply within one week.
- Drop off your resume at the Career Services Office, Bonaventure Hall, Suite 1058 and it will be ready for pick-up in 24 hours (on business days).
- Set up an appointment with a Career Counselor to discuss your resume in person or by phone.
- Mail or fax your resume to Career Services.

TYPES OF RESUMES

Resumes are commonly organized in **Chronological** or **Functional** formats, or a hybrid of the two. The main difference between these formats is how information about your experiences is organized. See the Sample Resumes on pages 10-15 for examples.

Within **Chronological Resumes** (or employment based resumes), descriptions of skills, experiences and accomplishments are listed with specific employers or organizations. Experiences are listed in reverse-chronological order (most recent to longest ago) within resume categories such as Professional Experience, Related Experience or Management Experience.

Functional Resumes (or skill based resumes) organize descriptions of skills, experiences and accomplishments into theme-based groupings, listing job titles, employers and dates of employment in a separate section. Functional resumes can help highlight skills acquired through numerous positions or experiences by focising on skills sets vs. work history. This is a format sometimes favored by third party recruiters and can be particularly helpful in emphasizing accomplishments when work history does not seem to be a direct match to where you would like to go or when your work history has some gaps. If this is your first contact with a company's recruiter, this format may be more risky than the traditional Chronological format.

Elements of a functional resume may be incorporated into a hybrid resume by categorizing experiences to highlight themes *within* a particular employer. For example:

Program Coordinator, Sojourner Truth House, Milwaukee, WI 2007 – present

Administrative Experience

- Supervised eighteen professional staff, interns and volunteers
- Arranged emergency shelter and services for battered women and children
- Designed and implemented budgeting procedures resulting in 8% fewer errors

Counseling / Crisis Intervention Experience

- Provided crisis counseling to 30 women and children
- Educated women in the areas of abuse and legal rights
- Advocated for and referred women to appropriate agencies

How to Choose

A successful resume communicates your skills and experiences quickly: choose a format that can be scanned in fewer than 10 seconds. Chronological resumes can be an effective format for entry-level applicants, for applicants who want to highlight promotions within their employment, and for applicants with a work history that could be summarized with an experience heading such as "Marketing Experience" or "Social Work Experience." Functional resumes can be more helpful for applicants who want to highlight skills or achievements from a broad range of experiences. With resumes as self-marketing documents, one question to ask is: which format helps my experiences and accomplishments stand out? Talking with a Career Counselor or professionals in your field of interest may help as you decide.

RESUME WRITING NUTS & BOLTS

Critical thinking is an important strategy in writing an effective self-marketing resume. Rather than simply listing job duties and dates of employment, writing a strong resume starts with thinking critically about the skills or experiences that are central to the position for which you are applying. What are the demands of the position or industry? What responsibilities or accomplishments from your past experiences will demonstrate your readiness for your next position? Thoughtfully answering these questions can help you write a tailored resume.

Critical thinking skills also apply to the ethics of resume writing: while it is important to emphasize your accomplishments and skills, stretching or omitting the truth could result in termination. Resumes are ethical documents and honesty is definitely the best policy.

Action Verbs: Start each bullet point or description with an action verb.

Avoid: Be sure to avoid references to age, race, health or marital status within your resume. In general, avoid using abbreviations (except for state abbreviations).

Consistency: Consistency is key within a resume. For example, if you bold your job titles, bold each job title. If you list dates numerically, do so for each date rather than changing between 1/2008 and Jan. 2008. Employers rarely have strong preferences regarding underlined versus bold text, but they do care about a clean, professional appearance and consistency helps create this appearance.

Detail: Provide detailed examples to back-up your skills. Stating that you increased sales is great, but this statement becomes even better if you can provide more detail: Increased sales 12% over six months through cold calling.

Font Style and Size: Choose fonts wisely to facilitate a quick and easy scan – either visually or technically. Sans-Serif fonts (Arial, Century Gothic and other fonts without hats or tails) are best for scannable resumes and may also be used for printed resumes.

Focus on Transferable Skills: Describing every job duty from every past position is neither necessary nor productive for a resume. Rather, focusing on the highlights and accomplishments from previous positions or skills and experiences that will relate most closely to the position you are applying for demonstrates your readiness for the job.

Keywords: The words in a job description are chosen for a reason. Strategically utilizing key words from the job description in your resume helps to demonstrate your understanding of the industry and your fit for the position. This strategy can be especially helpful with scannable resumes.

Length & Spacing: One-page resumes are often most appropriate for recent graduates. Two pages are optional for specific industries or for more experienced professionals. When first reviewing resumes, most employers indicate they spend fewer than 10 seconds scanning your resume, so be succinct. Concise communication also demonstrates your critical thinking skills: if you can communicate something in fewer words, do so! Use a consistent margin between .75 and 1 inch on all four sides of the document.

Personal Pronouns: While a resume is a formal document, personal pronouns are not included. To be concise, phrases rather than complete sentences are appropriate.

Printing: Print your resume on quality white or light-colored paper.

Prioritize: Place your most important information at the top of the page and within each section. If using a two-page document, the recruiter may not even follow through with the second page if enough interest is not provoked from scanning the first page.

Proofread: Always check for spelling and grammatical errors! Demonstrate your professionalism to employers by introducing yourself with an error-free document. Career Services is happy to review resumes via email, appointment or drop-off.

Save: If you are submitting your resume electronically, saving your resume as a PDF document ensures that content and format cannot be altered and will be preserved through email or uploading.

RESUME SECTIONS

Header

The resume header provides your name and contact information including:

- **Your full name**: Use a larger font size and/or bold text to help your name stand out.
- **Phone number**: Provide one phone number where you can be reached most successfully. You do not need to label your number as Home or Cell.
- **Email address**: Keep it professional. Luv2shop is great for friends, but for employers consider using your Stritch email or creating a job search email account on a free service like Hotmail, Yahoo or Gmail. Your name is always a wise selection for an e-mail address since self-marketing focuses on getting your name in front of the employer as often as possible.
- **Address information** is optional. Providing a mailing address is customary for resumes sent directly to an employer or networking contact. If you are posting your resume to an online job board or search website, withholding your mailing address is also appropriate.

Header Examples:

John Doe (414) 123-4567 • johndoe@stritch.edu

Jane Doe

123 North Main Street (414) 123-4567
Milwaukee, WI 12345 janedoe@stritch.edu

Objective Statements & Professional Summaries

An **objective statement** is a concise position centered statement describing the value you can add and the needs you can fulfill, which may include a brief statement of skills or qualifications that you will bring to a position. This may be especially helpful when you are applying for a specific type of position and/or industry.

A **professional summary** is longer and provides more detail than an objective statement. Professional summaries identify the type of position you are seeking and provide lengthier descriptions of skills and qualifications. Professional summaries are most helpful for experienced professionals who aim to demonstrate the applicability of

skills from a range or depth of past experiences for a specific type of position. Professional summaries are useful for networking and uploading your resume to job search websites.

When to use objective statements or professional summaries
Objective statements and professional summaries help an employer quickly understand your goals. With a typical review of fewer than 10 seconds, it is unlikely that employers will read a resume to decide where you will fit in their companies: that goal is for you to identify.

Objective statements can be less necessary when resumes are submitted with cover letters (which, in a professional job search, should be all the time)! When the position you are seeking is clearly identified in the cover letter, repeating this objective in the resume is not absolutely necessary. However, including an objective in a resume sent with a cover letter can help to focus your resume, especially if your objective highlights or summarizes your skills.

When writing your objective or professional summary, remember to:

- **Keep it job focused**. Your resume is a sales document: it is about what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.
- **Avoid general statements** such as "seeking a position with the opportunity for growth and advancement" or "seeking a position in a challenging environment." Most applicants want to work for growing companies, desire advancement or seek challenge, so identifying these goals in your objective does not help you stand out.

Objective Examples:

Seeking the Program Coordinator position with a non-profit organization.

To obtain an accounting internship with an auditing focus. Strengths include:

- Strong attention to detail
- Experience with data entry and spreadsheets
- Demonstrated leadership through campus activities

Human Resource management position utilizing experience in creating and evaluating training programs and projecting future needs.
(Excellent description if these are the criteria for an available position.)

A high school teaching position in English. Offering Spanish fluency and an interest in coaching soccer or involvement with extra-curricular club activities.

Professional Summary Example:

Seeking community outreach and public relations opportunities.

- Possess a strong track record of marketing programs and resources demonstrated by position at the Milwaukee Center for Independence.
- Successfully collaborate with people from a broad range of backgrounds including clients and service providers.
- Experienced in writing newsletters, brochures and other promotional publications.

Education

The education section of a resume highlights degrees or certification programs that you have completed or are currently pursuing.

Location on the Page

The education section can be listed before or after the experience section, depending on what you want to highlight. For recent graduates who are building professional experience, listing education first may help demonstrate your preparedness for a career field. For students with more full-time work experience or who return to school for a degree, highlighting your existing work experience may help show your qualifications for a position and listing the degree after the experience section reinforces your knowledge and abilities. Answering the question: what do I want employers to read about me first, my experience or my education, can help determine where to locate this section within your resume.

Remember:

- **Formality is key**: Write the full name of your degree and institution avoiding abbreviations.
- **Double Majors or Minors**: List the degree that will appear on your diploma as your formal degree, listing your second major or minor below. For example: Double Major: English or Minor: History
- **Graduation Date**: List your graduation date with the year or month and year of your graduation. You do not need to identify this date as your "anticipated date." Employers simply want to know when you will complete your degree.
- **Highlights**: Listing honors or courses related to your career goal can add detail to your education section.
- **Omit high school information**: Once you have started a higher education program, employers can safely assume that you completed high school. However, if there may be a significant reason for including this information, such as international study, language skills or a specialized program, do so.
- **Order**: If you have multiple degrees, list the most recent degree first.
- **School Location**: For distance learners attending Stritch in Wisconsin, we encourage you to list Milwaukee as the school location. For students studying at locations in Minnesota, we suggest listing Edina.
- **Study Abroad**: Study abroad or Academic Intensive experiences are listed within the education section.
- **Teachers**: Always list your certifications in the education section.
- **Transfer Students**: List the degree and institution where you graduated (or will graduate). It is not necessary or customary to list previous schools.

Education Format Examples

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology May 2011
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee WI GPA: 3.5/4.0
Related Coursework: Health Psychology, Drugs and Behavior

Study Abroad listed after Cardinal Stritch Degree:

Study Abroad
University Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast, Australia Spring 2008
- Coursework focused on Australian culture and politics.

International Academic Intensive Course
Spanish 310 Immersion Experience Summer 2007
- Coursework focused on Mexican culture and Spanish fluency.
- Traveled to Mexico for language development.

Multiple Degrees from the same school:

Masters of Business Administration December 2009
Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts May 2005
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

Teachers:

Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education May 2009
Minor: **Mathematics**
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI
Certification: **Name (#)**

Experience

The experience section is ***THE MAIN EVENT***! This is the section of your resume that employers will focus on to determine whether you have the skills and experiences to enable you to succeed in their position.

Experience certainly includes paid work and internships but experience extends beyond employment. Describing your volunteerism, clinical or student teaching experiences, leadership in campus or community activities and class projects can also highlight skills you developed, responsibilities you managed and successes you accomplished.

Organizing your experiences within your resume is a strategic decision. This section is where the main differences between chronological and functional resume formats emerge. If you utilize a functional resume format, be sure to include a Work Experience Section to list your past positions and employers. See the "Functional Format, Experienced" Sample Resume.

Whether you choose a functional or chronological format, be sure to remember:

- **Use Action Verbs**: Start each bullet point or description with an action verb. Remember to use present tense for positions you are currently in and past tense verbs for completed positions.
- **Provide Detail**: Provide detailed examples to back-up your skills. Identifying communication skills is great, but describing how you used them or the results is better: utilized strong communication skills, including public speaking, running club meetings.
- **Maintain a Job-Focus**: As always, keep the employer in mind and focus on including information that will help the employer learn more about how well you can do the job at hand. Describing the skills, experiences and accomplishments that will translate most readily into the position you are seeking is more helpful for an employer than listing *all* of the duties within your past positions.

- **Quantify Outcomes**: Quantifying your results is a great way to add detail to a resume (how much sales grew, how many staff you managed, etc.). This also reinforces your attention to detail.
- **Section Headings**: "Experience" is an appropriate label, but "Marketing Experience," "Research Experience" or "Volunteer Experience" helps attract and focus an employer's attention. In chronological resumes, remember to list positions in reverse chronological order within each category.
- **Keep it Short**: Balancing detail with being concise is an exercise for your critical thinking skills. Think of your bullet points as great story-starters, providing specific information to demonstrate you skill or accomplishment that you will describe further in an interview.

Questions to Consider as You Describe Your Experiences:

1. What skills did you utilize or develop through your responsibilities?
2. What did you learn through your position?
3. Were you promoted or did you train others?
4. Did you create new systems or processes?
5. Did you write reports, memos, summaries or help with publications for your organization?
6. Are there examples of times when you took leadership or initiative?
7. If you did data-entry, what systems did you use, what kind of information were you entering and how did it fit into the big-picture for the company or organization?
8. What were the results of your efforts? (Increased sales, a stronger mailing list, improved reading scores, etc.)

Special Skills

There may be skills that you wish to highlight outside of an experience or education section. Foreign language proficiency, international travel experience and computer skills are excellent abilities or experiences that employers care about. For example:

COMPUTER SKILLS: Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator, InDesign, ACCESS

A computer skills section is typically provided for software knowledge beyond MS Office. Many employers assume college graduates will offer a basic understanding of MS Office products.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Family hosted German high-school exchange student	Jan. – May 2006
Independent travel in Germany	July 2007

Honors & Activities

Sometimes community involvement and campus activities are highlighted in an experience section to demonstrate the skills acquired or developed through involvement. When more related experience takes priority within your experience section, an additional section listing or briefly describing these involvements can help ensure that these highlights make it onto your resume.

Club affiliations, community service and scholarships make great additions to a resume. Leadership roles and community involvement can highlight your initiative and can be great conversation topics in interviews.

Scannable Versions & Resumes for Online Applications

Scannable Resumes: Many companies (almost 100% of Fortune 1,000 companies) are using some type of "applicant tracking system." Using scanners and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, your resume is read and stored electronically in a database. If your resume does not translate well, it will not be stored and you will not be a candidate. Instead of reading resumes, hiring managers use the database and conduct "*keyword*" searches to find applicants.

KEYWORDS:

- Are almost always nouns!
- Include skills, education, job titles, companies, industry jargon and buzz words.
- Will provide a "hit" when used only once.

Steps to ensure your resume is scanner friendly:

- Rely on white space to define sections.
- Use only tabs and spacing - no other formatting features.
- Omit borders, shading, underlining, italics, bold text, parentheses and brackets.
- Use ONLY solid round bullets.
- Left-justify text.
- Do not use columns- scanners read left to right.
- Name should be one line above all other information.
- Keep the font between 11-14; letters should not touch one another at any time.
- Play it safe and use a common Sans-Serif font.
- If mailing a hard copy of your resume: print on plain white paper and send in a 9" x12" envelope - Do not fold, scanners have problems with creases.
- Minimize the use of general abbreviations (when in doubt, spell it out).

Resumes for Online Applications

Many employers request that applicants fill out their online application. Often there is an opportunity to upload your resume to their system, just as you would attach a document to an email. Sometimes, however, the only option is to copy and paste your resume into a text box. In these instances, consider the following suggestions:

* Rely on white space to define sections.
* Use only tabs and spacing- no other formatting features.
* Omit borders, shading, underlining, italics or script.
* Use asterisks for bullets. (Other symbols on your keyboard will also work.)
* Play it safe and use common Sans-Serif fonts.
* Keep the font between 11-14; letters should not touch one another at any time.
* Read instructions: every online site has specific directions for posting.

Sample Resumes

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Chronological Format - Entry Level

HECTOR CARRANZA

6801 North Yates Road, Box 123 — carranza@stritch.edu
Milwaukee, WI 53217 — (414) 410-5555

OBJECTIVE

An entry level marketing position in the radio and television industry utilizing communication skills and Spanish fluency.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts, *cum laude* — May 2008
Double Major: **Spanish**
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

Study Abroad
Spanish American Institute, Seville, Spain — Fall 2006
Coursework focus: Spanish culture and politics.

BROADCAST EXPERIENCE

Sales and Promotions Intern — Summer 2007 - Present
WKLH Radio, Milwaukee, WI

- Design contests and promotions, including weekly classic rock trivia contest.
- Solicit sponsors for weekly trivia contests, increasing company participation by 5%.
- Work collaboratively with syndicators to gather information about potential shows.
- Write commercial copy.

Club President — Spring 2007 – Present
News Broadcast Host — Fall 2004 – Present
Radio LOBO Campus Radio, Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

- Supervise station staffing, overseeing 5 student hosts.
- Oversaw transition from FM to online format.
- Train students for equipment use and fundraising.
- Solicit sponsors for contests and station support, increasing outside funding by 20%.

Broadcasting Intern — Summer 2006
Y-100 Radio, Fort Lauderdale, FL

- Hosted weekly Spanish top-40 radio show.
- Produced commercials and public service announcements in Spanish and English.
- Participated in remote broadcasts including contests and concerts.

EXPERIENCE

Admissions Office Assistant — Spring 2005 – Spring 2006, Spring 2007 - Present
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

- Aide Director of Admissions with promotional projects including scheduling college fair Attendance and planning parent activities for campus visit day.
- Represent University on campus tours and by answering questions for prospective students.
- Perform clerical duties including assembling mass mailings.
- Enter data into online application tracking system.

HONORS

Presidential Honor Scholarship, Delta Epsilon Sigma - Beta Nu Chapter

ACTIVITIES

National Press Foundation — Summer 2006 - Present
Saint Benedict's Meal Program, Volunteer — Fall 2007 - Present
Tutor, Spanish and Communication Courses — Fall 2006 - Present
Cardinal Stritch University Immersion Weekend, Spanish Facilitator — Spring 2007

Hector could have listed his Spanish fluency in a language skills section, but including this skill in the objective saves space.

Hector lists the most important job duties first. Consider prioritizing sections and descriptions throughout your resume.

Experience may include paid and unpaid activities such as internships and campus groups.

These are great activities. Listing them without descriptions leaves room for detailed descriptions for this student's career-related experience, while still letting an employer know about Hector's other supporting experiences.

"Employers want to know who you are, how you think and what you can offer. The way you organize your thoughts and lay them out in resume form is actually a sample of the kind of work you do." - Joan Lloyd

Chronological Format - Entry Level Nursing

Tonya Otis

1234 South Watertown Road • Milwaukee, WI 53219 • (414) 555-1234 • tonya@stritch.edu

Objective: Registered Nurse position in an acute care setting providing individualized quality care utilizing interpersonal communication and critical thinking skills

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing May 2008
Associate of Science in Nursing May 2006
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI GPA 3.4/4.0

Clinical Experience:

Geriatrics, Luther Manner Terrace, Wauwatosa, WI September 2007 – May 2008
Psychiatric, Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Milwaukee, WI
Medical/Surgical, Columbia St. Mary's Milwaukee Hospital, Milwaukee, WI
Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Wauwatosa, WI

- Served as member of therapeutic team providing quality care for patients in variety of health care settings
- Worked in a critical care unit with respirators, IV's and a sterile environment
- Utilized NG tubing/suctioning and other equipment
- Performed head to toe assessments of patients
- Administered medications as ordered by physician
- Assessed and monitored patient statuses
- Taught patients self-care
- Interacted with patients and families to promote a supportive environment

Even when listing the location seems redundant, it is important to be consistent and always list the locations for your experiences.

Health Care Experience:

Certified Nursing Assistant 2006- Present
The Shores Health and Rehabilitation Center, Glendale, WI

- Monitored and recorded patient vital signs
- Assisted 20 residents with activities of daily living
- Maintained resident skin integrity and body position
- Ensured resident privacy, integrity and individuality
- Built relationships with residents through friendly rapport and compassion
- Collaborated with other personnel to provide quality care

Unit Secretary- Acute Adult Psychiatric Unit 2003-2006
Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Wauwatosa, WI

- Accessed medical staff for patients
- Completed medical transcription and data entry including: discharges; admissions and charge entry
- Received and directed incoming calls

Using descriptive headers helps the employer see how your past positions fit your current goals.

Leadership & Volunteerism

Vice President, Student Nursing Association, Cardinal Stritch University 2007-2008

- Lead 25 nursing students in monthly organization meetings
- Planned community service activities including annual medical supply sale raising $900
- Developed organizational skills by helping to plan Cardinal Stritch University Health Fair with 15 organizations and 120 students attending

Representative, Student Government Association, Cardinal Stritch University 2008

- Represent Student Nursing Association at Student Government meetings
- Collaborated in rewriting Student Government Association constitution

Volunteer, American Cancer Society, Milwaukee, WI 2005-2006

- Drove patients to appointments and treatments

Highlight specific skills you developed through work or other activities for employers.

In addition to Career Services, show your resume to professors, clinical supervisors and your professional networking contacts to get their feedback.

Chronological Format - Entry Level Teaching

Susan Flowers

6801 North Yates Road, Box 123 • Milwaukee, WI 53217 • Susan.Flowers@email.com • (414) 555-1234

OBJECTIVE

Teaching position in grades PK-6 classroom

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education May 2007
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

CERTIFICATIONS

Wisconsin Early Childhood through Middle Childhood (Pre-K—6)
Qualified for Wisconsin 5-year license (2007-2012), Codes: 71-777

TEACHING RELATED EXPERIENCE

Student Teacher Grade 2 Spring 2007
Lloyd Street Global Education School, Milwaukee, WI

- Assumed all classroom teaching responsibilities for three weeks
- Facilitated reading and writing workshops, word sorting and guided reading groups
- Created hands-on science activities integrating math and technology
- Provided additional instruction for underachieving math small group
- Participated in parent/teacher conferences, staff meetings and grade level meetings
- Developed strong classroom management and conflict resolution skills

Teaching Aid Clinical Grade 4 Spring 2006
Catholic East Elementary, Milwaukee, WI

- Assisted fourth grade teacher with reading groups
- Read one-on-one with underachieving students
- Developed educational and seasonal bulletin boards
- Taught in multiculturally diverse classroom
- Created electronic newsletter for parents

Classroom Assistant Fall 2004 to Spring 2006
St. Francis Children's Center, Milwaukee, WI

- Assist lead teacher with learning and play activities in 2 - 3 year old room
- Work with children with developmental delays or disabilities
- Lead activities and learning units for children
- Interact with parents, providing behavior reports and answering questions

Camp Counselor Summers 2003 - 2005
YMCA Phantom Lake, Mukwonago, WI

- Supervise twelve 9 – 10 year old girls cabin for 10 weekly overnight camping sessions
- Foster supportive and positive community during camping experience
- Assisted with new counselor training in 2004 and 2005
- Lead arts and crafts programming including ordering supplies in 2005

ACTIVITIES

Vice President, Habitat for Humanity, Cardinal Stritch University 2004 – Present

- Serve as Vice President in 2007 – 2008 and member 2005 - 2008
- Lead fund-raising activities to finance spring break trips by raising $3,500

Student Wisconsin Education Association, Cardinal Stritch University 2003 – Present

Treasurer, Residence Hall Association, Cardinal Stritch University 2004 - 2005

Providing your full degree in addition to your certifications helps a school district or principal evaluate your application.

Providing details about your work with parents, classroom management and technology are especially helpful.

Highlight skills and experiences outside of your classroom teaching roles that could transfer into future teaching opportunities.

Educators: Always list your certifications on your resume!

Chronological Format - Experienced

Jeffrey Brown

123 Main Avenue (414) 555-1234
Dousman, WI 53022 Jeffrey.Brown@email.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY:

- Sales record and staff development experience provide outstanding background for Senior Sales Management positions within the publishing industry.
- Offering 11 year's sales and 9 years' management experience combined with entrepreneurial, team building and implementation skills.
- Possess proven leadership ability to conceptualize, structure and achieve market and profit objectives.

A summary of career highlights and skills helps a reader see Jeffrey's qualifications quickly.

PROFESSIONAL SALES EXPERIENCE

Wisketa Cards, Dousman, WI 2004-present
North American Sales Manager

- Direct sales of commodity and specialty cards in United States and Canada with total sales in excess of $40 million.
- Created and implemented Dousman Business Strategy, concentrating sales efforts to develop business near factories, reducing costs by 18% and improving profitability.
- Collaborated with Regional Managers to create incentive program to motivate sales force resulting in 20% increase in new product sales.
- Initiated aggressive sales efforts for additional volume.
- Increased production, using idle equipment spreading costs and substantially improving profit margins.
- Supervise sales staff of 25, including 4 Regional Managers.

Specific detail about cost savings and increased sales helps to prove the success resulting from Jeffery's work.

Retro-cards, Inc., Seattle, WA 1997-2004
Sales Manager, 1999-2004

- Managed sales for card division, representing 70% of corporate sales.
- Directed department of 6 sales professionals, creating a collaborative team culture.
- Reduced dependence on major accounts by expanding customer base and raising prices.
- Changed company image perception from volume supplier to top-quality product producer through catalog and website updates and emphasis on customized items.
- Supported customers through National Trade and Industry Association participation.

Sales Representative, 1997-1999

- Effectively maintained sales area of 3 states.
- Increased sales by 63% over 3 year period.
- Redesigned intake and contact format resulting in faster and higher quality customer service.

Providing dates along the margin highlights the tenure of Jeffrey's experience.

Listing multiple positions highlights promotions.

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration, Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI 2008

Bachelor of Science in Business, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 1997
Focus: **Sales and Marketing Management**

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Marketing Committee Chair, American Management Association – One year (and member five years)
Volunteer, READ America - Four years
Marketing Committee Chair, Big Brothers of America - Five years
Peace Corps Volunteer in Africa – Two years

No matter what your format, utilize a variety of phrases to describe your skills, responsibilities and accomplishments. To generate ideas for these phrases, list what you have accomplished in each position; then select the most important points. Include a description of customers, clients or patient populations and cooperative efforts with colleagues and team members.

Functional Format - Experienced

KATHY MORICE

1234 Milwaukee Street • Milwaukee, WI 12345 • (414) 555-1234 • KMorice@email.com

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a human resources position applying skills and experience in:

- Contract negotiations and compliance
- Employee training and development, including orientation programs
- Budgeting and strategic planning

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Human Resources

Employee Training

- Provided project management for employee training in new division of 400 staff
- Developed in-service training program for new employees
- Compiled and edited comprehensive training manual, which was adopted company-wide
- Updated procedures within Human Resources department and trained staff on new programs

Hiring and Benefits

- Recruited, screened and interviewed applicants for positions, filling 100 openings annually
- Achieved first year staffing goals in 10 months
- Revised and improved benefits package, resulting in 17% cost savings

Management / Administration

- Monitored organizational budgets of $100,000 monthly
- Managed all aspects of fitness club operations including full financial accounting of $750,000 annual revenues
- Negotiated and monitored contracts for equipment and supplies, cutting administrative costs by 20% through effective supply purchasing
- Oversaw human resources office of 15 and restaurant staff of 25

Program Development / Coordination

- Lead strategic planning efforts for fitness center staffing
- Designed and implemented stress management program
- Selected social and athletic activities to be offered; coordinated implementation, promoted programs and registered participants
- Planned, coordinated and promoted first annual company family picnic for 500 guests

EMPLOYMENT

Human Resources Manager - Jeffrey's Engineering, Waukesha, WI	2005-Present
Human Resources Representative - Novacorp, Milwaukee, WI	2002-2005
Operations Supervisor - Fit & Fun Athletic Club, Madison, WI	2000-2002
Assistant Manager - Denny's Restaurant, Hartland, WI	1998-2000

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration August 2000
Certificate in Human Resource Management
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

COMMUNITY / ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT

Society for Human Resource Management, Compensation Committee Member	2000-Present
Habitat for Humanity, Volunteer and Coordinator	2002-Present
Hartland Parent Teacher Association, Committee Member	2003-2007

Even within a functional resume, a skill highlights section within the objective or professional summary can help catch the reader's eye.

Details about results and outcomes help to add credibility to Kathy's readiness for the job.

Job titles and employers are still listed within a functional resume, but are deemphasized to keep the focus on skills and accomplishments.

Experiences are listed in reverse-chronological order according to end date.

A one-page resume is preferred within many business settings. While there may be MUCH more to describe, critically selecting the most relevant details to include helps an employer learn about your skills quickly. Expand further and provide additional examples in the interview.

Chronological & Functional Hybrid Format - Experienced

Mary E. Reeves

1234 South 37th Street (414) 555-1234
Milwaukee, WI 53215 mary.reeves@email.com

OBJECTIVE

A social services director position working with children and their families utilizing counseling, crisis intervention and administrative skills.

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Eight years' experience working with children and families
- Demonstrated success in reaching treatment goals, special focus on short-term therapy
- Skilled in participating as a member of a multidisciplinary team
- Thorough familiarity with Milwaukee community resources

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Program Coordinator, Sojourner Truth House, Milwaukee, WI 2006 - Present

Administrative

- Coordinate intake processes and supervise 24-hour domestic violence hotline
- Supervise eighteen professional staff, interns and volunteers
- Arrange emergency shelter and services for battered women and their children
- Create wellness programming to increase level of esteem and self-sufficiency
- Design and implement budgeting procedures for annual department budget of $65,000
- Collaborate with Child Protective Services and Task Force on Family Violence

Counseling / Crisis Intervention

- Provide crisis counseling to 30 women and children
- Conduct initial needs assessments with individuals upon arrival at the shelter
- Educate women in areas of abuse and legal rights
- Advocate for and referred women to appropriate agencies
- Train new staff and interns in areas of crisis counseling
- Mentor and supervise 3 masters-level interns and 15 hotline volunteers

Family Support Worker, Family Crisis Center, Milwaukee, WI 2002 - 2006

Case Management / Group Counseling

- Taught advocacy skills and intervened with government agencies as necessary
- Referred individuals to other agencies and resources in the community
- Facilitated support groups in the areas of parenting, money management and employment

An additional section, which may be viewed as helpful to a recruiter or generic. Space at the top of the page is valuable: consider what you want to present first wisely.

Detail does not have to always be numerical: information about the type of wellness programming Mary created is also great to provide.

Always provide your name on page 2. Providing brief contact information can also help in case your pages get separated: never staple your resume.

Mary E. Reeves, Page 2

(414) 555-1234 / mary.reeves@email.com

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (continued)

Crisis Intervention

- Conducted immediate assessments of risks to children
- Collaborated with Social Services Department
- Provided one on one crisis counseling in person and via telephone
- Oversaw 24-hour domestic violence hotline

EDUCATION

Coursework in Community Counseling 2004 - present
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Coursework Includes: Family Systems Theory, Research and Practice; Group Counseling Therapy; and Multicultural Counseling

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology May 2001
Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Association for the Care of Children's Health
National Association of Social Workers
Junior League of Greater Milwaukee
Make a Wish Foundation, Volunteer

References & Letters of Recommendation

Your reference list should be included on a separate document from your resume. If an employer does not specifically ask for references, you do not need to include them with your initial application. Bringing your reference page to an interview can be a nice gesture and demonstrates confidence.

Who makes a good reference?

Good references are individuals who can reinforce the skills identified on your resume with positive feedback about your past experiences and accomplishments. References can be past or current internship, work or volunteer supervisors, professors, coaches, colleagues, clients, mentors or contacts through professional organizations. Employers call references to learn more about you as a potential employee. With this in mind, professional references (people who can speak to your work performance) are more helpful than personal references (a neighbor or friend). Relatives should not be references!

As you consider possible references, consider the value that diversity (gender, seniority, background, etc.) within your references could offer to an employer. Could you offer different perspectives about your work based on the roles of your references? For example, for educators, principals or student teaching supervisors make great references. Could parents serve as effective references? Considering this variety could help an employer learn more about you through reference contacts.

Be sure to ask!

Asking someone to be a reference for you is not only polite; it also helps prepare them for the possibility of calls from employers. Be sure to ask your potential references if they would feel comfortable serving as a reference for you. If they are, then share information with them about the types of positions you are applying for and offer a copy of your resume to remind them of dates of employment, accomplishments and other details within your experiences. Ask your references how they would prefer to be contacted by employers: for example, would they rather have a home or work number provided? Stay in touch with your references during the job search process, letting them know about additional positions for which you apply. Finally, be sure to thank your references and stay in touch: share the news when you receive a position and let them know about how things are going once you start working. Maintaining this relationship is effective networking and you never know when you may need their help again.

Format

A reference page should include your full contact information (you may use the same header from your resume for professional branding). Be sure to include the name, job title, company name, company address, preferred phone and email for each reference as well as a sentence about how you worked with him/her. Providing three to four references is appropriate.

Jane Doe

123 North Main Street (414) 123-4567
Milwaukee, WI 12345 janedoe@stritch.edu

REFERENCES

Reference Name, Job Title
Company Name
Company Address
Reference Phone Number
Reference Email

[Reference name] supervised my internship at ABC Company.

Letters of Recommendation

As with references, letters of recommendation can reinforce the skills identified on your resume with positive feedback about your past experiences and accomplishments. If you are applying for graduate school or seeking opportunities in education, nursing, or abroad, letters of recommendation will likely be an important part of your applications.

When asking someone to write a letter of recommendation for you, the considerations for identifying individuals are very similar to selecting references. The best letters of recommendation are from people who:

- Have worked with you closely (so they can provide specific examples about your experiences and accomplishments).
- Have relevant expertise (professors or department managers are good examples).
- Have a positive opinion of you and your abilities.

Asking for Letters of Recommendation: The Earlier, the Better

After you have considered who you would like to ask, remember to give your references plenty of time. Professors especially may be asked for letters by a number of students. Provide as much advance notice as possible. If you know you will be applying for graduate programs in January and February, talk with your references about recommendations two to three months before the application deadlines. Similarly, if you know you will be applying for internships or full time positions, talk with your references about your timeline and ask if they think they could prepare letters in time.

Information about YOU & the Application Process

Equip your references with information about you and the opportunity you are pursuing. Making the time for a conversation about your goals and plans can help your references better understand what to focus on in the recommendation letter and helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page. It is not too forward to discuss experiences or points you would prefer your letter writer to emphasize. While they may not follow this guidance 100% of the time, it is often appreciated. In addition to providing a copy of your resume or CV as well as information about the opportunity you are pursuing for your references, providing a summary of work or projects you did with your reference (or the organization) can be a helpful reminder for details, outcomes or dates.

Be sure to also discuss application processes, deadlines and required forms. Letters of recommendation for job or internship positions may or may not need to be in a sealed envelope, whereas, letters for graduate programs often need to be in an envelope with a signature across the seal. Review the application instructions and discuss the process with your references. (If letters need to be mailed directly, providing a pre-addressed and stamped envelope is a nice courtesy for your references.) Finally, it can reduce confusion or anxiety around deadline-time if you ask your references how they would prefer that you follow up with them. For example, would they like a reminder call or email one month or a few weeks before the deadline? Establishing expectations at the beginning of the experience can help you and your reference.

Thank You & Follow Up

Your references are helping you pursue your goals, so they definitely deserve a thank you. Acknowledge their help with a thank you letter and stay in touch: share the news when you receive a position or are accepted into an academic program. Maintaining this relationship is effective networking and you never know when you may need their help again.

Cover Letters

Cover letters provide several self-marketing opportunities. Cover letters allow you to:

- Introduce yourself to an employer.
- Expand on the qualifications highlighted in your resume.
- Show another level of professionalism and initiative.
- Demonstrate your written communication skills.
- Address or explain your interest in a position.

Job seekers may use a cover letter to respond to a posted opening or to inquire about possible opportunities. Providing a cover letter with a resume is a professional expectation among employers. When Accountemps surveyed 150 executives from the nation's 1,000 largest companies, sixty percent of the respondents said that when they screen applicants, the cover letter is as important or more critical than the resume. It is in <u>your</u> best interest to prepare cover letters.

Cover letters address your interest in a particular position or company/organization, describe key skills and experiences that fulfill the needs of the position and identify next steps. Cover letters provide an excellent opportunity to enhance your self-marketing efforts by expanding on information highlighted within your resume. Rather than duplicating highlights from your resume, the best cover letters add detail to your experiences and directly link them to requirements of the position or industry.

While the skills you highlight may be similar between cover letters for different employers, cover letters should be customized for *each* position. This customization includes researching the position and the company or organization. This research can help you to identify skills or experiences to highlight and demonstrates your interest in each employer: employers want to know why you want to work for *them.* Vault and Reference USA are excellent tools for company research tools are available through StritchConnect.

Cover Letter Format
Cover letters are generally one page in length and follow a standard business letter format. Content is generally distributed as follows:

Your Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
(You may use your resume header for the appearance of letterhead)

(2 spaces)

Date

(2 spaces)

Mr. / Ms. Employer *(No contact name? Call the Human Resources office to ask who you should address application materials to or who is in charge of hiring.)*
Job Title
Company / Organization Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. / Ms. Employer:

Opening Paragraph

- State the purpose of your letter. You are either:
  1. applying for a known opening, or
  2. inquiring about available or anticipated openings.
- Mention how you learned of the opportunity. For example, "I am writing in response to the posting for a Program Coordinator posted on your website."
- Describe why you are interested in *this* employer or organization. This is where you have an opportunity to explain to an employer why you are interested in a marketing position with *his/her* company and not just any marketing position. For example, "after reviewing your website, I was impressed to learn…" or "The mission of your organization focusing on ABC resonates with my professional commitment to..."

Middle Paragraph(s)

- This is the section where you describe and sell your qualifications for the position.
- Customize your descriptions for each employer. Reading over the job description to identify the skills that seem most important to the employer can help inform your decisions about skills or experiences to describe.
- This section can include one or two paragraphs, depending on the number of skills you highlight. Describing 2-3 skills or experiences is customary.
- PROVIDE EXAMPLES! Just as supporting evidence helps your resume sell you better, providing examples of your skills in a cover letter helps an employer get to know your qualifications better. A cover letter provides an opportunity to <u>expand</u> on the descriptions in your resume: take advantage of the opportunity to tell an employer <u>more</u> about you.
- Keep the tone and content positive: focusing on what you can offer rather than what you want from an employer or position.

Closing Paragraph

- The sell is over: this paragraph is about next steps and professional courtesy rather than further descriptions of your qualifications.
- Reference the materials that you have enclosed with the cover letter (resume, references, transcripts, etc.).
- Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.
- Request an interview or indicate a time when you will call to follow up on your application (unless the job posting indicates not to call).

Sincerely,

(4 returns) leaving space for your handwritten signature upon printing

Your Typed name
Telephone number
Email address

Enclosure(s): Resume, etc.

Emailing Cover Letters

When sending your cover letter through email, attach your resume and cover letter to the email. Cutting and pasting your cover letter into the body of the email creates an unprofessional appearance. Rather, in the body of the email, provide a short message indicating the position you are applying for and referencing that your application materials are attached. This way, your cover letter maintains its business letter format and prints nicely.

As with resumes, saving your resume and cover letter as PDF documents ensures that content and format cannot be altered and will be preserved through email.

Thank You Letters and Other Job Search Correspondence

Written correspondence is frequent within a job search and extends beyond cover letters and introductions. Other job search correspondence may include thank you, acceptance, withdrawal or "stall" letters.

Format

In general, **utilize business letter format** and address your job search correspondence to a specific person including his/her title. If you don't know who to send your materials to, calling the company or organization to ask is completely appropriate and demonstrates thoroughness and initiative.

Email is becoming more and more common and professionally acceptable for thank you letters and other job search correspondence. It can often be helpful to mail a hard copy following an emailed letter, especially for acceptance or withdrawal letters.

Networking Letter

Networking letters can be a great way to request informational interviews. Requests for informational interviews are <u>not</u> requests for job interviews. Rather, informational interviews provide an opportunity for you to talk to a professional working in your field of interest or at a company you are interested in learning more about. In your letter, introduce yourself, say how you found the person's name and briefly suggest what you would like to learn from him/her. Then indicate how you will follow up. Keep the ball in your court, because it allows you to be in touch whether or not you hear back.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Dr. Brown, my business professor at Cardinal Stritch University, suggested that I contact you. She recommended that as a Cardinal Stritch alumnus, you would be an excellent person to talk with about pursuing a career in human resources.

I am currently exploring which aspect of human resources to pursue. Training and development, compensation and benefits as well as labor relations all sound interesting to me at this point. I want to go into my full time job search next spring with a clear sense of direction and I would greatly appreciate your insight into the long-term career implications of each path. I would also like to learn more about the day-to-day activities of a human resources professional.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for an informational interview in the coming weeks. I am interested in learning more about how you began your career and what recommendations you might make for someone transitioning into the field. I will call you in the next week to see if we might be able to arrange a convenient time to talk. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at (414) 555-1234. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,
(Signed Name)
Typed Name

Thank You Letter

Timing is critical! Thank you letters should always be sent within 24 hours after the interview. Ideally, send a thank you letter to every person you interviewed with; otherwise, send it to the Human Resource Director or the chair of the screening committee. This letter is to express appreciation and reiterate your interest in the position. As with your other application materials, pay attention to the standards in your industry. For example, a neatly handwritten thank you letter could demonstrate your commitment to customer service while a typed letter could reinforce your professionalism and provide more space for you to describe your interest in the position and appreciation for the interview.

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview last Thursday for the Lab Technician position with the ABC Company. It was nice to meet with you and learn more about the goals for your department. I became even more enthusiastic about the position when you mentioned that flu vaccine research would be part of the responsibilities of the position.

As we discussed during the interview, I enjoy conducting experiments and problem solving. College courses of biology and chemistry have affirmed this interest and developed my attention to detail. Furthermore, my work experience leading a data entry group at Children's Hospital Medical Center provided professional experience in laboratory testing and research. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to bring these experiences to your position.

I look forward to hearing from you by March 18, as you mentioned. If, in the meantime, you have any further questions, please call me at 414-288-7423.

Sincerely,
(Signed Name)
Typed Name

Acceptance Letter
This letter is utilized to accept a formal job offer and is probably the most exciting letter of all to write. This information should confirm the terms of your employment, including starting date, salary, etc. Express your appreciation for the opportunity and enthusiasm in beginning employment.

Dear Ms. Smith:

It is with pleasure that I accept the position as a staff accountant with the ABC Corporation. According to our telephone conversation, I will begin on August 27th and will receive a salary of $_____.

I am looking forward to working with you and the staff at ABC Corporation.

Sincerely,
(Signed Name)
Typed Name

Replying to Not Having Been Chosen
You will be tempted not to write this one. Always reply by letter, whatever the circumstances. Thank employers for their time and consideration. Reinforce the positive aspects of the company and ask to be kept in mind for future positions with them or with colleagues. Wish them well. While you may not have been chosen for this position, maintaining a positive and invested relationship leaves a professional impression.

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for your letter bringing me up to date on the status of my application for the _____ position. I am sorry, of course, that my experience did not match the requirements of the position which was recently available.

I hope that you will continue to consider me as a candidate for new positions that become available. I am very interested in working for you in the Marketing Department of the ABC Corporation. (Or - for the ABC Corporation.)

Sincerely,
(Signed Name)
Typed Name

The "Stall" Letter
Upon occasion, candidates find that they must respond to a job offer before they are ready to make a decision. Communication about delaying a decision should be pursued only when you are seriously considering the offer and this communication can take the form of a conversation or written letter. While a letter is acceptable, a conversation could offer the opportunity to explain the reason for the delay more fully while also getting immediate feedback from the employer. Either way, let the employer know that you are interested in the position and explain briefly why you cannot make a decision at this time. State a specific date by which you will be able to determine your plans with certainty. It is not ethical to accept an offer and keep looking.

Dear Ms. Brown:

I greatly appreciate your offer for the Communications Outreach Specialist position. The commitment of your organization to serving disadvantaged youth was affirmed during the interview and I would look forward to working to support the YMCA mission of building healthy spirit in body and mind. I greatly appreciate the offer.

Although the position is very attractive, I must ask for additional time to consider your offer. As I indicated during the interview, I am in the process of second-round interviews with three organizations. All interviews will be completed by the end of the second week in June.

A two-week extension of your offer deadline would be appreciated. I firmly believe that I can make a definite decision by DATE. I will contact you in one week to see if an extension can be given. Again, thank you for the offer.

Sincerely,
(Signed Name)
Typed Name

Withdrawal Letter

It is a matter of common courtesy to notify an employer once you have made a definite decision to reject an offer of employment. Rejecting an employment offer should be done thoughtfully. (You never know who they might know and whether you might want to apply for a different position at that organization in the future.) Indicate that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it. It is not necessary to give a long explanation. Thank the employer for his/her offer and confidence in you.

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your employment offer for the position of Sales Manager with ABC Company. I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application due to accepting an offer for a similar position with a different company.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to interview with you, to discuss career possibilities, and to learn about the work of ABC Company. I wish you the best and for your company's continued success.

Sincerely,
(Signed Name)
Typed Name

Further Questions?

We hope this guide is a helpful tool in your self-marketing. If you have further questions, please contact Career Services to set up an appointment.

Cardinal Stritch University Career Services
Bonaventure Hall, Suite 1058
6801 North Yates Road
Milwaukee, WI 53217

Office: (414) 410-4157
Toll Free: (800) 347-8822 Ext. 4157
Fax: (414) 410-4160
Email: career@stritch.edu
Web: http://career.stritch.edu