

RESUMES and JOB SEARCH LETTERS



TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

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| 1 North Genesee St. Waukegan, IL 60085 847-377-3450 | 800 Lancer Ln. Grayslake, IL 60030 847-543-7400 |
| www.lakecountyjobcenter.com www.illinoisworknet.com | |
| TTY (for hearing impaired) 847-978-9008 | |

Equal opportunity employer/ program. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to persons with disabilities.

revised—September 2007

**Some Places in Lake County where you can get
free résumé-writing assistance**

Appointments required in most cases. Please call!

**Job Center of Lake County
(Waukegan)**
1 North Genesee St.
Waukegan, IL 60085
(847) 377-3450

**Job Center of Lake County
(Grayslake)**
800 Lancer Ln.
Grayslake, IL 60030
(847) 543-7400 or (847) 543-2059

RESUME TIPS

- 1) Make it easy for an employer to reach you!** *Your name, address, and phone # belong at the top of the résumé. If you aren't home often, consider offering an alternative way of contacting you—a fax number, pager, e-mail, etc.*
- 2) Be positive**—*identify your strengths and accomplishments.*
- 3) Be specific**—*For example, list specific ways that you have used a computer rather than merely stating that you have 'computer skills'.*
- 4) Include only the most relevant information.** *Use concise sentences and keep your résumé brief (1 page if possible, 2 in some cases)*
- 5) Feature the most important information about you at the TOP!**
- 6) Write it yourself.** *No one knows your skills, past accomplishments, and future dreams as well as you do.*



ELECTRONIC RESUMES

A paper copy of your résumé is not enough! Many employers will ask you to email your résumé or to cut and paste your résumé into an online application. When preparing your résumé for this type of electronic use, you should do the following:

- 1) Keep the format simple.** *A document that contains fancy formatting (columns, graphics, etc.) will not cut & paste well. Certain types of formatting (bold, italics, etc) will be lost when you cut & paste a document.*
- 2) Include key words.** *When sorting through a group of electronic résumés, employers will typically search the résumé database using key-words. For example, in order to find an ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, the employer might type in the words **Microsoft Word**, **multi-line telephone**, and **scheduling**. Any résumés that contain these words will pop up on the employer's screen!*

FORMATTING TIPS

- 1) **Laser print on quality paper.** *Paper should be a plain, light color. Never hand-write in after-thoughts.*
- 2) **Use a simple font** (such as Times New Roman or Arial).
- 3) **Beware of making the font too small** (11 or 12 point is average).
- 4) **Proofread, proofread, proofread.** This is the first impression many employers will have of you, so it should be **error free**.

Common Résumé questions:

Do I need an *objective* on my résumé?-- An objective is not required and, in fact, a **vague objective is a waste of space**. If you do include an objective, specifically describe the type of work you want and why you would be good at that type of job.

How many years *work history* should I list on the résumé?

Employers are most interested in what you have done most recently. You typically only need to list your work history for the **past 5 to 15 years**.

If you have worked for many years, you do not need to describe every job you ever held. Focus on the present.

How much *education* should I list on the résumé?

List your highest level of education as well as any additional relevant education or training. Don't list graduation dates if you graduated more than 10 years ago.



Can I include *additional information* besides my employment history on the résumé?

Yes!! Many people gain valuable experience through non-work-related events. Your résumé could include any **relevant** examples of:

- volunteer experience
- work at home
- military history
- certifications & licensing
- membership in relevant associations
- computer, technical, and people skills

*Personal information such as social security number, race, age, marital status etc. should **not** be included on a résumé.*

Résumé Questions: continued

Where do I include *references* on a résumé?

Actually, the names and addresses of your references belong on a **separate sheet of paper** and should only be given to the employer when requested. You may end your résumé with the phrase “*references available upon request*”, but it isn’t required. Why not use that space to further sell your skills?

Are there different types of résumés?

Yes, a **chronological résumé** describes your work and educational history in chronological order—from most recent to least recent.

A **functional résumé** focuses on the functions or skills you have used in the past. Your actual work history is listed at the bottom and is brief.

Some people choose to combine the best features of the two types of résumés.



Which type of résumé is best for me? Consider the following list.

Chronological Résumés

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Easy to organize.▪ Most familiar to employers/ recruiters.▪ Shows progress in your field.▪ Can highlight stability if you’ve worked for one company for many years. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Can highlight instability if you’ve frequently changed jobs.▪ Gaps in employment stand out.▪ May raise questions about your goals if you’ve changed professions.▪ Accomplishments may be “buried.” |

Functional/ Skills Résumés

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Immediately highlights your strengths.▪ Extremely flexible—you can adapt it to the job you are applying for.▪ Permits you to describe yourself in better marketing terms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Challenging to prepare.▪ Must be changed to match each job objective.▪ You must be careful that you are communicating precisely—make sure your specialty and skills are highlighted. |

A chronological résumé highlights Delia's steady history in office jobs. This résumé should help her get another position similar to her most recent experience.

Delia Dartmore

111 Westford St.
Waukegan, IL 60000
111-222-3333
Msg. 222-333-4444
ddartmore@someemail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

More than 8 years experience in responsible office positions requiring attention to detail and proven communication skills.

- Reputation for taking initiative and completing projects accurately and on time.
 - Extensive experience with report writing and spreadsheet creation.
 - Energetic team player with positive, supportive attitude.
 - Adapt quickly to new company policies and requirements.
-

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Aon Clinical Research
Administrative Assistant

Schaumburg, IL
01/03 – 04/07

- Worked at fast-paced reception desk. Greeted all incoming visitors and maintained visitors' log.
- Assisted 10 managers and respective staff with office duties.
- Coordinated travel arrangements for staff members and maintained travel itineraries.
- Processed all incoming mail for office. Entered package information into spreadsheet.
- Ensured outgoing mail and packages were labeled and delivered to appropriate carrier.
- Maintained and operated switchboard. Answered multi-line telephone and responded to emails.
- Coordinated orientation packets and training activities for new employees. Also trained them regarding safety procedures. Programmed security cards for new staff members with appropriate clearance.
- Scheduled meetings in conference rooms. Ordered and set up lunches.
- Ordered supplies for entire office. Also inventoried office supplies.
- Acted as keyholder and monitor for the confidential file room.
- Processed invoices.

Kelly Placement/Records Inc.
Government Default Clerk

Vernon Hills, IL
12/01 – 08/02

- Broke down bankruptcy files and sorted confidential correspondence into specific categories.
- Sorted, filed and copied files for imaging to office locations.
- Processed and distributed mail to 60+ mailboxes.
- Prepared material for FedEx shipments.

Machine America Co.
Administrative Assistant

Lincolnshire, IL
06/98 – 11/01

- Promoted from Receptionist to Administrative Assistant.
- Answered multi-line telephone. Paged appropriate staff members as needed.
- Arranged hotel accommodations, car rental and limo services for international employees.
- Assisted accounting department with preparation of invoices, billing and data entry.
- Sorted and distributed mail, scheduled meetings and called in requisition orders to vendors.
- Demonstrated ability to interact effectively with staff members from other countries.

Danline Corporation
Fleet Coordinator

Northbrook, IL
06/95 – 04/98

- Answered telephone and expedited transportation problems for approximately 40 employees.
- Received and entered mileage information for all drivers.
- Authorized to make payments for vehicle repairs and transportation costs.
- Researched and responded to billing reports.
- Entered purchase data into specialized database.
- Prepared daily drivers' instruction packets for fleet managers.
- Responsible for daily mail distribution and Fed-ex shipments.

EDUCATION

Office Skills Certificate, College of Lake County, Grayslake, IL

COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, Outlook) and Internet research, type 45 wpm

A two-page résumé is acceptable provided that it is easy to read and does not contain irrelevant information.

A skills or functional style résumé may help Delia to get back into production. It emphasizes her knowledge of the field and draws attention away from the fact that her last production job was quite a few years ago.

Delia Dartmore

111 Westford St. Waukegan, IL 60000
111-222-3333
Msg. 222-333-4444
ddartmore@someemail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

More than 10 years experience in production/ manufacturing positions requiring exceptional attention to detail. Additional experience in office/ administrative positions.

- Responsible for first piece inspection for plastic parts leaving injection molding machines.
- Recorded all measurements for parts in database.
- Performed inspection of entire production floor every other hour. Held authority to shut down machines as needed.
- Used calipers, scales, and gauges to ensure parts met specifications of blueprints. Also performed visual inspections.
- Communicated regularly with managers and teams regarding production matters.
- Required to continually update knowledge regarding new parts and requirements.
- Experience assembling electrical, hydraulic units. Tested AC voltage on parts and performed final inspection prior to shipping.
- Dipped parts in degreaser prior to inspection.
- Operated and maintained drill and power tools during production of automotive parts.

WORK HISTORY

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------|
| <i>Administrative Assistant</i> | Aon Clinical Research, Schaumburg, IL | 2003 – 2007 |
| <i>Government Default Clerk</i> | Kelly Placement/Records Inc., Vernon Hills, IL | 2001 – 2002 |
| <i>Administrative Assistant</i> | Machine America Co., Lincolnshire, IL | 1998 – 2001 |
| <i>Fleet Coordinator</i> | Danline Corporation, Northbrook, IL | 1995 – 1998 |
| <i>Final Audit Inspector</i> | Smith Engineering Corporation, Addison, IL | 1991 – 1993 |
| <i>Assembler/Inspector</i> | Swift Incorporation, Carol Stream, IL | 1989 – 1990 |
| <i>Machine Operator</i> | Machine Corporation, Chicago, IL | 1980 – 1988 |

EDUCATION

Danline Machine Hands-on-Training Center, Chicago, IL
Certificate in Blueprint Reading, Precision Instrument, and Math

COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, Outlook) and Internet research, type 45 wpm

For this recent graduate, a skills or functional style résumé helps her emphasize her recent education and internship in mass media.

Jill Johnson

111 Smith Ave. Gurnee, IL 60000
(847) 111-2222
jjohnson@emailaddress.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Creative professional with up-to-date training in mass media.
Demonstrated expertise in production and promotion strategies.
Proven record of effectively managing multiple tasks without compromise to quality.
Recognized for strong work ethic and innovative problem solving.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Computer software: Microsoft Word, Excel & PowerPoint, Dreamweaver, Flash, Adobe Photoshop, Final Draft
Radio equipment: Pro Tools digital audio production equipment
Television equipment: Avid Express DV and Canon cameras

Only use specific names of software, equipment or acronyms if your reader will understand them.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Northern Illinois University: August 2007
Major: Mass Communications: emphasis on television & radio
Minor: Theater & Dance

- Developed educational video on parenting for the Family Support Network System.
- Produced and starred in public service announcement for School of Nursing.
- Developed radio CD including news, commercials, interviews and public service announcements.
- Stage production crew member for plays and musicals including The King & I, Animal Farm and The Foreigner.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

WMDP Carbondale (NIU Broadcasting Company) Carbondale, IL
Production Intern May 2007 to July 2007

- Produced ideas and proposals for internship crew. Produced topic concepts for a weekly, one-hour radio program regarding entertainment.
- Starred in 30 second commercial spot (see www.myjill.com/jobs) to encourage new internships.
- Assisted in teleprompter work for a daily news program.
- Answered multi-line telephone and greeted incoming customers.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Student Maintenance Worker, Facilities Mgmt, Carbondale, IL: Fall 2005 to Spring 2007
Food Server, Noodles & Company, Worthing, IL: Fall 2003 to Spring 2003
Clerical Worker, City of Geneva Clerk's Office & Records Dept: Summers 2001 to 2003
Camp Counselor, YWCA, Smithville, IL: Summer 2000



Job Search Letters

Written correspondence in the job search (besides résumés) is one of the most important and often neglected parts of the whole job search process. People spend days, weeks or even longer writing the perfect résumé. However, when it comes to composing an effective letter to an employer, most people omit this step or create a single generic letter. The average employer receives hundreds of pieces of correspondence a day. You want your letter to **STAND OUT**. **All your correspondence with employers should be customized, professional, and interesting!**

Cover Letter Tips

- 1) Address each letter to the recipient by name.** Whenever possible, find out who is in charge of the department or division of interest, and send your letter to that person. Don't hesitate to call the company directly to find out the name (and correct spelling!) and title of the person in charge.
- 2) Start your letter off with a strong sentence**, one that almost begs the reader to read on. Communicate something unique to that person or organization.
- 3) Do not point out what the employer can do for you** or what you hope to gain from this job. Rather, *show how you can address the needs of this particular employer*. Indicate what you have accomplished that you can offer this employer.
- 4) Use the body of the letter to highlight brief facts** which will arouse the readers' curiosity and interest them in you!
- 5) In the conclusion**, indicate how you will follow up with the employer. You should plan to call, email or write the employer within seven to ten business days. This demonstrates your serious interest and initiative.
- 6) Do not use a letter that looks like it could have been sent to anyone.** Make each letter unique to that particular employer.
- 7) Keep your letter short** (one page).
- 8) Quantify your experiences and achievements.**

The Parts of a Cover Letter

Introduction

State why you are writing and indicate your knowledge of the employer in the first two or three sentences. When possible, name the position for which you are applying and how you heard of the opening. If you are writing as a result of a personal referral, someone known to the reader, state it in the first sentence. Just make sure that you have that person's permission to use her/his name!

Body

In the second paragraph, communicate the way in which your skills and experiences can be of value to this particular employer. Present the most relevant information you want the employer to consider, even before she/he turns to your résumé. This is the section where you must sell yourself and your abilities. You will want to balance your confidence with humility. Highlight prior experience that will make your background come alive. Paint a picture of the type of person they want to hire by describing how your experience relates or is transferable to the employer.



Closing

Here you should indicate the step you will take next. This can include reasserting your interest in the position and arranging for a specific time when you will contact the employer to set up a meeting. Avoid endings which lack assertiveness such as "Please contact me..."; don't leave the initiative and interview bid up to the employer. Write your letter as though you expect the meeting to occur. Since you should be sending letters to a small number (approximately 6 to 8) of employers at any one time, you should be able to do enough research and to follow up with all employers receiving your letters.

Stephanie Tusston

111 S. Lake St.
Garthville, IL 00000
(111) 111-1234
stusston@someemail.com

April 2, 2007

Dr. Polack
Polack Care Clinic
123 West St.
Garthville, IL 00000

Dear Dr. Polack:

In response to your recent advertisement in the Garthville Gazelle, please accept this letter in application for the Billing Clerk position currently available within your office. I am seeking to transition back into the medical field after spending the past 5 years as a stay-at-home mom. My husband is now the full-time childcare provider for our family, so I am eagerly seeking to advance my career.

As you can see from my enclosed résumé, I was employed as a Lead Cashier at a local hospital for almost 1 year. My supervisor was so impressed with my communication style with insurance companies that he promoted me to Medical Claims Processor. I have up-to-date training in billing and coding and am proficient with a variety of software.

I will call your office next week to follow up on this letter and to answer any questions you may have. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at the phone number listed above. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Stephanie Tusston

Ted S. Thompson

111 Walter Payton Blvd. Chicago, IL 60011
312- 211-1111
tthompson@emailmessage.com

May 4, 2007

Toni Smith
Hiring Manager
Computer Technology Institute
1151 S. Greenbay Rd.
Chicago, IL 60011

Dear Toni Smith:

In response to your advertisement which appeared in the *Chicago News Sun*, I am submitting my résumé for the position of **Account Representative** at Computer Technology Institute.

With 2 years experience in a variety of accounting departments and recent college coursework in mathematics and business principles, I believe I can readily fill your needs. In my previous positions, I always capitalized on my ability to undertake a varied array of projects. I learn quickly and enjoy finding effective solutions to problems.

You requested salary information; I am looking for an initial salary between \$25 and \$30 thousand. However, my salary requirements are negotiable based on the responsibilities of the position.

I will contact you next Wednesday to see if there is a time we can meet in person and to answer any questions you might have. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at (312) 211-1111.

Sincerely,

Ted S. Thompson

OTHER JOB SEARCH LETTERS

The cover letter is only one type of correspondence related to your job or career search. Here are some others:

Email letter

An email letter is basically like a cover letter, but it should not include a header or date (since the message will be automatically dated).

Remember, spelling is still important. Spellcheck your letter before sending it out. Do remember to attach your résumé! (It is preferable to attach a résumé rather than to copy and paste it—since attachments retain their original formatting.) Type the title of the position or job order number in the “subject” line of the email. It is also a good idea to indicate where you found the job and the date you saw it.

Example: SUBJECT Inventory Clerk, Job Order 1234a, Career Builder, 9-10-2007

Letter to request an information interview

Here, you are introducing yourself to someone with whom you would like to speak regarding his/her career field, specific position, or organization. You can follow most of the rules of cover letters with the following exceptions:

- Do not include a résumé because it gives the reader the impression that you actually want to apply for a job. If the reader has no openings, she/he may choose not to meet with you.
- Outline parts of your background which relate to this person's field or organization.
- Ask for a half-hour meeting. People are much more likely to agree to a shorter meeting; they will probably end up spending more time with you anyway.

Letter to follow up after an interview

Oftentimes, these are called thank you letters, but thanks are only part of the reason for writing. More specifically:

- Keep it very brief. Two paragraphs should be enough.
- Send it out as soon after your interview as possible. If you have new information to add, you want the employer to have this information before making a decision on you.
- Reiterate your interest in the position.

Letter of acceptance

After you receive an offer and have accepted it over the telephone, follow-up with a brief letter accepting the position and outlining the specifics as you understand them, namely, position title, salary, starting date, supervisor and any other pertinent information. Occasionally, an employer may provide a copy of your offer letter requiring your signature. If this is the case, be sure to read the letter carefully to make certain that all the specifics as you understand them are included before returning the signed copy.

Letter to reject an offer

Keep it brief. Thank the person for his/her confidence in your abilities and state that you enjoyed meeting with them. It is not necessary to state why you are declining the offer -- unless of course you would like to! Be sure to clearly state that you are not accepting the position. A positive statement to leave things open for future consideration would not hurt -- especially if your needs or interests change.

Letter to follow up when you were NOT offered a position

If you were very interested in a particular position and did not receive an offer, you can send a letter to re-emphasize your interest and to communicate your regrets. You should mention why you thought you were a good match for the organization's needs. At the same time, leave the door open for the future in case a similar position becomes available. Also, the person to whom you are writing may move on to a different organization and may become interested in you as a candidate for a position in her/his new organization.

FINAL TIPS FOR ALL LETTERS

Make your letter look graphically pleasing. Print it on good quality, light-colored stationery.

Make it perfect: no typos, no misspellings, no factual errors. After spell checking on your word processor, proof read your cover letter carefully. Leave enough white space -- 1 to 1½" margins.

Keep a copy of every letter you send out. When you make follow-up phone calls, it is always helpful to have a copy of your letter in front of you so that you will know exactly what you said to this particular person -- especially since all your letters will be different.



For more information

Check out these helpful books and websites:

Example Résumés

Gallery of Best Résumés for People Without a Four-Year Degree,
3rd edition by David F. Noble, 2007

Gallery of Best Résumés, *3rd edition* by David F. Noble, 2004

Resume Magic, *2nd edition* by Susan Britton Whitcomb, 2003

www.tbrnet.com

www.jobsmart.org

Creating and Using an Internet-Friendly Résumé

www.eresumewriting.com

www.careerbabe.com

Cover Letters

Cover Letter Magic, *2nd edition* by Wendy S. Enelow, 2004

Gallery of Best Cover Letters, *2nd edition* by David F. Noble, 2004