

# TRM 316/IST 366 Assignment #5

**Title:** Resume' and Cover Letter

**Due Date:** 27 October 2008

The resume is a personal document and is your marketing device to obtain interviews. Please take time and care when compiling your information and deciding what you want to include.

For the cover letter: Find a job ad or job description that appeals to you in some way. Write a cover letter that highlights your qualifications and requests the employer to look at your resume and to call you for an interview. Follow the format guidelines included in this packet and in the textbook. The letter should include at least three paragraphs. Include, as an attachment, the text from the job ad you are responding to.

---

**Common Resume Sections/Headings** include, but are not limited to, the following:

Identification  
Career Objective/Statement  
Skills Set  
Skills/Qualifications Summary  
Education  
Work experience  
Extracurricular activities  
Professional/civic activities  
References

---

**CHRONOLOGICAL:**

1. Identifying Information
2. Career Objective
3. Education
4. Employment History
5. Interests and Activities
6. References

**SKILLS/ANALYTICAL/FUNCTIONAL:**

1. Identifying Information
2. Career Objective
3. Skills and Abilities
4. Education
5. Employment History
6. Interests and Activities
7. References

---

**Section order:** There are some accepted practices in the ordering of the resume elements. The identification and Career Objective/Skills Set/Qualifications Summary are always at the top and the References, if included, are always at the bottom. Education and Experience are often reversed; place the more important section first.

**Print Resume:** It is typically formatted to fit on an 8½" x 11" piece of paper. When designing a print resume, one usually includes many formatting features such as bold, tabs, borders, and paragraph alignment (left alignment, center alignment, and right alignment.) Attention is usually given to the use of white space on paper such as margins and line spacing.

**Paper:** Resumes should always be printed/copied onto 8½" x 11" paper and use white, off-white, light earth, or gray tones. The majority of all resumes are reproduced on twenty-pound white bond paper.

**Resume Length:** Ideally, your resume should be just one page if its major use is to serve as a screen to obtain an interview. If you have an extensive background, you may develop a two-page resume to present to employer after you have secured a resume. A general rule of thumb is that if you have 10 years of experience or more than 2 jobs directly related to the position you are planning on applying to, you can have a 2-page resume. Otherwise, you should stick to a single-page resume.

**Cover Letter:**

A good cover letter motivates the potential employer to read the attached resume and, subsequently, invite you to interview for the position you are seeking. The ultimate purpose of a cover letter is to introduce you to the employer and to show why you are one of the best candidates applying for a specific job with the organization. As with the resume, the job of the cover letter is to get you an interview!

With the cover letter you have an opportunity to expand upon your resume and add your personal touch to your approach. The cover letter brings the resume to life by pointing out that there is a real live person contacting the employer on a personal basis. Your letter should be a warm, pleasant, talking human being who is seeking a more personal conversation. The TONE should be of modest confidence. This is your opportunity to put your personality in your marketing tools. The cover letter is also representative of your written communications skills. Make sure that it presents your communication skills in the best possible way.

Your cover letter should put your resume in context: it should draw attention to your strengths and present non-resume material that can make a difference between you and your next closest competitor when the interviewing decision is made.

## RESUME WORKSHEET

**Identifying Information:** Name, address, telephone, e-mail address, web site address

All your contact information should go at the top of your resume.

Avoid nicknames.

Use a permanent address. Use your parents' address, a friend's address, or the address you plan to use after graduation.

Use a permanent telephone number and include the area code. If you have an answering machine, record a neutral greeting.

Add your e-mail address. Many employers will find it useful. (Note: Choose an e-mail address that sounds professional.)

Include your web site address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions.

---

---

---

### Career Objective or Qualifications Summary

An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you're hoping to do.

- Be specific about the job you want. For example: To obtain an entry-level position within a financial institution requiring strong analytical and organizational skills.
- Tailor your objective to each employer you target/every job you seek.

---

---

---

### Skills Set

- A list of your skills that an employer would be most interested in knowing you have.
- These can be developed from your keyword research.

---

---

---

### Education

New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first. Alumni can list it after the work experience section.

- Your most recent educational information is listed first.
- Use reversed chronological order.
- Include the institution and its location.
- Include your degree (A.S., B.S., B.A., etc.), major, institution attended, minor/concentration. For example, "B.S. in Information Systems Technologies., minor in Electronic Systems Technologies.
- Add your grade point average (GPA) if it is higher than 3.0.
- Include date of graduation or projected date of graduation—For example, anticipated date of graduation.
- Mention academic honors and/or special accomplishments.
- You can also include a list of courses that might be of particular interest to an employer.

---

---

---

**Employment History (Work Experience)**

Briefly give the employer an overview of work that has taught you skills. Use action words to describe your job duties. Include your work experience in reverse chronological order—that is, put your last job first and work backward to your first, relevant job. Include:

- Title of position,
- Name of organization
- Location of work (town, state)
- Dates of employment
- Describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on specific skills and achievements.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Other information**

You may want to add:

- Key or special skills or competencies.
- Leadership experience in volunteer organizations.
- Participation in sports.
- Hobbies related to your career.

---

---

---

**References**

Ask people if they are willing to serve as references before you give their names to a potential employer. You may note at the bottom of your resume: "References furnished on request" or provide references with your resume. Also, you should provide any of your references with a copy of your resume. Types: Work, Academic, and Personal.

Omission: No perfect solution exists as to whether or not to list references on the resume. It is a personal decision. In many cases, inclusion or exclusion comes down to whether or not you have space for them without increasing the length of your resume by another page. A separate page of references is common so when requested, it can quickly be provided.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **Resume Checkup**

Once you've written your resume, you should have it reviewed and critiqued by others. You can also take the following steps to ensure quality:

### **Content**

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your resume.
- Get a friend (an English major would do nicely) to do a grammar review.
- Ask another friend to proofread. The more people who see your resume, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen (and corrected).

### **Design**

These tips will make your resume easier to read and/or scan into an employer's data base.

- Use white or off-white paper.
- Print on one side of the paper.
- Use non-decorative typefaces.
- Avoid italics, script, and underlined words.
- Use 8-1/2- x 11-inch paper.
- Use a font size of 10 to 14 points.
- Choose one typeface and stick to it.

---

Use action words to describe your experience and accomplishments. Here are some actions words to use:

- |                |                |               |               |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| • achieved     | • created      | • implemented | • programmed  |
| • acquired     | • cultivated   | • improved    | • promoted    |
| • adapted      | • demonstrated | • informed    | • provided    |
| • addressed    | • designed     | • insured     | • publicized  |
| • administered | • developed    | • interpreted | • published   |
| • analyzed     | • devised      | • interviewed | • recruited   |
| • anticipated  | • discovered   | • launched    | • reorganized |
| • assembled    | • doubled      | • maintained  | • reported    |
| • assisted     | • drafted      | • managed     | • researched  |
| • audited      | • edited       | • marketed    | • resolved    |
| • budgeted     | • eliminated   | • minimized   | • reviewed    |
| • calculated   | • enforced     | • motivated   | • selected    |
| • centralized  | • established  | • negotiated  | • separated   |
| • changed      | • evaluated    | • obtained    | • set up      |
| • collaborated | • expanded     | • operated    | • simplified  |
| • composed     | • explained    | • organized   | • solved      |
| • condensed    | • forecasted   | • originated  | • surveyed    |
| • conducted    | • formed       | • oversaw     | • staffed     |
| • constructed  | • founded      | • performed   | • supervise   |
| • contracted   | • generated    | • planned     | • taught      |
| • converted    | • guided       | • prevented   | • tested      |
| • coordinated  | • hired        | • produced    | • trained     |
|                |                |               | • used        |

## What makes a GOOD cover letter?

- 1. No spelling, grammatical or typing errors – not even one!**
- 2. Show that you know something about the company and the industry.** This is where your research comes in. Don't go overboard—just make it clear that you did not pick this company out of the phone book. You know who they are, what they do; and *you* have chosen them.
- 3. Address it to the person who can hire you.** Resumes sent to the personnel department have a tougher time getting to the right person. If you can find out (through networking and researching) exactly who is making the hiring decision, address the letter to that person. Be sure the name is spelled correctly and the title is correct. A touch of formality is good too: address the person as “Mr.,” “Ms.,” “Dr.,” or “Professor.” Also, try to get the correct job title of the person you are addressing.
- 4. Write it in your own words** so that it sounds like you—not like something out of a book. Employers are looking for knowledge, enthusiasm, and focus.
- 5. Be natural.** Being “natural” makes many people nervous and then even more nervous because they are trying to avoid spelling errors and grammatical mistakes.
- 6. Use polite, format style which also demonstrates self-confidence and respect for the employer. Be clear, objective, and persuasive.**
- 7. Be positive in your tone regarding your personal descriptions and expectations.**
- 8. Use terms and phrases that are meaningful to the employer.** (Try using O\*Net Online to find terms, phrases, keywords for your resume and cover letter. This is a full-access, online version of the occupational network database. <http://online.onetcenter.org/>) Also, use the terms and phrases the employer has used to describe the position in your resume and cover letter.
- 9. Briefly highlight one or two most significant accomplishments or abilities to show you are an above-average candidate.**
- 10. Group similar items together in a paragraph and then organize the paragraphs to relate and flow logically.**
- 11. Close the letter with a plan for follow-up action. Be proactive and ask for an interview to further discuss your qualifications for the position.**
- 12. Proofread!!!! Sign the letter.**
- 13. Keep it to one page and use business letter style.**
- 14. Do not overuse the word “I”.**
- 15. Do not repeat the same material that is in your resume, but do make reference to your resume.**
- 16. Never use your current company's stationery.**

**COVER LETTER FORMAT (should adhere to one of the standard business letter formats)**

**Your Contact Information** (For top margin, you can either center the text vertically on the page or go with 1" or more.)

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone Number

Email Address (Hit enter at least two times after email address; this will give you one blank line between contact information and date.)

Date (Hit enter at least two times after date.)

**Employer Contact Information** (If you have it. You can use a Re: line or a Subject: line if really unsure of whom to send it to.)

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, State, Zip Code (Hit enter ONLY two times after contact information. Should only be one blank line between inside address and salutation.)

**Salutation** (Leave out if you don't have a contact. You can use To whom it may concern salutation if you are really unsure of whom to send it to.)

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name: (Hit enter ONLY two times after salutation leaving one blank line.)

**First Paragraph**

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for. Include the name of a mutual contact, if you have one. Be clear and concise regarding your request. (Hit enter ONLY two times leaving one blank line.)

**Middle Paragraph(s)**

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Convince the reader that they should grant the interview or appointment you requested in the first paragraph. Make strong connections between your abilities and their needs. Mention specifically how your skills and experience match the job you are applying for. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it. Try to support each statement you make with a piece of evidence. Use several shorter paragraphs or bullets rather than one large block of text. (Hit enter ONLY two times leaving one blank line.)

**Final Paragraph**

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow-up. State that you will do so and indicate when (one week's time is typical). You may want to reduce the time between sending out your resume and follow up if you fax or e-mail it. (Hit enter ONLY two times leaving one blank line.)

**Complimentary Close** (Hit enter FOUR times leaving three blank lines for your signature.)

Respectfully yours,

**Handwritten Signature** (Hand write your signature in the three blank lines.)

Typed Signature