

Career Services Guide

Welcome to Career Services at Kirkwood Community College. This Guide is just one of the many services we offer our students, alumni and community members. Let us help you find a major, look for a job or search for a new or different career.

Career Services is located on the first floor of Iowa Hall at the main campus in Cedar Rapids. You can participate in credit classes, workshops and receive individualized assistance during day and evening hours. Our Job Club is a place where job seekers go to share ideas, network with others and view job listings. It is a resource facility providing computer accessibility, telephone service and related workshops. Many participants begin by attending the evening Career Directions Workshops.

We have developed on-line services to supplement our face-to-face offerings. Employers post job openings and students/alumni post resumes on our Jobs Website at www.kirkwood.edu/jobs. We have developed links to other sites to assist in your career search and can refer you to additional career search and job seeking skills websites.

Our goal is to help you be successful. I wish you the best of luck in your career search. Welcome to Career Services at Kirkwood Community College.

Sincerely,

Bob Burnes
Dean of Students

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12/20/06

Campus and Local Resources

Career Services Center, 398-5689
125 Iowa Hall; Kirkwood Community College

Services offered through Kirkwood's Career Center:

Career exploration – choosing a major, researching careers
Interest/personality assessments
Help finding jobs and internships
Job Club
Resume/cover letter help
Interviewing skills
Online job board
Career fairs
On campus interviews
Job Seeking Workshops/Credit Class

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (319) 294-9308 or KCC Voc. Rehab Phone (319) 398-4925
Main Office 4403 1st Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA or KCC Campus Iowa Hall 123
The on-campus rehabilitation counselor provides specialized assistance to eligible Iowans with disabilities through the Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS).

Available assistance and services include:

- Medical and psychological assessment
- Counseling and guidance
- Physical or mental restoration services (therapy, wheelchairs, hearing aids)
- Special adaptive equipment or devices
- Job placement coordinating
- Financial assistance arrangements

Kirkwood Skills-to-Employment offers employment and training resources for Dislocated Workers and income-eligible adults and youth in Linn, Johnson, Jones, Cedar, Benton, Iowa, and Washington counties. Training sponsorships may be available for those who meet eligibility criteria and demonstrate financial need.

Staff Assisted Core Services

- Career exploration assistance
- job search and placement assistance, including career counseling
- workshops and job clubs

If employment leading to self-sufficiency is not achieved through staff-assisted services, then more intensive services can be provided.

Intensive Services

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs, including diagnostic testing and other use of assessment tools, and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and intervention measures.

- Development of an in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment goals and the steps necessary to achieve employment goals.
- Group counseling and career planning.
- Skill upgrading.
- Individual counseling and career planning.
- Case management for participants seeking training services.
- Short-term, pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills and professional etiquette to prepare participants for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Limited relocation expenses.

If employment leading to self-sufficiency does not result from intensive services, then training services may be provided.

Training Services

- Training to learn occupational skills.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Remedial and Basic Skills academic training.

Support Services

Services such as transportation, childcare or dependent care that is necessary to enable an individual to participate in Workforce Investment Act Activities. The ability to provide support services is based on budget availability and the financial needs of the participant.

To see if you qualify, contact your local WIA consultant today!

Robin Cook
 Kirkwood Resource Center
 1030 5th Avenue SE, Suite 2300
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52403
 (319) 398-5070, Ext. 200
Robin.Cook@iwd.iowa.gov

Julie Luck
 800 7th Street SE
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52403
 (319) 365-9474, Ext. 1247
Julie.Luck@iwd.iowa.gov

Melissa Fiacco
 Eastdale Plaza
 1700 1st Avenue, Suite 22
 Iowa City, IA 52240
 (319) 354-2272
Melissa.Fiacco@iwd.iowa.gov

Our toll-free number is 1-800-383-8451

Or contact: Cheryl.Tabarella-Redd@iwd.iowa.gov or send inquiry to Skills to Employment, 1030 5th Avenue, S.E., 3rd Floor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403. Telephone: (319) 398-5070, ext. 102 or 1-800-383-8451

Other local resources (off-campus)

Promise Jobs, 1-800-383-8451

"Promoting Independence and Self Sufficiency through Employment" is Iowa's welfare reform program. PROMISE JOBS is designated to assist Family Investment Program (FIP) recipients to become self-sufficient. Promise Jobs staff persons are located in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City and they provide services to Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington counties.

A number of activities are available to PROMISE JOBS participants including:

- Family Investment Agreement
- Life Skills/Assessment
- Job Club
- Basic Education
- Post-Secondary Classroom Training
- Parenting Skills
- Family Development Services
- Family Planning Services
- Monitored Employment

Benton County

Kirkwood Center
111 West 3rd St.
Vinton, IA 52349
319-472-2318 (Thursdays)

OR
319-398-5070, ext. 111 in Cedar Rapids

Cedar County

Kirkwood Resource Center
401 West 9th St
Tipton, IA 52772
563-886-3451 (Fridays)

Iowa County

Kirkwood Center
200 West St.
Williamsburg, IA 52361
319-668-2461 (Thursdays)

OR

319-354-2272 in Iowa City

OR

(319) 398-5070, ext. 140

Johnson County

Eastdale Plaza
1700 1st Avenue, Suite 22
Iowa City, IA 52240
319-354-2272
Fax: 319-354-0670

Jones County

Kirkwood Center
818 West 1st St
Monticello, IA 52310
319-465-5133 (Tuesdays)

Linn County

Kirkwood Resource Center
1030 5th Avenue, S.E., 3rd Floor
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403
319-398-5070 or 1-800-383-8451
Fax: 319-398-5252

Iowa Workforce Development Center
800 7th Street, S.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403
(319) 365-9474
(319) 365-9270

Washington County

Kirkwood Center
111 Westview
Washington, IA 52353
319-653-4655 (Tuesdays)
OR
319-354-2272 in Iowa City

Iowa Workforce Development <http://www.iowaworkforce.org>

Iowa Workforce Development has many offices that can help you with job searching, unemployment claims, skills development, support and testing services, and job searching.

Locations:

Cedar Rapids

800 7th Street, SE PO Box 729
319-365-9474

Iowa City

1700 S. 1st Ave - Suite 11B
319-351-1035

Vinton

111 West Third Street
319-472-2318

Monticello

818 W 1st, PO Box 555
319-465-4044

Washington

111 Westview Dr.
319-653-4787

Experience Works, Inc.

Experience Works is a national, nonprofit, community-based organization whose mission is to put the experience of older individuals to work. Originally named Green Thumb, and chartered in 1965 as a small, rural demonstration program, Experience Works has grown to be the nation's leading provider of training, employment, and community service for low-income older people.

Our Vision of Experience Works:

To be the Recognized National Leader in Senior Workforce Solutions and a Major Contributor within the Broader Population.

We will do this by:

- Providing older individuals and others with skills and opportunities to enhance their employability, performance, and life satisfaction;
- Providing employers with skilled, reliable, and experienced employees to maximize their competitiveness in a changing business environment;
- Meeting community needs through the involvement of our employees and program participants;
- Increasing awareness of older worker issues and building support for policies that are responsive to the needs of a rapidly aging workforce; and
- Cultivating a company culture built on professionalism, courtesy, and high performance, and that values continuous learning, innovation, and improvement.

Location: 800 7th St SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401 Phone (319) 365-7559

Prepare for life after graduation NOW!

These are some suggested guidelines for staying on track with your career goals.

First Year To-Do List:

- Visit the career center, and learn about the different services available to you.
- Take an assessment and/or meet with a counselor to clarify career goals.
- Research careers that interest you and decide upon a college major
- Visit with your academic advisor to map out the coursework for your career plan
- Participate in volunteer activities and/or student organizations to learn useful skills
- Create a resume
- Consider working part-time or interning in a job that is related to your major during the summer or during the school year.

Second Year To-Do List:

- Attend a career fair to visit with potential employers
- Develop a plan to move toward your career goals
- Research companies/organizations if you will enter the job market upon your Kirkwood graduation
- Narrow down the specific things you are looking for in a job
- Polish your resume
- Learn how to write cover letters
- Practice your interviewing skills
- Visit the Career Center for assistance with any of the above



Career Exploration Assessments

Need help deciding on a major or career? Taking a career assessment may help.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

This tool measures your personality style, including what energizes you, your attention to detail, your risk-taking comfort level, and how you make decisions. This assessment will help you gain a better understanding of your personality, and help you identify career fields that may be a good “fit” for you. This assessment is offered in a workshop format only. (See below for workshop dates)

Choices

This assessment measures your interests in different career-related subjects. To receive the greatest benefit from this assessment, attend a workshop where you can take the assessment and learn how to apply the results. (See below for workshop dates)

If you can't make it to a workshop, you can take the Choices workshop on your own. (see pages 9 & 10 for instructions)

For Career Exploration Workshop dates/times: Stop by 115 Iowa Hall or visit our website for dates and times of workshops. Go to: www.kirkwood.edu From there, go to: Academics > Services > Student Development & Counseling > Career Workshops

Other Free Online Assessments are also offered through websites that are not affiliated with Kirkwood. For a link listing of these sites, visit <http://www.careerinfonet.org> Then go to Career Tools > Career Resource Library > Career Assessment > Free Online Assessments and Tests.

Instructions for accessing Choices via the Internet:

1. Access the internet using Microsoft Internet Explorer or any other internet provider you have available.
2. Type Https://access.bridges.com/ct in the address bar and hit enter.
3. The login screen asks for both a site ID and password.
 - **Site ID: 1007353**
 - **Password: a7114ps2**
 - Click on the **GO** button after entering all numbers.
4. You will now be in the Choices Planner program. At this point you will need to set up your portfolio. Click on the Create a portfolio link and fill in the requested information.
 - **Portfolio Name: your first initial and last name**, no caps or spaces (ex: John Smith would have a portfolio name of jsmith).
 - **Portfolio Password:** Choose any password that you will remember.
 - Click on the Create your portfolio now link. Complete the questions asked and submit.
 - You should now see your name at the top right hand corner of the screen (ex: Welcome John).
5. Please go to the two activities listed under the tab HOME at the top left hand side of the screen. You may begin each activity (Interest Profiler and Work Values Sorter) by clicking on the name of the assessment. Complete each part of those two assessments, printing your results after completing each assessment. You may also go under the WORK tab and complete the Transferable Skills Checklist or other assessments that may be of interest to you.

6. After completing these assessments, you may click on the **HOME** tab at the top of the page and click on the **Career Finder** link.
 - On the career finder page, you can click on the names of the assessments you already completed, plus any other items of interest to you and the program will develop a list of possible “best-fit” careers for you to research.

Final Notes:

- Ability Profiler Assessment Password is “**begin**”.
- You may leave the program and return at any time. Make sure you keep these directions or write down the site id and passwords so you can access the program again.
- Please contact a Kirkwood counselor with questions or concerns you have while working through this program. Our phone number is 398-5471



Career Research

Once you've started to gain a more thorough understanding of yourself (your strengths, personality, interests, abilities, and values) your next step is to find a career fits you. This will take some time, but there are many resources available to help you.

Ways to research careers

- **Online-** The internet is a great starting place for researching for a wide range of careers fields (see below for recommended web sites)
- **Internships-** Short term professional work experiences (i.e. internships) are a great way to “try on” a career field. (See pages 13 - 14)
- **Job shadowing** – Sometimes professionals will let you follow them around for a day or two- this can give you a taste of what the job environment is like.
- **Related experiences** – Your part time job, volunteer work, or involvement in organizations may also help you better understand certain career fields.
- **Informational interviewing-** One way of researching careers is to interview people who are in the career field you are interested in. (See page 12)

Career Research websites

- **The Occupational Outlook Handbook** has an online catalogue of information on hundreds of careers. Includes information the training and education needed, earnings, expected job prospects, what workers do on the job, and working conditions <http://stats.bls.gov/oco>
- **O*NET** is also an online database of career information. With O*Net, you can select skills you have, and then search for a career that matches your skills. You can also search by keyword. <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- **Salary.com** has information about salaries, including low, median, and high range salaries. www.salary.com
- **Get That Gig** provides profiles of people working in a wide range of career fields. <http://www.getthatgig.com/>
- **America's Career InfoNet** has information about particular occupations (training, outlook, earnings); particular geographic areas, trends, and resources. <http://www.acinet.org>
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics** has projections for future job growth for many occupations <http://www.bls.gov/>
- **Click on My Career** is a Cedar Rapids/ Iowa City website that has information about careers that are generally available locally. Includes real profiles and job descriptions of professionals in the area. <http://www.clickonmycareer.com>
- **Career Voyages** is a user friendly website. You can research careers and get helpful tips on where to start in planning your career, including searching for college programs and financing your college expenses. <http://www.careervoyages.gov>
- **What can I do with a major in _____?** Find out what you can do with a specific major <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/majors>

Informational Interviewing

Informational Interviewing is a great way to learn about a career field that interests you. You can gain a lot of insight and also develop valuable contacts that may help you in the future. Here's what you do:

1. **Find someone** that does something that sounds interesting to you. You can use the yellow pages, internet search engines, company websites, friends, and professional organizations to identify possible contacts. Your counselor or career services coordinator can help you brainstorm. (Tip: Professionals from smaller, lesser-known organizations generally receive fewer requests for information, and may be more willing to help.)
2. **Contact the person** you'd like to interview. Let them know that you are a Kirkwood student researching careers. Ask if they would be willing to help you out by letting you interview them about their career path. Let them know it will only take 20-30 minutes. (Tip: make sure it only takes 20-30 minutes)
3. **Prepare a list of questions**, guided by what you would like to learn from the interview. (see sample list below)
4. **Dress appropriately and arrive 10-15 minutes early**. Bring a copy of your resume, just in case it is requested. Remember that your purpose is gathering information, not searching for a job.
5. **Keep a record** of the information you gained from the experience. Reflect upon what you learned- Does it still seem like something you'd enjoy? Also keep a record of the contact information for each person you interview; you may need it in the future.
6. **Send a Thank-You note!** The person you interviewed is probably a very busy person, and generously gave you one half hour of time, free of charge. Show your appreciation with a short thank-you note.

Sample Questions for an Informational Interview

1. Could you describe the career path you took to arrive in your current position?
2. What is a typical day like for you? A typical week?
3. What are your main responsibilities? How much time do you devote to each activity?
4. What are some typical high pressure situations you deal with?
5. What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
6. What are the most challenging aspects of your job?
7. What would you most like to change about your position?
8. How has this career field changed in the last several years?
9. What changes do you foresee in the next few years?
10. What character qualities/skills are important to have to be successful in this field?
11. How can I obtain these skills/qualities?
12. What educational experiences would be helpful to one hoping to enter this field?
13. What educational experiences did you find helpful in preparing for this job?
14. What are some common entry-level positions in this field?
15. How much travel or relocation is required?
16. Are you happy with your salary?
17. How difficult would it be for you to change to a similar job in another industry or setting?
18. What are your future career goals? Are these common goals for your field?
19. What are the actual hours you put in during a given week?
20. Would you be willing to look at my resume/ portfolio and give me some tips or advice on how to improve it?
21. Would you recommend anyone else in this field for me to talk to?

Internships

An internship is a temporary job doing professional work in a field that interests you.

Internships are required for some Kirkwood programs. Check with your academic department for more information.

An internship can help you:

- Apply what you are learning in class to real world situations
- “Try on” a career to see if it’s a good fit
- Work alongside professionals in a career that interests you
- Develop valuable career contacts
- Build your resume
- Learn useful skills
- Gain confidence in your abilities
- Obtain a full time position
- Gain the experience you need to obtain a full-time job

How to find and Internship

- The Career Center (125 Iowa Hall) does not setup Internships; however, we can assist you in the Job Seeking Skills process in locating internships.
- Attend a career fair at Kirkwood. Call 398-5689 or stop by 125 Iowa Hall for dates.
- Check Kirkwood’s online job board ([www.collegecentral.com/kirkwood./](http://www.collegecentral.com/kirkwood/)). Many “part-time” or “summer” jobs could actually be considered internships.
- Research organizations you’d like to intern with and send each of them a specific letter of inquiry (See pages 39-40) Follow up a week later with a phone call, to see if they are open to the idea of having you as an intern.
- Ask your professors, friends, family, and advisor for internship ideas and/or leads.

Nationwide Internship Listings Online

- Internship Programs.com: <http://internships.wetfeet.com>
- Rising Star Internships: <http://www.rsinternships.com>

Internship Tips

- Make sure you will be doing a significant amount of professional work, and not just fetching coffee.
- Some internships are paid, and some are unpaid. When selecting an internship, consider not only the amount you’ll be paid, but more importantly the quality of experience that you will gain.

Other ways to get experience

- **Part-Time Jobs-** Some part-time jobs involve duties that are related to your professional field. Even if your part-time job does not qualify as an internship, you may still be able to learn new skills and meet professionals in your field.
- **Volunteer-** Are there any organizations that could use your skills? Many organizations need people to plan events, organize activities, raise funds, create marketing campaigns, analyze budgets, etc. If you volunteer your services you will be able to gain practical experience and add to your skill set. (Of course, you’ll also be contributing to the well-being of your community!)

- **Get involved with a campus organization-** Develop your leadership, communication, and organizational skills by getting involved in one of Kirkwood's student organizations. Manage a budget, make posters, lead meetings, plan events, sell things, recruit new members, organize fund-raisers, or be an activist. You will gain valuable skills through any of these activities. Check with Student Life in 104 Iowa Hall for more information.
- **Make up your own projects-** If you can't find anyone that needs what you have to offer, make something up! Write reports, create artwork, make up a business plan and marketing strategy, or build / fix something. You can talk about these projects during an interview, or you can compile your projects into a portfolio that displays your work and proves your skill level. (Some majors lend themselves to this more easily than others.)



Types of Career Related Writing

Resume: A concise summary of your most relevant educational, work, and volunteer experiences.

Types of Resumes:

- **Chronological** – Organized in reverse chronological order (with most recent jobs first). This is the most widely accepted format (See pages 18 & 19 & 23 - 30)
- **Functional** – Organized by skill, often used to draw attention away from a large gap in employment history (See pages 19 & 31)
- **Computer Scanned**- A resume specially formatted to be pasted into online application forms. (See pages 19 & 32)

Cover Letter: Accompanies your resume, specific to each job you apply for, makes the connection between the job description and your resume

Types of Cover Letters:

- Letter of Inquiry – sent when there is no advertised position opening. (See pages 39 & 40)
- Letter of Application – sent along with resume to apply for a specific position that has been advertised (See pages 34 & 36 - 38)

Reference page: Often employers will request your references to be sent along with your resume. Your reference page should have the same header as your resume, and contain contact information of 3-5 professional references. Always bring a reference page to your interviews in case one is requested. (Example page 41)

Letter of Acceptance: Send as a formal acceptance of a job offer, when requested. (Example page 42)

Letter of Decline: Send when you'd like to decline a job offer (Example page 43)

Thank you letter: Send to an employer to express appreciation for an interview or other meeting. You may also hand-write a thank you card. (Examples pages 44 - 47)

Networking Letters: You may use these as a way of meeting new people within your field. (Example page 54)

Resumes

Parts of a Resume

Header: The first line of information in your header should be your name, in 14-18 pt font. Then include your address, email, and phone number. If your contact information changes during semester breaks, include both a “permanent” and “current” address, so employers can get a hold of you during semester breaks.

Education: If you are a recent graduate, you’ll probably list your education near the top of your resume. Include the name of your institution, the degree(s) earned, minors or areas of concentration, and anticipated or actual graduation date. If your GPA is over 3.0, include your GPA. You don’t need to list the years of attendance, you only need the date you completed your degree. You do not need to include high school information, unless you are a recent high school graduate. Generally, recent graduates will put the education section near the top of the resume. As you gain more significant work experiences, consider moving the education section to down below your experience section.

Experience: This is where you will include information about your experiences – both volunteer and paid. List your experiences in reverse chronological order (beginning with your current job, and ending with your least recent job.) Use 3-5 bullet points for each job to clearly describe what you did, focusing on duties/skills that may be transferred to the job you are applying for.

-OR-

“Related Experience” and “Work Experience”: Usually you can put all your experiences under one category titled “EXPERIENCE.” If you have several work experiences that are not related to your field, you may want to separate your experience category into “RELATED EXPERIENCE” and “WORK EXPERIENCE”. “RELATED EXPERIENCE” would go near the top of the resume, and include all your past experiences that are closely related to the type of work you are seeking. “WORK EXPERIENCE” would go below related experience, and would include jobs that are not related to your field.

Optional Sections:

- **Objective:** If you are applying for a specific job within a company, mention that job title in your objective, at the top of your resume. If you are applying for an internship, make a note of when you’d like to do the internship (summer, spring semester, etc.) General objections are okay, but not necessary. If you do include a general objective, make sure you emphasize what you can offer the employer rather than what you hope to gain. An objective would go directly below your contact info at the top of the page. (Example: To obtain an internship during the summer of 2008 where I can utilize my skills in marketing)
- **Course Highlights:** If you are looking for an internship, you may want to include a section for course highlights, so you can let the employer know you’ve taken specific classes and have knowledge that would make you a useful intern. List the classes that are most directly related to type of work you will be doing at the internship. If you are looking for a full time job in a field that is not directly related to your major, include courses that you have taken that relate to the type of job you seek.
- **Computer Skills:** If you have knowledge of certain computer systems or software that will help you better perform the job you’re applying for, list them here. List the latest additions you know. (Example: Adobe Photoshop 8.0, Microsoft Word 2003, Windows XP)
- **Certifications or Technical Skills:** If you have certifications or technical skills that you can use on the job you’re applying for, list them here.

- **International Experience:** Use this heading if you have studied abroad or spent significant amount of time overseas.
- **Languages:** If you are fluent in more than one language, you may want to list your proficiencies in this section.
- **Activities:** If you have been involved in activities that relate to your field or demonstrate your skills, you can include them on your resume.
- **Leadership:** If you have been in charge of any volunteer projects, or attended leadership conferences, you can include them in this section.

Resume Format

- Make sure all information is clearly organized, so the employer can understand everything very quickly. The average resume is only glanced at for 20 seconds!
- Arrange your sections in order of importance (i.e. if computer skills are very important in your field, list those near the top of your resume)
- Put whatever you want to draw attention to in **Bold** print. Most people bold their college major and job titles.
- Keep your format consistent. (For example, if you abbreviate some of your months, abbreviate all of your months)
- Margins can be ½ - 1 ¼ inches wide
- Use 11-12 pt. font.
- Try to limit your resume to one page if possible; two pages are okay if you have several years of related experience.
- Use bullets instead of paragraph form.

Other Resume Tips

- You don't need your whole life story, if you've had several unrelated jobs, only list your most relevant work experiences.
- Give your resume to a few other people to proofread for errors.
- Print on white or off-white resume paper, in case copies are made of your resume.
- Use a laser printer if you can. If you use an inkjet printer, make sure your ink dries completely, without smearing.
- Use Times New Roman font or another font that is easy to read.
- You don't need to include your personal interests unless they relate to the job you're applying for.
- Don't use a template. If you do, it's likely your resume will look *exactly* like several other resumes in the pile. Also, templates make it difficult to edit and rearrange your resume, which you will need to do often.
- Try to keep your resume to one page, unless you have several years of experience that cannot fit onto one page.
- Arrange your section categories by order of importance. (For example if computer skills are very important to the job you're applying for, put the computer skills section toward the top of the page)
- Look at sample resumes in your specific career field. Do an online search or ask your teachers for places to find resume samples within your career field.

Transferable Skills

When writing your resume, think in terms of transferable skills. A transferable skill is any skill that you learned through past experience that you could use in a future job. Communication, customer service, managerial, and organizational skills are all transferable skills that employers are looking for.

Even if your past jobs included waiting tables, mowing lawns, and working as a clerk, you probably developed some transferable skills. Communication, organization, and leadership skills can be learned in a variety of jobs. Use the list of verbs on pages 20 - 22 to brainstorm skills you may have learned at your past jobs.

Tailor your resume to the job you are applying for, and focus on the skills that seem most relevant to the position you want. Try to pull out the job duties and skills you learned that are similar to the type of work you want to do. By doing this, you will be able to make connections between your experience and the job you want. (even though they may seem unrelated). Look for clues about what the employer is looking for in the job description.

- **For example, let's say your last work experience was a part-time job at the Dairy Barn.** Unless you are applying for a job flipping burgers at the Whippy Dip, you'll need to write about something other than how well you can flip burgers and make a soft serve cone. If you are applying for a position in sales, focus your bullet points on the duties that involved relating to customers, selling, and persuading. If you are applying for an accounting position, talk about how you counted the cash register, how much money you handled, and about how you helped take inventory. If you are applying for a position in management, talk about how you trained new employees and came up with ideas to help the Dairy Barn run more efficiently.

Tips for Writing Bullet Points

- Start with an action verb (See pages 20 - 22)
- Identify who you were helping (clients, customers, coworkers, management)
- Describe your job duties, focusing on the duties that display your transferable skills (See page 18)
- Talk about how your efforts helped your organization
- Add numbers to show how productive you were. (i.e. number of times you did something, number of customers you helped, amount of cash you handled, how much of something you accomplished, etc.)

Resume Styles

There are 3 Resume Format Styles

- **Chronological**
 - The Chronological Resume Style is the most common type used today. This type presents your information in a timeline approach. You list the most recent work or education experience is listed first, followed by the next most recent. (See pages 23 – 30)

The main reasons in using the Chronological Style:

- The style best suited for entry-level job-seekers or those people who have stayed in the same field.
- Many employers and recruiters expect and prefer this style.
- This style provides a straightforward history of your work experiences and education.
- Employers can easily scan Chronological resumes than any other styles.

Cautions:

- This style will show any gaps in employment history.
- Can demonstrate a lack of work experience.
- Employers and recruiters can guess your age if you include older work experiences.

- **Functional/Skill**

- Functional resumes highlight your related skills rather than your chronological work history. You do still need to summarize your work history near the bottom of the resume. (See page 31)

You may want to consider using a functional resume if:

- You have a gap(s) in your work history (Example: you took a few years off to raise children or pursue other interests)
- You have changed jobs frequently
- You are looking to transition into a new career. (i.e. Your past job titles and experiences are not similar to the job you are applying for)
- Functional resumes may be effective in these situations, because they draw attention to the transferable skills you have, rather than your exact job titles and experiences.
- If you are an older worker seeking to deemphasize a lengthy job history.

- **Computer Scanned**

- A Computer Scanned Resume is basically a print resume that the employer turns into an electronic resume by using Optical Character Recognition (ORC) software and then placing it into a keyword-searchable database. (See page 32)

Preparing an internet-ready resume:

- Often large companies will require you to apply online and paste your resume into an online form.

If you do this, follow these guidelines:

- Keep it as simple as possible, remove lines and complicated formatting.
- Use (*) or (–) for bulleted lists, instead of automatic bullets.
- Use one universal font for the whole document (Times New Roman)
- Use a normal type size, usually in the range 11 to 14pts. The most common font size recommended is 12 pt.
- If your resume is more than one page, be sure to place your name at the top of second page.
- Print your resume on a high quality laser printer or inkjet. When using resume paper, it is recommended to use a Laser printer. Print only on White paper.
- Avoid any kinds of graphics or shading.
- Do not use Italics
- Do not use Bold (unless you know for sure that the scanning system accepts bold type).

Action Verbs

It's best to start most of your bullet points with a powerful action verb. Here is a list of powerful verbs that describe skills employers are looking for. You can also use this list to help you come up with ideas for skills you may want to include on your resume. Which of these verbs describe what you did at your previous jobs? Most of these skills can transfer to the job you are looking for. Note: if there are verbs included in the job description for a specific job you are applying for, be sure to use those in your resume as well.

Management Skills

Accelerated	Coordinated	Identified	Produced
Administered	Delegated	Improved	Prohibited
Anticipated	Designated	Influenced	Recommended
Appointed	Determined	Initiated	Regulated
Approved	Developed	Increased	Reinforced
Assigned	Directed	Handled	Reviewed
Assumed	Elected	Hired	Revised
Attained	Evaluated	Led	Secured
Authorized	Employed	Managed	Scheduled
Caused	Enlisted	Motivated	Screened
Chaired	Envisioned	Observed	Strategized
Changed	Established	Organized	Strengthened
Conducted	Executed	Oversaw	Supervised
Contracted	Exercised	Planned	
Commissioned	Finalized	Prepared	
Consolidated	Forecasted	Prioritized	

Clerical/Organizational Skills

Adjusted	Dispatched	Obtained	Selected
Allocated	Distributed	Operated	Simplified
Altered	Eliminated	Organized	Spearheaded
Arranged	Established	Orchestrated	Specified
Calculated	Executed	Prepared	Sought
Catalogued	Forwarded	Processed	Straightened
Charted	Generated	Purchased	Systematized
Classified	Implemented	Recorded	Tabulated
Collected	Incorporated	Retrieved	Updated
Compiled	Inspected	Set goals	Validated
Contracted	Maintained	Screened	
Coordinated	Monitored	Scheduled	

Creative Skills

Acted	Established	Instituted	Polished
Brainstormed	Expanded	Integrated	Renovated
Conceptualized	Fashioned	Introduced	Revitalized
Conceived	Founded	Invented	Shaped
Created	Formulated	Improvised	Sketched
Customized	Generated	Launched	Uncovered
Developed	Illustrated	Originated	Stimulated
Directed	Initiated	Performed	Visualized
Drafted	Innovated	Pioneered	
Dramatized	Inspired	Planned	

Problem Solving Skills

Alleviated	Formulated	Revitalized	Solved
Debugged	Judged	Revamped	
Engineered	Remedied	Revived	
Evaluated	Repaired	Satisfied	

Analytical / Research Skills

Analyzed	Critiqued	Inspected	Studied
Assessed	Deciphered	Interpreted	Summarized
Classified	Detected	Interviewed	Surveyed
Collected	Diagnosed	Investigated	Synthesized
Conducted	Evaluated	Measured	Systematized
Completed	Examined	Monitored	Theorized
Compared	Extracted	Recognized	Transformed
Controlled	Explored	Refined	
Corrected	Identified	Reviewed	
Correlated	Indexed	Researched	

Technical Skills

Assembled	Installed	Mapped out	Stocked
Built	Inspected	Operated	Licensed
Constructed	Labored	Overhauled	Programmed
Designed	Logged	Performed	Remodeled
Engineered	Merchandised	Processed	Repaired
Edited	Maintained	Proofed	Solved
Fabricated		Shipped	Taught

Financial / Quantitative Skills

Accounted for	Computed	Grossed	Raised
Administered	Consolidated	Increased	Reconciled
Apportioned	Conserved	Input	Recorded
Appraised	Converted	Inventoried	Reduced
Approximated	Counted	Managed	Summarized
Audited	Dispensed	Marketed	Tabulated
Allocated	Dispersed	Maximized	Targeted
Balanced	Earned	Minimized	Totaled
Boosted	Enumerated	Multiplied	Tracked
Budgeted	Estimated	Planned	Transacted
Calculated	Figured	Profited	Sold
Certified	Financed	Projected	
Checked	Forecasted	Purchased	
Compiled	Grew	Quantified	

Communication Skills

Addressed	Deliberated	Moderated	Recruited
Adapted	Developed	Motivated	Related
Arbitrated	Directed	Negotiated	Reported
Arranged	Drafted	Officiated	Represented
Authored	Edited	Perceived	Solicited
Briefed	Elicited	Persuaded	Suggested
Clarified	Enlisted	Presented	Summarized
Collaborated	Formulated	Promoted	Surveyed
Communicated	Greeted	Publicized	Translated
Consented	Influenced	Reconciled	Welcomed
Cooperated	Interpreted	Recruited	Wrote
Corresponded	Interviewed	Referred	
Critiqued	Mediated	Spoke	

Teaching Skills

Adapted	Explained	Instructed	Stimulated
Advised	Facilitated	Mentored	Tested
Clarified	Fostered	Modeled	Theorized
Coached	Guided	Motivated	Trained
Demonstrated	Graded	Persuaded	Tutored
Educated	Illustrated	Presented	
Enabled	Informed	Routed	
Encouraged	Initiated	Set goals	

Helping Skills

Accommodated	Counseled	Facilitated	Tailored
Advised	Demonstrated	Familiarized	Referred
Aided	Diagnosed	Guided	Rehabilitated
Alleviated	Eased	Helped	Relieved
Assessed	Educated	Interceded	Rescued
Assisted	Enabled	Listened	Represented
Assured	Endorsed	Mobilized	Served
Bolstered	Enhanced	Prescribed	Supported
Clarified	Enriched	Provided	Sustained
Coached	Expedited	Protected	

Sample Chronological Resumes

Jane D. Smith (*Bold*)(*Font size 12 – 16*)
299 King Street NE (*Regular Text*) (*Font size 11 - 14*)
Rich, IA 55555
(319) 555-1212
jane.smith@aol.com

Career Objective (*Headings-Bold & Font size 12 - 14*)

(*Career Objective is Optional*)

To obtain a Paralegal position in Real Estate Law firm. (*Regular text, Font size 11 - 12*)

Professional Experience

(*Formatting Dates: Year to Year 1994-2000 or Month/Year to Month/Year 2/00-12/05*)

2006-Present Belding & Belding Law, Cedar Rapids, IA

Legal Assistant (*Job titles in bold*)

- Provide paralegal services to attorneys in residential real estate sales within Iowa and Illinois.
- Monitor transactions from start to final settlement statement; order and review titles, obtain plot plans and municipal lien certificates, research background, and work successfully against deadlines.
- Serve as liaison for clients, banks, and attorneys; schedule meetings, identify documents necessary for all parties.
- Coordinate all post-closing functions, complete title insurance forms, send final payments to banks and municipalities, and disburse funds.

2000-2006 Investors Life Insurance Co., Marion, IA

Deputy Clerk (2004-2006)

- Negotiated payments with attorneys Third Party Liability cases and reviewed medical records.

Operator Clerk (2000-2004)

- Provided subscriber information to customers, assisted in completion of questionnaires and forms.

Education (*List most recent education first and High School is not necessary if you have college education*)

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Paralegal Studies, Associate of Arts Degree, expected 5/08

3.95/4.00 GPA

Computer Skills (*Must list Computer Skills on Resume*)

Experience in operating IBM-PC's and programs Win XP, Word 2003, Excel 2003, Internet and E-Mail; Knowledgeable in PowerPoint 2003, and Access 2003 programs; Typing (60 wpm)

Jane D. Smith

(Must place your name and page 2 on second page)

Organizations *(Optional)*

- Member of the Iowa Paralegal State Association.
- Member of the National Paralegal Association.

Volunteer Activities *(Optional)*

- Volunteer at Boys and Girls Club for over 3 years.
- Girl Scout leader for the past 4 years.

Awards *(Optional)*

- Awarded the Pounds Scholarship for Academic Achievement – 2006.

References *(Optional)*

Morris Pounds

Counselor
Kirkwood Comm. College
Box 2068
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
(319) 398-5654

Tom Smart

Attorney
Smart & Crazy Law, Inc.
Box 8602
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
(319) 398-5555

Sally Booth

Customer Rep.
ZXC Company
P.O. Box 77
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 377-2222

John Westfield

Human Resource Director
Winfield Best Co.
P.O. Box 88
Winfield, IA 52659
(319) 257-4444

(Complete Job Title, Name of Comp., Address-Home or Work and same for Phone No.)

Chronological Resume Sample

Frank Simmons

19 Cole Dr. NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
(319) 555-8978

Frank-simmons@student.kirkwood.edu

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an internship for the Summer of 2008 in the field of Public Relations.

EDUCATION: Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
A.A. **Communication Media/Public Relations** pending 5/09
3.60/4.00 GPA

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Freelance Marketing Consultant 5/07 - present
Cedar Rapids, IA

- Provide marketing, writing, design, and photography services for local and regional clients
- Work with print shops to print communication pieces

Promotions Coordinator (PT) 8/07 - present
Kirkwood Club; Cedar Rapids, IA

- Wrote copy for advertisements, brochures, flyers, and direct mailings for a large student organization
- Recruited, trained and provided creative direction for a team of 3 writers and designers
- Wrote press releases that resulted in articles in the campus newspaper

Public Relations Intern Summer 2007
Harvest Community Church; Lincoln, NE

- Created a visual identity and marketing plan for a new church
- Wrote copy and took photos for a new web site

Reporter 1/07 – 5/07
Communiqué newspaper; Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA

- Brainstormed ideas for stories
- Reported and wrote news articles
- Worked with an editor to refine written pieces

COMPUTER SKILLS: Experience in Illustrator, Photoshop, PageMaker, QuarkXPress, Excel 2003, Dreamweaver, FrontPage, Freehand, Fireworks, Flash, Word 2003, html

RELEVANT COURSEWORK: Mass Media, Communication, Composition

ACTIVITIES: Kirkwood TGIF student ambassador
Phi Theta Kappa leadership organization

Chronological Resume Sample

Terry Maine

67 First Ave.
Smalltown, IA 52385
(319) 555-8755

terry-maine@student.kirkwood.edu

- OBJECTIVE:** To obtain a position as an Administrative Assistant.
- EDUCATION:** Kirkwood Community College
A.A.S., **Administrative Assistant** pending 5/07
GPA: 3.10/4.00
- RELEVANT COURSEWORK:** Word Processing, Human Relations, Business Editing, Business Math
Desktop Publishing, Multimedia, Business Law, and Accounting
- RELATED EXPERIENCE:**
- Office Assistant** 5/06 - present
Advising Center
Kirkwood Community College; Cedar Rapids, IA
- Greet and schedule appointments for up to 150 students per day
 - Organize files and tracked daily statistics
 - Maintain accurate records for students
 - Answer a multi-line phone and directed callers accordingly
- Secretary** Fall 2006
Kirkwood Club
Kirkwood Community College; Cedar Rapids, IA
- Kept track of attendance at each meeting
 - Typed meeting minutes for each meeting
 - Maintained communication with all 30 members of the group, by sending out periodic email updates
- OTHER EXPERIENCE:**
- Cashier** Summer 2005
Kroger Grocery Stores
Surfside, SC
- Operated a computerized cash register
 - Responsible for cash drawer averaging \$2000 daily
 - Communicated effectively with a diverse group of customers
 - Worked efficiently to provide quality service for up to 250 customers per shift
- COMPUTER SKILLS** Experience in operating Access 2003, Excel 2003, Word 2003, FrontPage, Publisher 2003, PowerPoint 2003, html, and type 50 wpm.
- ACTIVITIES:** Kirkwood Student Senate
Kirkwood Soccer Club

Chronological Resume Sample

Angie Lucason

angie-lucason@student.kirkwood.edu

Local Address:

109 James St.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52241
(319)-555-5182

Permanent Address:

35 Maurer St.
Wilton IA, 52778
(563) 555-7885

- OBJECTIVE:** To obtain an Internship during the Fall semester of 2008 in the field of Accounting
- EDUCATION:** Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
Associate of Science/Career Option Degree, Accounting pending 6/08
GPA: 3.10/4.00
- PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**
- Treasurer**
Kirkwood club; Cedar Rapids, IA Fall 2006
- Maintained a balanced budget of \$1000
 - Wrote checks for club expenses
 - Collaborated as part of a governing leadership group to make decisions for the club
- Server**
Lone Star Steakhouse; Cedar Rapids, IA 08/06-present
- Efficiently provided service for up to 6 tables at a time
 - Balance cash register totals after each shift, often in excess of \$1500
 - Train 8 new employees
- Teller**
Wilton Savings Bank; Wilton, IA 04/04-08/05
- Processed customer transactions accurately
 - Explained policies and answered questions for customers
 - Operated adding machine, calculator, coin machine and currency counter
- ACTIVITIES:**
- Volunteer, Freedom Festival Summers 05, 06, 07
Intramural Ultimate Frisbee Team Fall 2006
Salvation Army Volunteer Fall 2006
- LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:**
- Student Ambassador**
Admissions Office, Kirkwood Community College
- Spoke to groups of prospective students about attending Kirkwood Community College
 - Gave tours of campus
- HONORS:** Dean's List Spring 2007

Chronological Resume Sample

Mark Johnson

988 5th St. SE #88 · Cedar Rapids, IA 52401 · (319)-555-5899 · mark-lucason@student.kirkwood.edu

Employment

2004-present

Parts Counter Clerk

Fleet Maintenance Solutions, Inc. Cedar Rapids, IA

- Responsible for parts inventory tracking and organization, data entry
- Order up to 60 different parts per shift
- Communicate effectively with suppliers
- Work independently with minimal supervision

2001-2004

Overnight Cashier

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Cedar Rapids, IA

- Operated a computerized cash register
- Listened to customer concerns and resolved conflicts
- Collaborated with a team of coworkers to provide outstanding customer service
- Performed a variety of tasks related to keeping track of store inventory

1998-2001

Overnight Cashier and Stocker

Hy-Vee Food Stores, Inc. Cedar Rapids, IA

- Responsible for cash register drawer averaging \$2000 daily
- Organized shelves to create aesthetically pleasing presentations of goods
- Worked with back stock and stock order inventory

1997-1998

Packaging Department Employee

Deans Foods, Inc. Cedar Rapids, IA

- Operated machines in a manufacturing environment
- Operated and performed minor maintenance on electrical / mechanical / hydraulic powered equipment
- Drove propane fueled forklifts, moved 2000-pound loads
- Monitored, adjusted, and maintained an automated bagging machine
- Utilized a high level of mechanical aptitude

Education

Kirkwood Community College Cedar Rapids, IA

Computer Programming, 9 Credits completed, 1999

Hawkeye Community College Waterloo, IA

Airframe / Powerplant License, A.A.S., 1982

Computer Skills

Experience in operating IBM-PC's and Windows XP and Microsoft Office 2003 programs Word, Excel, Power Point and Access. Experience in COBOL, CICS Coding, Java, UNIX, RPG400, SQL Server Programming, "C ++" Language, and MVS/ESA JCL .

Chronological Resume Sample

James Skarton

448 3rd Ave. Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 james.skarton@gmail.com
(319) 555-5555

Objective:

To obtain a full-time, entry level position as a Registered Nurse

Education:

Associate of Applied Science in Nursing pending 05/07
Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
GPA 3.50/4.00

Related Coursework:

Human Anatomy and Physiology, Communications, Sociology, Nursing, Professionalism, Composition, Psychology, Microbiology, Metrology

Clinical Rotations:

Mercy Medical Center, **Medical/Surgical** - Cardiology and Urology 10/06 - 12/06

- Provided direct care for an average of 16 patients daily
- Facilitated dressing changes and IVs
- Prepared chart notes and other medical documentation

Iowa Department of Health, **STD Clinic** 01/07 - 03/07

- Assisted with health histories and physical assessments

Iowa Community Health Center, **Community Clinics** 03/07 - 05/07

- Physical assessments and immunization clinics.
- Effectively established rapport with a diverse population of patients

Relevant Experience:

Certified Nursing Assistant, Long-Term Care Center; Cedar Rapids, IA

- Performed patient care in a long term, geriatric care center
- Responsible for the care of 13 patients
- Charted and documented activities
- Educated patients for home care and discharge planning

Certifications:

Registered Nurse (RN) — IOWA 05/08
C.P.R. and First Aid Certified, American Red Cross 03/04

Affiliations:

National Student Nurses Association Member 03/06-present
Mercy Medical Center Volunteer 02/06-present

Other Work Experience:

Kirkwood Bookstore, Clerk; Cedar Rapids, IA 08/05-10/05
Landscape Care, Irrigation Assistant; Ely, IA 05/05-08/05

Chronological Resume Sample

Terry Johnson

443 6th St. Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 terry.johnson@hotmail.com
(319) 555-5555

EDUCATION:

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
Associate of Applied Science Degree, **Architectural Technology** pending May 2007
GPA 3.31/4.00

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS:

Architectural CAD, Building Construction Systems, Architectural Drafting, Construction Estimating & Practices, Drawing, Human Relations, American Architecture

COMPUTER PROFICIENCY:

Experience in AutoCAD 10-14/2000, Arc View, 3D home, 2020 Kitchen, Word 2003, Excel 2003, PowerPoint 2003, Photoshop, Windows XP

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

2006-present

Drafting Intern

Omnitechnologies, Inc.; Cedar Rapids, IA

- Create CAD drawings for the steel fabrication.
- Collaborate with clients and engineers to aide in initial design development
- Assist with documentation of certification for government projects

Summer 2005

Drafting Assistant (Volunteer)

Habitat for Humanity; Iowa City, IA

- Worked with an architect and drafter to create drawings of housing plans for low-income families
- Helped volunteer lay-workers understand the blueprints.
- Assisted with the construction of 5 new homes

OTHER EXPERIENCE:

Summer 2004

Office Assistant

Cannon Engineering Firm; Cedar Rapids, IA

- Organized various support projects for a small firm of engineers
- Answered telephone and directed callers appropriately
- Communicated effectively with clients and engineers

2000-2004

Steel Factory Worker

Cargill Steel; Jonesville, IL

- Operated bundling machine and attached bundles to crane
- Worked long hours in a physically demanding environment

Functional Resume Sample

Jane D. Smith
299 King Street NE
Rich, IA 55555
(319) 555-1212
jane.smith@aol.com

Highlights of Qualifications

- Number one ranked sales representative for 3 straight years
- Strong product knowledge from 11 years experience in the field
- Able to handle large territories effectively
- Experience serving wide range of electronic industries

Professional Sales Experience

Direct Sales & Product Demonstration

- Increased average monthly sales to Midwest Stereo from \$1,100 to \$21,000 in 1 year
- Set sales record, surpassing all sales representatives for any given month in company history.
- Held down company's largest territory; exceeded quotas and greatly increased sales.

Customer Service/Account Relations

- Established and maintained good rapport with over 250 clients in the electronics industry.
- Followed through promptly to resolve customer complaints.
- Found hard-to-find parts for customers, by whatever means necessary.
- Located detailed product information for customers to facilitate accurate parts ordering.

Marketing/Promotion

- Organized customized accessory racks for display in retail outlets.
- Successfully demonstrated to customers the benefits of quantity purchases and incentive programs.
- Researched industry trade journals to identify potentially popular and profitable items, and locate products requested by accounts.

Employment History

2000 – Present	Area Sales Rep.	Future Electronics	Marion, IA
1997 – 2000	Sales Rep. (PT)	Radio World Inc.	Cedar Rapids, IA
1994 – 1997	Stocker	Best Buys Co.	Cedar Rapids, IA

Education

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
Electronics Engineering, Associate of Applied Science, 2000

Computer Skills

Experience in operating IBM-PC's and programs Microsoft 2003 Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, Outlook and Windows XP.

Computer Scanned Resume Sample

Jane D. Smith
299 King Street NE
Rich, IA 55555
(319) 555-1212
jane.smith@aol.com

Career Objective:

To obtain a Paralegal position in Real Estate Law firm.

Professional Experience:

2000-Present Belding & Belding Law, Cedar Rapids, IA;
Legal Assistant
Provide paralegal services to attorneys in residential real estate sales within Iowa and Illinois.

Monitor transactions from start to final settlement statement; order and review titles, obtain plot plans and municipal lien certificates, research background, and work successfully against deadlines.

Serve as liaison for clients, banks, and attorneys; schedule meetings, identify documents necessary for all parties.

Coordinate all post-closing functions, complete title insurance forms, send final payments to banks and municipalities, and disburse funds.

1994 – 2000 Investors Life Insurance Co., Marion, IA; 1994 – 2000
Deputy Clerk (1998 - 2000)
Negotiated payments with attorneys Third Party Liability cases and reviewed medical records.

Operator Clerk (1994 - 1998)
Provided subscriber information to customers, assisted in completion of and forms.

Education:

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
Paralegal Studies, Associate of Arts Degree – 1994

Computer Skills:

Experience in operating IBM-PC's and programs Win XP, Word 2003, Excel 2003, Internet and E-Mail; Knowledgeable in Power Point 2003, Access 2003, and Outlook; Typing (60 wpm)

COVER LETTERS

The purpose of a cover letter is to build a bridge between your resume and the job description of the job you're applying for. You must help the employer see how your experiences, which are listed on your resume, could help you be successful at this job, which is described in the job description.

A cover letter should always accompany your resume when you are applying for a specific job.

Parts of a Cover letter (See examples p. 33, 34, 36 - 40)

Header:

Include your contact information at the top of your cover letter. You may use a standard letter format or you may use the same header as you do for your resume.

Opening Paragraph:

Grab the employer's attention. What do you know about the company that makes you want to work there? Identify the position you'd like to apply for and demonstrate your knowledge about the position. You should also identify how you learned about the position opening. You could do this by mentioning the name of a person who works at the organization or by referencing a job posting from a website or newspaper.

Body:

This section will contain one or two paragraphs, in which you describe why you are qualified for the position. Don't repeat the same information from your resume. Instead, use the body of your letter to expand on some of the information from your resume. Include relevant details about specific projects or experiences. You may use either paragraph form or bullets or a combination of the two.

Repeat phrases from the job description in the body of your cover letter. This is a great strategy for helping employers see that you have what they are looking for. Does the job description mention that the ideal candidate should have "excellent interpersonal communication skills?" Then your letter should read something like "Among the skills I have to offer are my excellent communication skills. For example..." Immediately back up every statement like this with some solid facts. Talk about something you've done that demonstrates your skills. (See pages 34 - 35)

Closing:

This is where you ask for an interview. Describe whatever step you will take next, and be sure to follow through with what you say you'll do. It's appropriate to say you'll call them on a certain day to follow up. You may want to include your contact information here and invite them to contact you with any questions. Close with "sincerely", then type and sign your name.

Salary History:

Sometimes an employer will ask for your salary history. They want to get an idea of how much money you expect to earn. If the employer asks you to include "salary history" or "salary information" with your application packet, address this issue somewhere in your closing paragraph. Always give a salary *range* and let them know if you're willing to negotiate. Visit www.salary.com to get an idea of a typical salary range for the position. (Example 1: My salary history from 1997 to present ranges from \$25,000 - \$30,000 annually, and is negotiable.) (Example 2: I would expect to earn \$30,000 - \$35,000 in this position, but I am willing to negotiate.)

A Sample Cover Letter: with corresponding resume and job posting

Job Description:

NATURAL RESOURCE INTERN

Duties: Lead interpretive nature walks with guests of all ages. General park maintenance activities such as mowing, facility and area clean-up and painting;

Requirements: Excellent verbal communication skills and leadership ability a must. Knowledge of natural resource interpretation helpful. Experience with park maintenance helpful.

To apply: send resume / cover letter to John Smith, Human Resources Coordinator, County Conservation Board, Cedar Rapids, IA 52365

NOTICE THE PHRASES REPEATED FROM JOB DESCRIPTION

29 Jewel Dr. SE
Marion, IA 52302

04-06-20XX

Mr. John Smith, Human Resources Coordinator
Somewhere State Park
345 35th St.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Dear Mr. Smith:

I would like to apply for the Natural Resource internship I saw posted on Kirkwood Community College's job website. Somewhere State Park has long been one of my favorite places to camp. I especially appreciate the fall color and fishing opportunities your park has to offer. I was excited to learn about your opening for a natural resources intern.

My excellent verbal communication skills and leadership ability are two qualities which I could contribute to your team. As a day camp counselor, I led groups of children through a variety of activities. In this leadership role, I accommodated the special needs of individuals while keeping in mind the well-being of the entire group. I also used my communication skills to motivate children to participate in activities.

I also have knowledge of natural resource interpretation. As a backpacking trip leader, I led guests of all ages on multi-day excursions through the wilderness. Using my knowledge of geology, wildlife, and plants, I helped group participants gain a deeper appreciation for the natural wonders they were experiencing. Along with knowledge of natural resource interpretation, I also have had some experience with park maintenance. As a part of the Muscatine County Conservation Corps, I worked with a team to maintain and improve county parks. I mowed, painted, cleaned up trash, cleared trails after storms, landscaped and trimmed weeds.

The knowledge and leadership skills I've gained through these experiences make me confident I would have plenty to offer Somewhere State Park. I will contact you on Thursday to see if you would like to set up a time to discuss my qualifications for this position. Please feel free to contact me at 319-555-8479 or marci-jase@gmail.com. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Marci Jase
Marci Jase

Enclosure. Resume

Marci Jase

29 Jewel Dr. SE
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 377-5555

marci.jase@student.kirkwood.edu

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an internship in the field of natural resources interpretation for the summer of 2008

EDUCATION: Kirkwood Community College
A.A.S., Parks and Natural Resources Expected May 2009
G.P.A.: 3.32/4.00

RELATED COURSEWORK: Natural Resources Interpretation, Wildlife Identification & Management, Plant Material, Soil and Water Conservation, Park Maintenance

RELATED EXPERIENCE: **Backpacking Trip Leader (volunteer)** Summers 2002-2006
Rocky Mountain National Park, CO; Grand Tetons, WY

- Led 6 groups of friends on backpacking trips through the Rockies
- Educated group members about the geology, plants, and wildlife of the area
- Planned routes, coordinated meals, and gathered necessary equipment
- Taught group members hiking techniques, water purification & cooking methods, wilderness safety, and environmental consciousness

Day Camp Counselor Summer 2006
YMCA of the Rockies; Estes Park, CO

- Led groups of kids on hikes through the Rocky Mountain National Park
- Planned team-building activities
- Taught the kids about plants, animals, and geology
- Regularly administered First Aid on minor injuries

Muscatine County Conservation Corps Summer 2005
Muscatine County Conservation Board; Muscatine, IA

- Learned environmental principles from county conservation workers
- Worked on various conservation projects in county parks
- Maintained nature trails and constructed new trails
- Implemented techniques to prevent erosion on hillsides within area parks

Day Camp Counselor (volunteer) 8/03 – 8/04
Girl Scout Camp Sacajawea; Muscatine, IA

- Taught girls how to build and cook over a fire
- Led girls on hikes, creek walks, and other outdoor activities
- Taught knot tying, orienteering, and camp safety

More Sample Cover Letters:

178 Green St.
Worryville, MO 55596

September 15, 20XX

Pat Cummings, Editor
ABE Corporation
4410 S. Main St.
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I recently read your advertisement in the *Des Moines Register* for the position of Assistant Editor, and I am highly interested in learning more about the job's specific requirements.

I possess strong written and verbal communication skills, as well as computer and desktop publishing experience. My accomplishments include:

- Winning the Columbia Scholastic Press Association's First Place Gold Circle Award for graphic art.
- Serving as feature editor, art editor, graphic artist, and reporter for various college publications.
- Completing a course in advertising art/desktop publishing, which focused on the use of PageMaker software.
- Proficiency in IBM compatible Microsoft Word 2003 and Excel 2003 software.

Please find my resume attached for your review. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my specific abilities in relation to your needs. I will call you early next week to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet or you may contact me at (302) 555-5555.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith

Enclosure. Resume

363 Ocean View St.
Somewhere, IA 55555

October 15, 20XX

Mr. John Doe, Manager
BCD Company
10 South Main Ave.
Frytown, IA 55551

Dear Mr. Doe:

In response to your ad in the *Gazette* on October 10 for the Management Assistant position, I am enclosing my resume for your consideration.

I think you may be interested in some of my accomplishments:

- Hired, supervised and trained 6 full-time staff and 12 seasonal assistants.
- Assisted in the development of our management training program; oversaw the program's \$350,000 budget.
- Designed office procedures; developed company policy on handling customers.
- Familiar with the use of personal computers - IBM and Microsoft Office 2003 programs, Excel and Word.

In accomplishing these tasks, I drew heavily on my educational training and my diversified work experience. Presently I am seeking a new opportunity where I can continue to utilize my abilities and skills.

My salary range for the past 10 years has been \$28,500 to \$54,750.

I would like to meet with you and explore my qualifications and interest in the BCD Company. I will call your office early next week to see when we can arrange time to meet, or you may contact me at (319) 555-1212. I would appreciate that you would not contact my present employer as I am still employed.

Sincerely,

Jane D. Smith

Enclosure. Resume

178 Green St.
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

September 15, 20XX

Mr. Jerry Boss
Human Resource Manager
P.O. Box 7777
Des Moines, IA 50110

Dear Mr. Boss:

I am interested in the Editorial/Computer Production Manager position that you advertised in the *Des Moines Register*. Let me briefly match your needs, as I understand them to my background.

Your requirements:

- Proofreading, researching, and writing skills.
- Knowledge of PC-oriented desktop publishing.
- Knowledge of computer on-line programs.

My relevant skills:

- Proficiency in proofreading and copyediting attained during seven years with a typesetting company. Completed freelance project in keying and copyediting for an IMIS Research reference book.
- Computerized a pre-PC typesetting system. Set up a Word-based newsletter system and completed initial work for a PageMaker-based hardware/software setup. Familiar with typesetting and pay layout issues both from pre-PC and PC eras.
- Utilized PC communications for over ten years. Independently set up an E-Mail system using Netscape. Expanded knowledge of on-line systems as a library and information sciences student.

I hope you agree that my qualifications suit this position ideally. May we schedule a personal interview? I will call you in a few days to setup a mutual time or you may reach me at (608) 555-5555.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith

Enclosure. Resume

If there is no advertised job opening:

You'll want to write a different sort of letter. Here are a few examples of letters you might use to inquire about possible job openings. Send your resume along with this letter. Be sure to follow up with a phone call. Ask them if they got your credentials and if they have any hiring needs.

If you know of a *possible* job opening:

399 North Street
Largeville, IA 55555

December 14, 20XX

Mr. Jon Onslow, Manager
Human Resources Department
A.J. Carlson & Company
78 East 13th Street North
Jonesville, IA 51234

Dear Mr. Onslow:

Let me introduce myself to you. I am Robert Dunit, Senior Programmer with Laser Inc., with over ten years of experience that could benefit your company. Recently I talked with George White and he mentioned your company desires to update their current billing system.

My most recent experience includes designing an automated billing system for a technical trade newspaper publisher. My responsibilities included the total project design, along with the user interface. In addition, I developed the first and second draft of the operator's guide.

As a Senior Programmer with your organization, I would focus on quality control as well as producing a simplified billing system. Furthermore, my work as a team leader was recognized as the top Project Leader of 2004 in my company.

Being currently employed, I would appreciate confidentially with this inquiry. I will contact you in a few days to arrange an appointment. If you need to contact me before this time, my phone number is (319) 555-2222.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Dunit

Enclosure. Resume

“COLD CALL” COVER LETTER

178 Green St.
Marion, IA 52310

March 20, 20XX

Sid Cummings
Human Resource Manager
XYZ Computer Corporation
1140 Main St.
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I am writing to inquire about opportunities for Computer Programmers in your XYZ Corporation.

I offer extensive knowledge of five computer languages and strong management, sales, and sales support experience. As a Computer Specialist, I was responsible for the management of a center handling the complete line of Honeywell computers and peripherals for home and commercial use. In addition to a B.S. degree in Business Administration, I will receive a certificate in Programming this May.

I feel confident that given the opportunity, I can make an immediate contribution to XYZ Corporation. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your requirements. I will call your office in a week to schedule an appointment or you may contact me at (319) 373-5555.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Chris Smith

Enclosure. Resume

Other Writing Samples

REFERENCE PAGE

- Give your “reference page” to employers when they ask for your references or they can be sent with your Resume.
- Make sure you receive permission from the people who you asking to be a reference. It is very unprofessional in not getting their permission.
- List 3-6 people who know you and can speak positively about your work ethic, skills, or character. You may list past supervisors, coworkers, clients, teachers, or student organization leaders and friends.
- Make sure you contact all of your references ahead of time. Let them know what kind of job you are looking for, and who may contact them to inquiry about you.
- Send your references a copy of your Resume and thank-you notes and let them know which job you’ve accepted.

Marci Jase

29 Jewel Dr. SE
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 377-5555
marci.jase@student.kirkwood.edu

REFERENCES:

Sam Pelly

Day Camp Director
YMCA of the Rockies
2800 Tunnel Rd.
Estes Park, CO 98854
(908) 555-4857

Jim Johnson

Conservation Crew Supervisor
Muscatine County Conservation Board
588 16th St.
Muscatine, IA 52761
(563) 555-8968

Jane Fritta

Camp Director
Camp Sacajawea
345 County Road B
Muscatine, IA 52761
(563) 555-4789

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

2030 Glass Ct. NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

July 8, 20XX

Tom Smart
WXYZ Corporation
4949 Wenig RD East
Des Moines, IA 50705

Dear Mr. Smart:

I would like to confirm our phone conversation, which occurred on July 7, 20XX. I am thrilled to accept WXYZ Corporation's offer to become your new Computer Specialists Manager for a yearly salary of \$35,000.

I have formally resigned from Blackwell Company, and will be relocating to the Des Moines area within the next 3 weeks. I will be able to better pinpoint an exact starting date within the next few days.

You will be hearing from me again soon to finalize the remaining details of our agreement.

Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to become a part of the WXYZ Corporation team. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (319) 574-5555.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith

LETTER OF DECLINE

29 Glass RD. NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

June 7, 20XX

Sid Cummings
Human Resource Manager
XYZ Computer Corporation
1140 Main St.
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I would like to use this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to meet with me last week.

However, after careful thought and consideration, I must decline your tempting offer for the position of Computer Programmer. I've decided that my interests and career goals lie elsewhere at this point in my life. Perhaps our needs will coincide at a later date.

Thank you again. Best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith

THANK YOU LETTERS

- Send a thank-you after any kind of meeting (networking, informational interviewing, or a job interview)
- Send one to each person who spent a significant amount of time with you.
- Send it as a typed letter on resume paper or a *neatly* hand-written thank-you card
- Be prompt. Mail your letters the same day of your interview/meeting.
- Proofread.

Thank-You Letter (Send After The Interview)

12 Gateway St.
Winfield, IA 52659

September 14, 20XX

Tom Jones, Sales Manager
US Market Inc.
101 Hwy 29 W.
Marion, IA 52302

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for meeting with me on September 13th regarding the Sales Representative opening. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the position responsibilities and advancement opportunities available at US Market Inc.

I feel confident that my 10 years of retail sales experience, combined with my communication and interpersonal skills, would make me an ideal candidate for this Sales Representative position.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am looking forward to hearing from you next Tuesday.

Sincerely,

Jerry Smart

Thank-You Letter After Interview

12 Gateway St.
Winfield, IA 52659

September 19, 20XX

Tom Jones, Plant Engineer
Engineer Inc.
8564 Radius Dr. SE
Des Moines, IA 50529

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me on September 18, 2006. Engineer Inc. is an impressive, modern manufacturing plant, which I would be interested in joining as a Mechanical Product Design Engineer.

Let me reiterate my accomplishments for this position.

My accomplishments:

- Managed mechanical design systems for over 250 consumer and PC products, both in assembled and kit form.
- Administered \$780,000 in expense budget, plus \$4 to \$10 million in research engineering department.
- Monitored production safety records and compliances.
- Added \$15 million of new revenue out of \$85 million total business revenue for 2005.

Your requirements:

- Administer mechanical product design and production.
- Prepare and regulate expense and capital budgets.
- Oversee product safety.
- Increase and maintain product revenue.

I will be looking forward to your decision by next Wednesday. Thank you again for considering my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Jerry Smart

Thank-You Card Sample



E-mail correspondence

- When you email your resume, use your email message as your cover letter. You can just paste your cover letter into the message of the email, unless a separate cover letter is requested. Format your email cover letter as you would any email message. (Your contact info can go at the bottom; don't leave space for a signature—you won't be signing it!)
- If a separate cover letter is requested, your email should be brief. State the position you are applying for and mention that you've attached your cover letter and resume.
- Use the job title or job code as the subject line for your email. You may also want to include your name in the subject line, especially if your email address is not your name.
- All attachments should be in Microsoft Word documents unless requested otherwise. Test your resume by emailing it to your friends to make sure it opens easily on different computers.
- Name each file with your name and document description. (Example: jane-smith-resume.doc, jane-smith-coverletter.doc, jane-smith-references.doc)
- Be brief, polite, and professional whenever you correspond with an employer.
- Make sure your email address, greeting, and signature line are professional.

Sample E-mail message

Dear Mr. Prior,

I would like to apply for the accountant position advertised in the Cedar Rapids Gazette. Please review the attached cover letter and resume in consideration for position #2445. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Mark Myers

Job Searching

Some of the best jobs are snagged before they are even advertised! Here are some tips on how to be proactive and snag one for yourself:

1. Target a specific geographic area, and research places where you'd like to work. (See page 49)
2. Ask everyone you know to keep their eyes open for potential job openings in your field. Even if they are not working in your field, they may know someone who is! (See pages 51 - 53 for more tips on networking)
3. Set up informational interviews with people within the organization you'd like to work for. (See page 12) Don't ask for a job, but do ask for advice on your resume (and if they like it, they may offer some job leads!)
4. Send letters of inquiry to places you'd like to work, via postal or email (See pages 39 - 40)
5. Follow up your letters a few days later with a phone call
6. Ask if you can call back in month to see if there are any new job vacancies.
7. Check company websites and online job boards regularly for job vacancy announcements.

Local Job Listings

- Kirkwood's Job Board: These employers are specifically looking for Kirkwood graduates: <http://www.collegecentral.com/kirkwood/>
- Corridor Careers: Cedar Rapids/Iowa City job listings: <http://www.corridorcareers.com>
- Mount Mercy's job listing website: http://www.mtmercy.edu/career/job_trek.htm
- Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Help Wanted: www.cedarrapidsiowacityhelpwanted.com
- The Iowa City Press-Citizen newspaper puts their help-wanted pages online through: <http://www.careerbuilder.com> Sign up to receive emails when new jobs meeting your search criteria are posted.
- Iowa's Largest Job Bank: <http://www.iowajobs.org/> This website is managed by Iowa Workforce
- Cedar Rapids Gazette is the largest local newspaper in the area. www.gazetteonline.com
- Des Moines Register is the largest newspaper in Iowa which covers mainly Central Iowa and jobs listings throughout the whole state. www.dmregister.com

National Job Listings

- www.ajb.dni.us America's Job Bank
- www.indeed.com Indeed
- www.monster.com Monster Board
- www.careerbuilder.com Career Builder
- www.computerjobs.com Computer Jobs
- www.dice.com Dice
- www.hotjobs.com Hot Jobs
- www.nationjob.com Nation Job Network
- www.bestjobusa.com Best Jobs USA
- www.career.com The Career Center
- www.careercentral.com Career Central
- www.socialservice.com Social Service Jobs

- **Find a website for your major.** Many career fields have job posting websites that post only jobs within a specific field.
 - Ask your advisor or program coordinator for recommended job websites within your field of study. (Example: <http://www.healthcaresource.com/> is a database of nationwide health care job openings.)
 - Or visit <http://www.careers.uiowa.edu/students/joblistings.html> and click on “Job Listings by Discipline” for a list of job listing websites in your discipline. (not all disciplines are represented)

Choosing a Geographic Location

The job search will be much more manageable if you narrow your choices down to one or two geographic areas in which you’d like to work. For an interactive guide on how to find the right place for you, visit: www.findyourspot.com

Here are some things to consider when choosing a geographic location:

- Educational opportunities
- Cultural & Leisure opportunities
- Religious opportunities
- Proximity to family/friends
- Job market/Industry
- Cost of living
- Climate (Weather)
- Population of city

Researching Companies / Organizations

Once you have targeted the geographic location you’d like to work, your next step is to target specific companies or organizations.

Researching companies will help you:

- Evaluate whether or not a company seems like a good fit for you. (Do you really want to work there?)
- Figure out how you could benefit the company, so that you can communicate specific ways you could contribute to/improve the company’s (What are their needs?)
- Prepare for an interview. Researching the company beforehand conveys your interest in the company. It will also enable you to ask intelligent questions during the interview.

Tips on researching companies:

- Save time by using a resource book that compiles information on several companies in one place. The books may focus on a specific industry. You may be able to find these books in the Kirkwood’s library or the public library, or bookstores. (Examples: Dun & Bradstreet, Standard & Poor’s Register, Moody’s Manuals.)
- Review the company’s website. Use a search engine to locate the website, and then peruse the site, and gain as much information as you can.
- People who already work for the organization can be a great resource. If you know someone who works there, (or if you know someone who knows someone who works there) be sure to get into contact with that person.
- Join a related trade or professional organizations to get an inside look at the industry.

- Read professional journals and magazines to learn about companies and trends in your field.
- Stay organized. Keep your information organized by using a spreadsheet or other method. You don't want to confuse one company with another.

Things to investigate:

- Product made/services offered by this company
- The work environment
- Potential for growth
- Plans for the future
- methods of decision-making
- degree to which employees are involved in decision-making
- frequency of turnover
- management style
- competitors
- history- including past accomplishments
- major customers/clients
- things that need improvement
- If you are researching in preparation for an interview, find out as much as you can about the specific position you are applying for.

Websites for Researching Companies

- Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce: <http://www.cedarrapids.org> The membership directory has contact information and/or links to many local companies.
- At WetFeet.com, you can enter a major city, and get lists of information about the major industries and companies in that city, along with links, to help you find lesser known job opportunities within the area. <http://www.wetfeet.com>
- Vault.com has detailed information about major companies worldwide. <http://www.vault.com>
- Symplicity.com provides detailed info on hundreds of companies. Registration is required, but it's fast and free. <http://www.symplicity.com>

Networking

80% of people today find jobs through networking. When used in conjunction with your excellent resume, cover letter, and interviewing skills, networking can help you get your first big break! Networking is the process of making connections with people who may be able to help you in your job search.

Networking can help you find out about job openings before they are even advertised. People inside a company often know when there is a need for a new employee, long before people outside the company find out.

Networking can help get you hired. Most employers would prefer to hire someone that they know, or someone that knows someone they know. The more people you know within your field, the better your chances for obtaining a job.

But I don't know anyone in this field. How can I network?

Meet your friend's dad's neighbor's uncle's brother!

- Let's say you only know 10 people with real jobs, and they are in career fields you are not interested in.
- Each of those people probably knows 15 people in other fields. ($10 \times 15 = 150$)
- Now you have 150 contacts, and one of them is likely to know someone that can help you with your job search.
- Whenever you meet someone, ask them if they can recommend anyone else who may be able to help you with your job search. This will expand your contact base even more.

Use informational interviewing as a way of initiating relationships (See page 12)

- Contact people within your field directly. Use a directory to find their contact info.
- If you call and have trouble getting a hold of the person, email may be the best way to initiate contact.
- Identify yourself as a student who is preparing to enter the work-world. Tell them you are learning more about the field and looking for some advice on entering the field. Make sure it's clear that you are not asking them for a job.
- Set up an appointment to come in and chat with the person.
- During the interview, ask questions about the industry, and ask for advice on getting into the field. Show them your resume and ask for suggestions on how to improve it. Ask if they know anyone else who might be helpful to speak with.

Online networking: Join a chat room that is related to the specific industry you want to enter.

Attend professional conferences and/or join a professional organization: Many professionals belong to professional organizations specific to their career field. Many times these organizations will hold conferences where area professionals gather to learn, socialize, and network. Most organizations and conferences will give a discounted registration/membership rate to students. Ask your teachers or advisor for recommended professional organizations.

Join a career-related student organization: Involvement with a student organization related to your major can give you opportunities to meet and work with people in your field. Check with Student Life in 104 Iowa Hall for more information.

Cold calls or Networking letters (see example of networking letter on next page?)

If you don't know anyone in your field, and don't know anyone who knows anyone in your field, you may need to do some "cold" calling. You can call, email, or mail a letter to initiate contact with someone you've had no previous connection with. You may obtain names and contact info from phone directories or company websites.

A networking "cold call" might go something like this:

You: Hello. Could I speak with Ms. Frank please?

Employer: This is Ms. Frank speaking. What can I help you with?

You: I'm a recent graduate from Kirkwood's Accounting program. I'm researching the field of accounting and learning about what's going on in the field by talking to people who are currently working in the industry. I've researched your company, and I'm very interested in possibly meeting with you to learn more about the field of accounting. Would you be willing to help me out with this?

Employer: Well...ok...but we're not really hiring now.

You: Oh, that's fine. It would be great just to be able to meet with you and see what you do. You might be able to offer some helpful advice for someone just starting out in this field. Would you be available to meet with me next week sometime?

Employer: Well...I've got an open slot on Wednesday, at 11:00.

You: Wednesday at 11:00 sounds great. I'll see you then. Thank you so much for your willingness to help!

Some things to remember as you meet people:

- **Prepare beforehand.** Know what you're looking for. Have a list of questions you want to ask. Be ready to ask them during an informational interview, at the grocery store, or at a conference. Networking can happen anywhere. Be ready.
- **Stay organized.** Keep a record of your contacts. Write down contact info, and anything else you learn about the person or organization. You may need to contact them in the future, and you'll want to remember all you can about them.
- **Ask for advice on your resume.** But make sure that they understand you are asking for advice, and not begging for a job (remember, you promised them on the phone that you wouldn't ask them for a job) However, getting tips on your resume, and getting your resume before potential future employers can help you.

- **Respect their time.** If you ask for a 20 minute meeting, keep it to 20 minutes. Always try to make things as convenient as possible for them.
- **Do what you said you'd do, when you said you'd do it.** Call when you said you'd call, etc.
- **Introduce yourself each time you meet someone, even if you've met them before.** They may not remember you, and introducing yourself will save them from the embarrassment of having forgotten your name.
- **Thank them!** Express your gratitude by saying thank you and sending people who help you thank you notes.
- **Keep in touch, but don't stalk them.** Ask if you can check back in with them in a month or two. (That way you can see if they've heard of any new job openings and ask them other questions about your job search) If they give you permission, contact them in a month or two if you're still looking for a job then. Don't call more than once every few months, or you may start to annoy your contact.

Just Do it. Networking can be scary at first, but as you gain confidence, it will become easier and more pleasant. The worst that can happen is you'll meet someone that doesn't want to help you; so you have little to lose, and much to gain. If you are polite yet persistent you'll find that most people are happy to help.



NETWORKING LETTER

266 Rainbow St.
Hiawatha, IA 52233

May 6, 20XX

Henry Johnson
Telecommunications Consultant
ZIP Corporation
88 Old Mill RD
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Several years ago I was a classmate of your son Dustin at the University of Iowa. When I bumped into him last week in Billings, Montana, of all places, he informed me that you deal closely with several leading specialists in the telecommunications field and suggested I contact you immediately.

I am interested in joining a company where I contribute strong skills and education in communications. I offer:

- Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Science
- Familiarity with all areas of marketing, public relations, and advertising
- Two year experience as a Promotions Intern at KNRA radio station.
- Fluency in Spanish
- Excellent skills in operating Microsoft Office 2003 programs.

I would greatly appreciate any advice and/or referrals you might be able to give me. I will call you in a few days to follow up or may contact me at (319) 378-5454.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mark Johnson

Enclosure. Resume

Job Fairs

- Job fairs are a place for employers and job-seekers to come together.
- Research attending companies beforehand, so you know who you want to speak with and what you want to speak about. (See pages 49 - 50)
- Dress professionally and bring plenty of copies of your resume.
- Purposefully approach the companies you're interested in working for. Shake hands and introduce yourself. Chat about job opportunities with the company and your qualifications for specific job openings. Ask if they'd like your resume. Ask what the next step would be. (Ask if they going to be conducting on-campus interviews. Offer to follow up with a phone call.)
- Stop by 125 Iowa Hall, call 398-5689 or visit www.collegecentral.com/kirkwood/ for dates and list of employers for the next job fair.

Interviewing

Before the interview:

- Research the company thoroughly beforehand (See pages 49 - 50) Make sure you understand the position you are applying for, and how your qualifications and career goals match the position.
- Call or visit the company website to obtain an extensive job description if available.
- Think about your answers beforehand. Know how you would answer each of the sample questions, and be ready to share factual examples to support your answers.
- Practice your interview with a friend. Practice answering and asking questions.
- Make sure you know where you're going. Give yourself plenty of time to drive to your destination, and double-check your directions via the company website, receptionist, and/or a city map.
- Bring extra copies of your resume, your reference sheet, a pen and pad of paper. Carry these things in a briefcase or professional folder.
- Bring a portfolio of items that document your abilities (i.e. writing samples, photos of you in action, relevant class projects, photos of past projects, letters of recommendation, etc.)

At the interview:

- Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early.
- Greet your interviewer(s) by name. Check with receptionist beforehand to make sure you know how to pronounce all names correctly.
- Shake your interviewer's hand firmly and smile.

Dress code for women:

- **Invest in a good dark suit:** Black is your safest option for a color. Either a skirt or pants are acceptable. Navy blue and grays are the most suitable colors to wear.
- **Dress modestly.** Avoid low cut blouses, high skirt slits, or short skirts. Wear make-up, but keep it subtle.
- **Don't over-accessorize:** Chose a few classy accessories, and leave the rest at home. Showy earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, pins, belts, or purses can be distracting.
- **Avoid flashy colors:** Don't wear things like bright red lipstick, neon green scarves, or hot pink nail polish. Stick to subtle colors.
- **If you wear a skirt,** wear nude hose color and closed-toe shoes.

Dress code for men:

- Dark suit coat (Navy Blue or Grays or Black) with matching pants, white or light blue dress shirt, matching tie, shined shoes.
- No earrings, hats, or wild ties.
- Shave or trim facial hair.

Dress code for everyone:

- **Pay attention to the details:** Make sure buttons are sewn on securely, suit is neatly pressed, hair is recently trimmed and well-groomed
- **Don't wear too much cologne/perfume**
- **Be caution of wearing black suit with white blouse or white dress shirt which could represent you are attending a funeral. It is best to wear an off color blouse or shirt but not black and white.**
- **Overall, dress One Level higher then what you would normally where on the job daily!**

A few types of interviews:

- Panel Interview: a group of search committee members or future coworkers interviews you.
- Group interview: You are the member of a group of prospective employees who are interviewed all at the same time.
- Phone interview: For long-distance job searches, you may be doing some interviewing over the phone. Sometimes employers will screen you out over the phone, the first time you make contact. Be prepared for some interview questions anytime you call an employer. Also, be dress up so you feel like you are ready for the interview.
- Interview during a Meal. Sometimes this is the final interview as the hiring company wants to see how you interact in public in a dining situation. The company will watch how you eat and interact with the representatives. This can be one of the most stressful interviews as you need to know how to eat formally. You must know your dining etiquette!

For more information:

Practice Interviews, 500 sample interview questions, and sample answers to questions can be found at: <http://www.job-interview.net/>

Questions you might be asked:

Three top questions asked by Employers

1. Tell me something about yourself.
2. Why do you want to work for this company?
3. What is it about this job that interests you?

Other Popular Questions: (Asked by Employer)

1. What are your long range career objectives?
2. What do expect to be earning in five years?
3. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
4. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
5. Why should I hire you?
6. Please give me an example of where you had a conflict with a peer. What was it over and how did you handle it? What resulted from it? Would you handle it in a different manner now? Why?
7. When you're held previous jobs, how did you determine what were the appropriate and inappropriate things to do? Cite some specific examples.
8. How do you work under pressure?

9. Tell me about a time when you had to learn something new in a short time. What was the situation? What did you have to learn? What was the result?
10. Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a group problem. What caused the problem? What did you do? How was it resolved?
11. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
12. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
13. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
14. What do you do in your spare time?
15. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
16. Is there anything you would like to tell us about yourself that we may have overlooked?
17. How long do you expect to work for us if we offer you the position?
18. What do you expect for a salary?
19. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
20. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her?
21. What computer experiences do you have?
22. Are you willing to spend at least 6 months as a trainee?
23. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
24. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
25. Please give me examples of things you have done which demonstrate your ability to handle multiple priorities. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?
26. Please give me examples of things you have done on previous jobs which demonstrate your ability to pay attention to detail. Tell me what you did and what resulted from your action."
27. How would you apply your education to this job? What would you do and what would you expect to result from it?
28. Describe your most creative sale. How did you create that sale and describe how you might be creative in selling our products?
29. Let's role play. I'm going to pretend to be a customer with (a specific crisis situation). Show me what you would do in this situation by role-playing.

Sample Questions for Behavioral/Situational Interviews

Attention to Detail

Please give me some examples of things you have done on previous jobs, which demonstrate your ability to pay attention to detail. Tell me what you did and what resulted from your actions?

Please give me an example of where you may have found an error in some aspect of work that others may have overlooked. What was the error, how did you find out, and what resulted from your actions?

Teamwork

Please give me some examples of where you have demonstrated the ability to be an effective member of a team. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Please give me an example of where you have made any team, which you were a member of more effective. Tell me what you did and how the team and the organization benefited from your actions.

Quality of Work

Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate the quality of the work that you do. What did you do and how did your organization benefit from your actions?

Please give me some examples of your accomplishments, which would demonstrate your ability to perform this job. What did you do and how did it benefit your organization?

Please give me an example of why your previous organization was better off by you working there. What did you do and how did the organization benefit?

Application of Education

Please give me some examples of how you have applied your education to previous jobs. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

How would you apply your education to this job? What would you do and what would you expect to result from?

Personal Development

Please give me your most recent example of something you did to improve your job performance. What did you do, why did you do it, and what resulted from it?

Please give me an example of where you failed (or received some very negative feedback) in some aspect of your job performance. What did you do to try to correct this failure and what resulted from your actions?

Resolving Conflict Effectively

Please give me an example of where you had a conflict with a peer. What was it over and how did you handle it? What resulted from it? Would you handle it in a different manner now? Why?

Please give me an example of where you had a conflict with a customer. What was it over and how did you handle it? What resulted from it? Would you handle it in a different manner now? Why?

Sales Ability

Please give me some examples of how you generated new business from a client. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Describe a major sale that you lost. Why did you think you lost it and what do you do differently as a result of that experience?

Describe your most creative sale. How did you create that sale and describe how might be creative in selling our products?

Describe your most difficult client. What do you do to maintain that client?

Give me some examples of where you have been able to anticipate complaints/problems and correct them before they became an issue. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Managing People

Have you ever had a difficult subordinate? If yes, tell me how you dealt with him/her and what resulted from your actions. If no, tell me what you would do and what you would expect to happen from your actions.

Give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your ability to manage people effectively. What did you do and how did the organization benefit from your actions?

Please give me some examples of things you have done to obtain maximum performance from your subordinates. What did you do and what resulted from your actions? How would you apply those techniques in this job?

Managing Costs

Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your ability to manage a budget effectively and would demonstrate your ability to perform this job.

Please give me some examples of how you have demonstrated the ability to control costs and still achieve organizational objectives.

Motivation

Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your level of motivation. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Please give me some examples of where you took extraordinary efforts to achieve a deadline. What did you do and what resulted from it?

Response to Deadlines

Give me examples some examples of things you have done in the past which demonstrate your ability to respond to tight deadlines. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Please give me some examples of things you have done which demonstrate your ability to handle multiple priorities. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Creativity

Please give me some examples of things you have done on previous jobs, which demonstrate your creativity on the job. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Organization

Please describe some things you have done on previous jobs or in school that would demonstrate your organizational skills. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

Describe a recent project you were in charge of. Indicate how you organized that project and the impact of your organization on the outcome of the project.

Mesh with Corporate Culture/Job

When you've held previous jobs, how did you determine what were the appropriate and inappropriate things to do? Cite some specific examples.

Give a realistic job preview then ask the follow question – Please give me specific examples of things you have done on previous jobs or in your education, which would demonstrate that you would perform effectively and enjoy this position.

Common Closing Question

Is there any question I didn't ask, that you wish I had asked? (Use this time to mention anything you want to add that would demonstrate your ability to perform the job)

Illegal Questions

Employers cannot ask illegal questions in regard about your age, marital status, children, childcare arrangements, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. Illegal questions are those may relate to circumstances that are not specific to the job in which you are interviewing. If you were ask an illegal question like “What’s your marital status?” as what is an appropriate question would be: “Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?” There are 3 ways to answer the illegal question and they are 1. Simply answer the question. 2. Refuse to answer the question. 3. Reflect the question back to the interviewer for clarification what they are really asking. If you are asked inappropriate questions when interviewing, be polite and try not to be defensive. If the interviewer is very pushy in knowing personal information, you have to ask yourself, do you want to work for this company!

Sample Questions to Ask an Interviewer:

1. You’ve heard all about me, would you mind telling me a little about yourself?
2. Describe what my responsibilities would be on this job?
3. Is this a newly created job?
 - *If yes, what results are you hoping to see?
 - *If not, what is the last person who held this job doing now?
 - *If resign, why?
 - *If promoted, what contributed to his/her advancement?
4. What do you consider to be the most difficult task on this job?
5. How would I be trained for this position?
6. What are the strengths of the department and what do you see for improvements in the department?
7. Upon what criteria are employees in this department evaluated?
8. What types of people succeed in your organization?
9. How will I get feedback on my job performance?
10. Does your company believe in and support continuing education?
11. Are your sales up or down over last year?
12. Why do you enjoy working here?
13. If you were to offer me the position, where could I expect to be 5 years from today?
14. What are the department goals for the year?
15. Could you describe your style of supervision?
16. What are the opportunities for advancement within this organization?
17. (Formulate questions that show you've done your research.) For example; I've noticed your stock has increased by 5 % in the last quarter. What do you attribute to this success?
18. Do you think I'll find this job to be challenging and stimulating?
20. I want this position! Could you I have a 30 day trial period to prove myself?
21. What is a realistic time frame for advancement?
22. When can I start?
23. What is the next step that I need to do to be apart of your team?

Job Applications

When applying for jobs, you may be asked to fill out a job application. Here are some things to keep in mind when filling out application forms.

- Follow the directions very carefully. Take your time.
- Photocopy the original application form, before you fill in the blanks. That way if you can't fix your mistakes, you can start over without having to go back and ask for a new form. Also, you can use the photocopy as a referral sheet in filling out future applications.
- Use Erasable Blue or/and Black Ink Pen
- Never Leave An Item Blank. If the questions doesn't apply to you write "NA" (non-applicable). This ensures the employer that the application is complete.
- You may type an application form if you have access to a typewriter.
- Some companies may ask you to fill out an online application form.
- Be sure to check your spelling and proofread your entire application.
- Whenever you pick up or turn in an application, dress professionally.
- Follow up a few days (7 working days) later with a phone call.

Job Club

The Kirkwood Community College Job Club is open to anyone needing support during their job search and the group is open to anyone regardless of residence, age, position and educational level. There will be job club activities weekly as each month the activities will repeat. There will be workshops on Career Directions, MBTI Workshop, Choices Planner, Resume Writing, Resources to Identify Job Possibilities, Job Applications and Written Correspondence, Interviewing for a Job and Mock Interviewing. For more information and times please contact our Student Development Office at (319) 398-5471 or stop by the office in Iowa Hall 115.

Follow up

- You will improve your chances of getting a job, if you follow up on all jobs you apply for, and all "fishing" letters you send.
- Call or email 3-5 days after sending a resume, unless the employer requests no phone calls.
- Some sample questions you could ask during your follow-up call: Did you receive all of my credentials? Do you have any questions for me? Where are you in your hiring process? Am I a candidate? When can I expect to hear from you? Would you be interested in setting up a time to meet with me?
- If you are granted an interview, send a thank-you note immediately afterwards.
(See pages 44 - 46)
- Call a week or so after the interview. Ask if a decision has been made. Ask if you're a candidate.
- If you are still a candidate: Ask if they'd consider giving you a 30-day trial period to prove yourself. Ask for a follow-up interview.
- If you have been eliminated: Thank them for their time. Ask for constructive criticism (Example: What made you decide not to hire me? What are some areas I could improve upon?)
- Following up shows the employer that you really want the job.

Evaluating Job Offers

Eventually, you may be offered a position with a company. Congratulations! Your next step is deciding whether or not to take the job. You may have to choose between two offers. Here are some things to consider.

Look at the corporate culture

- Do you really want to work there?
- Is there work-life balance?
- Is there open communication?
- Is it a positive working environment?
- Will you enjoy your coworkers?
- Are there opportunities for training and advancement?
- Can you get behind the vision of the company?
- How do the company's values align with your own?
- Will your work activities be interesting and fulfilling?
- How flexible will your work hours be?
- How's the company's reputation?

Understand the benefits package. Benefits add value to your package. You may actually walk away with more money at a lower salary job with excellent benefits. Ask questions to clarify what's included in your benefits package.

- What is the cost to the employee for health insurance?
- What all is covered by the insurance? What is the co-pay? Dental? Vision?
- 401 k matching?
- Retirement or early retirement programs?
- Tuition reimbursement?
- Life insurance?
- Flexible spending accounts?
- Profit sharing or stock options?
- Vacation days? (Divide base salary by 260 to determine the cash value of each paid vacation day)

Know what you're worth

- Find out what others who do similar work in the same geographic location are being paid. Make sure your offer comparable.
- Use www.salary.com or Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://stats.bls.gov> to locate this information.

Can you negotiate?

You may want to consider asking for a larger salary or added benefits if a few of the following are true:

- The salary offered is significantly below your market value.
- The person who offered you the job has the power to increase your salary.
- The company is large and/or financially stable.
- They are urgently trying to fill the position.
- You are significantly more qualified than the other applicants, or there is little competition for the position.

Some Final Tips on Job Searching

- Don't give up. If you are like most people, you will be rejected many times before you land a job. This is to be expected. If you have to work a dead-end job to pay bills, continue to set aside time each week to devote to finding a job you like.
- During your job search, be sure to spend time around people who affirm you and encourage you in your search. This will help keep you positive and motivated.
- Be willing to start at the bottom. Look at the big picture. The job may be your dream job, but it may lead to your dream job someday. Consider: Will you improve your skills and learn new skills? Will you develop valuable contacts? Are there opportunities for advancement? Will this job enhance your resume?

Transitioning from school to work

Making the transition from school to work can be a time filled with uncertainties and nervousness.

Leaving Kirkwood

- Get letters of reference from your instructors. It's better to get them while they still remember you. You may need letters of reference in the future for scholarships, jobs, or graduate school.
- Stay connected with student organizations that may be able to help you in terms of networking.
- Check with the financial aid office to make sure you understand your financial obligations.

At your first job

- In the workplace, it doesn't really matter how cool you are, or how cool you were. It does matter how ambitious, competent, positive, diligent, and dedicated you are.
- Be sure to ask for clarification or direction when you need it; on the other hand, take initiative and try to figure things out on your own. You will drive everyone crazy if you ask too many questions.
- Don't hesitate to take on projects that will challenge you and help you refine your skills.
- Strive for professionalism: Dress appropriately, avoid swearing, avoid gossip???
- Actively manage your money: Seek financial advice, learn about investments, and make a budget.

Recommended Readings

Making Career Decisions

What Color Is Your Parachute? 2006: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers by Richard Nelson Bolles

What Color Is Your Parachute? Workbook: How to Create a Picture of Your Ideal Job or Next Career by Richard N. Bolles (2005)

I Don't Know What I Want, But I Know It's Not This : A Step-by-Step Guide to Finding Gratifying Work by Julie Jansen

Do What You Are : Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type-- Revised and Updated Edition Featuring E-careers for the 21st Century by Paul D. Tieger

The Pathfinder : How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success by Nicholas Lore

I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was : How to Discover What You Really Want and How to Get It by Barbara Sher

Other Career –Related Books

Who's Hiring Who, by Richard Lathrop. Ten Speed Press

The Practical Job-Search Guide, by Donna Ferris. Ten Speed Press

How to Make \$1000 a Minute, Negotiating Your Salaries and Raises, by Jack Chapman

Occupational Outlook Handbook, by the US Dept. of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Surviving a Layoff, Downsizing, R.I.F., Reengineering, Plant Closing, by Dahlstrom & Company, Inc. 2000

Resumes

The Adams-Resume Almanac, by Adams Publishing Company – Holbrook, MA.

The Resume Catalog: 200 Damn Good Examples, by Yana Parker

The Resume Solution, by JIST, Author David Swanson

Blue Collar & Beyond Resume Book, by Yana Parker

Resumes That Work – How to Sell Yourself on Paper, by Loretta D. Foxmen, M.A., Wiley Press Book

How to Write a Winning Resume, by Deborah P. Bloch, VGM Career Horizons

High-Impact Resumes, Richard Beatty, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1998

101 Best Resumes, Jay Block. McGraw-Hill, 1998

The Everything Resume Book, Steven Graber, Adams Medial Corporation, 2000

Coverletters

The Adams-Cover Letter Almanac, by Adams Publishing Company – Holbrook, MA.

Cover Letters for Professionals. Haldane, Bernard & Associates. Impact Publications, 2000.

Interviewing

The Adams-Interviewing Almanac, by Adams Publishing Company – Holbrook, MA.

Make Your Job Interview a Success, by J.L. Biegeleisen, ARCO

Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed. Anthony H. Medley, Ten Speed Press, 1998

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