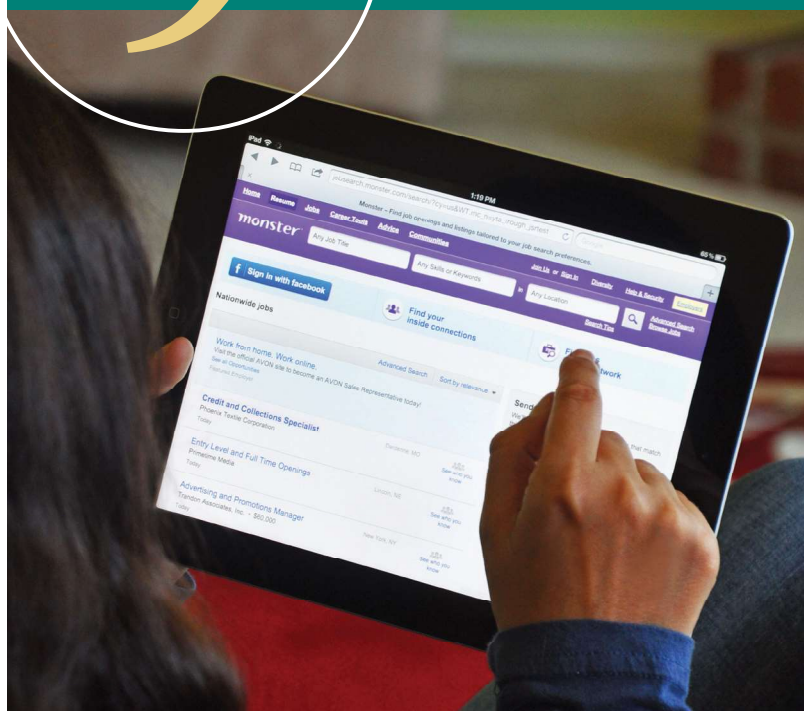


9

Résumés and Other Employment Materials



LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ Research jobs and narrow your job search
- ▶ Create print and digital résumés
- ▶ Write a persuasive job application letter
- ▶ Compile a dossier and a portfolio (or e-portfolio)
- ▶ Prepare for job interviews
- ▶ Write an appropriate thank you letter
- ▶ Write an appropriate acceptance or refusal letter

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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LET'S GET STARTED

Résumés and Application Letters

MyWritingLab™

Your friend has told you about a paid internship at a local company, and you would really like to get an interview because you are hoping to get a job related to your college major when you graduate. Also, the location is close to your apartment, so you could walk to and from the internship. Without reading this chapter, create a résumé and write an application letter that is targeted at getting this internship.

Questions to ask about the résumé and application letter you wrote, as you review the material in this chapter:

- ▶ Did you research the company?
- ▶ Is your résumé brief and to the point?
- ▶ Is the material in your résumé described and arranged in the order that makes sense for the company to which you are applying?
- ▶ Does your application letter contain the three basic paragraphs (introduction, body, conclusion)?
- ▶ Does your application letter get right to the point?
- ▶ Does your application letter help highlight specific and relevant items from your résumé?

At the end of this chapter, review your initial Let's Get Started résumé and application with a group of students, and compare what you wrote with what you learned from this chapter. Make a plan to revise or modify your original materials based on what you have learned from the chapter and in class.

This chapter comes first in the documents section of this book for two reasons: to highlight the importance of using the skills you have learned thus far to get hired, and to encourage you to create a portfolio of sample documents as you work through the remainder of the book.

Review the basics of effective communication

Enhance your job search by relying on key principles from earlier chapters. For example, research each specific position for which you apply (see Chapter 2). Show that you communicate persuasively, that you present yourself honestly, and that you understand teamwork (see Chapters 1, 3, and 4). Also, prepare all application materials with a clear sense of audience and purpose (see Chapter 3).

In today's job market, many applicants compete for few openings. Whether you are applying for your first professional job or changing careers, you need to market your skills effectively. At each stage of the job search, you must stand out among the competition.

Identify your assets

ASSESSING YOUR SKILLS AND APTITUDES

Begin your job search by assessing those qualities and skills you can offer a potential employer:

- Do I communicate well, and am I also a good listener?
- Do I work well in groups and with people from different backgrounds?
- Do I have experience or aptitude for a leadership role?
- Can I solve problems and get things done?
- Can I perform well under pressure?
- Can I work independently, with minimal supervision?
- Do I have any special skills (public speaking, working with people, computer or other technical skills, aptitude with words, analytical skills, second or third languages, artistic/musical talent, mathematical aptitude)?



Source: Chris McGrath/Getty Images.

- Do I have any hobbies that could improve my job prospects?
- Would I prefer to work at a large company or a small one? At a for-profit or a nonprofit organization?
- Do I like to travel, or would I prefer working in a single location?

Besides helping you focus your job search, your answers to these questions will come in handy when you write your résumé and prepare for job interviews.

RESEARCHING THE JOB MARKET

Narrowing your search does not mean limiting yourself to one or two types of job, but instead giving yourself a measure of realistic focus. Try to stick to those fields that interest you most and fit you best.

Begin your research well in advance of the time you need to have a job lined up. If you've never done job research, the question "Where do I start?" can be daunting: "Do I go to a career counselor first?" "Should I talk with friends and family members?" "Do I go straight to the Help Wanted section—in print or online?" "Should I buy a book on how to find a job?" "Which Web sites are the best?" More than ever, seemingly endless sources of information are available to job seekers. Try to proceed in a step-by-step, logical way, as described below, rather than immediately going online and trying to navigate random Web sites.

The human connection is always the best way to start looking for a job. Once you've narrowed down your job search, go to your campus job placement office and meet with a career counselor (either at your school or outside), who will know the job search process inside and out. Also, speak with a reference librarian (in person or online), who can point you to the right library resource. Network with acquaintances who may know someone else you can speak with.

Before you apply for specific jobs, learn more about the industry. There are a number of ways to do this: Consult reference materials (books, magazines, professional journals, Web sites) specific to the industry. Join a professional group related to your industry and either attend meetings or speak with professionals online through sponsored chat groups. Learn about the key companies in your industry of choice—find out who they are, make a list, and research those particular companies. Finally, set up an informational interview with someone at a company in your field. Even busy professionals are often willing to speak with interested job seekers not applying for a specific job. These people can offer general advice about the industry as a whole and about their own company.

Job postings can be located in a variety of places: Use nationwide job portals and job networking sites (such as *Monster.com*, *Careerbuilder.com*, *Riley Guide*, and *LinkedIn*) to find jobs across the country or specific to your location; consult the print or online Help Wanted sections of your local newspapers; locate industry-specific jobs on professional organization Web sites; or find jobs

Search within a reasonable range

Don't just dive in; work step by step

Start by talking to job experts, librarians, friends, and family

Next, consult industry-specific resources

Finally, look for specific job postings or send out unsolicited application letters

advertised only on human resources Web sites of particular companies. You don't have to limit your search options to advertised jobs, however. Another approach is to send an unsolicited application letter to a company that interests you (for more on unsolicited application letters, see page 159).

RÉSUMÉS

Definition and function of a résumé

Of course, before applying for any job, you should create an effective résumé. A *résumé* is essentially an applicant's personal advertisement for employment. It lists (in a standard format) education and employment history, along with other relevant information, providing a snapshot of the person's qualifications.

A résumé is designed to give an employer an instant overview. In fact, employers initially spend only 15 to 45 seconds looking at a résumé; during this scan, they are looking for a persuasive answer to the bottom-line question: "What can you do for us?"

Employers are impressed by a résumé that looks good, reads easily, appears honest, and provides only the relevant information an employer needs to determine if the applicant should be interviewed. Résumés that are mechanically flawed, cluttered, sketchy, hard to follow, or seemingly dishonest simply get discarded.

Parts of a Résumé

What to include—and not include—in a résumé

All résumés contain standard parts. Every résumé must include contact information, career objectives, education, work experience, and references. A résumé is not the place to include such items as your desired salary and benefits or your requirements for time off. In addition, do not include irrelevant personal information, your photograph, or information that employers are not allowed to legally ask (such as your race, age, or marital status). As you read through this section, refer to Figure 9.1, which includes all the required parts.

Contact Information. Tell prospective employers where they can reach you. If you are between addresses, provide both addresses and check each contact point regularly. Be sure that your email address and phone number are accurate. If you use voice mail, record a message that sounds friendly and professional. If you have your own Web site (professional, not personal, in content), include the Web address. Remember that employers may be able to view your Facebook or other social networking pages, so keep those sites professional in tone and content.

Career Objectives. Spell out the job you want. Avoid vague statements such as "A position in which I can apply my education and experience." Instead, be specific: "An intensive-care nursing position in a teaching hospital, with the eventual goal of supervising and instructing." Tailor your career objective statement as you apply for different jobs, in order to match yourself with each position.

James David Purdy 203 Elmwood Avenue San Jose, CA 95139 Phone: (555) 316-2419 Email: jpur@valnet.net		← Contact information includes full name and address, phone, and email address
Objective	Customer relations for a hospitality chain, leading to management.	← Career objective is specific and tailored to the job
Education 2011–2013	<i>San Jose City College, San Jose, CA</i> Associate of Arts Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management, May 2009. Grade point average: 3.25 of a possible 4.00. All college expenses financed by scholarship and part-time job (20 hours weekly).	← Education section lists school, location, degree earned, and other relevant information
Employment 2011–2013	<i>Pretalo Lodge and Convention Center, San Jose, CA</i> Began as desk clerk, promoted to desk manager (part-time) of this 200-unit resort. Responsible for scheduling custodial and room service staff, planning conventions, and handling customer relations.	← Work experience section lists most recent jobs first and includes relevant skills applied on the job
2010–2011	<i>Teo's Restaurant, Pensacola, FL</i> Beginning as waiter, advanced to cashier and finally to assistant manager. Responsible for preparing weekly payroll, making banquet arrangements, and supervising dining room and lounge staff.	
2009–2010	<i>Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., San Jose, CA</i> Sales representative (part-time). Received top bonus twice.	
2008–2009	<i>White Family Inn, San Luis Obispo, CA</i> Worked as bus-person, then server (part-time).	
Leadership	<i>Awards</i> Captain of basketball team, 2009; Lion's Club Scholarship, 2011. <i>Languages</i> Committee chair for student French club; fluent French speaker. <i>Activities</i> High school basketball and track team (3 years); college student senate (2 years); Innkeepers' Club—prepared and served monthly dinners at the college (2 years).	← Leadership section combines awards, skills, and activities that may be relevant to a job
References	Available on request.	← When no references are included, an "available on request" statement substitutes

FIGURE 9.1 A standard résumé

Education. Begin with your most recent schooling and work backward. Include the name of the school, degree completed, year completed, and your major and minor. Omit high school, unless the high school's prestige or your achievements there warrant its inclusion. List courses that have directly prepared you for the job you seek. If your class rank or grade point average is favorable, list it. Include specialized training during military service. If you finance your education by working, say so, indicating the percentage of your contribution.

Work Experience. If your experience relates to the job, list it before your education. List the most recent job and then earlier jobs. Include employers' names and dates of employment. Indicate whether a job was full-time, part-time (hours weekly), or seasonal. Describe your exact duties for each job, indicating promotions. If it is to your advantage, state why you left each job. Include military experience and relevant volunteer work. If you lack paid experience, emphasize your education, including internships and special projects.

Leadership or Other Activities. By law, you are not required to include a photograph or reveal your sex, religion, race, age, national origin, disability, or marital status. List any awards, skills, activities, and interests that are *relevant* to the given position: say, memberships, demonstrations of leadership, languages, and special skills that may be of interest to the employer.

References. If the employer has requested references, list three to five people who have agreed to provide strong assessments of your qualifications and who can speak on your behalf. Never list as references people who haven't first given you express permission. Your references should not be family members or non-work-related friends; instead, list former employers, professors, and community figures who know you well. If the employer does not request references as part of the initial application, simply state at the end of your résumé, "References available upon request." If you don't list references, prepare a separate reference sheet that you can provide on request. Include each person's job title, company address, and contact information.

Organizing Your Résumé

Organize your résumé to convey the strongest impression of your qualifications, skills, and experience. A standard résumé, like the one in Figure 9.1, is also known as a *reverse chronological résumé*, listing the most recent school and job first. If you have limited experience or education or gaps in your work history (e.g., due to illness, raising children) or if you have frequently switched career paths, create a *functional résumé* (Figure 9.2) to highlight skills relevant to a particular job.

Carol R. Chasone 642 Eagle Lane Eugene, OR 97405 (503-314-5555) crchasone@eor.edu	
OBJECTIVE	Position in marketing/communications with opportunity for advancement
SALES/ MARKETING SKILLS	• Wrote recruiting letter currently used by the Eugene Chamber of Commerce • Designed posters for promotion of industrial development in Central Oregon • Assisted Chamber President in promoting the organization's activities • Recruited 7 speakers for Chamber meetings • Wrote 3 public-relations pieces about a local hospital, for area newspapers
COMMUNICATION AND DOCUMENT DESIGN SKILLS	• Conducted demographic study of small businesses in Southwestern OR • Presented study findings to Eugene Chamber of Commerce • Wrote 15-page report on results of demographic study • Designed and wrote two brochures to promote the Small Business Institute • Designed 5 issues of <i>Patient Care</i>, 16-page in-house hospital newsletter • Wrote 8 articles and conducted 3 interviews for the newsletter • Designed 6 posters for in-service hospital programs
ORGANIZATIONAL/ MANAGEMENT SKILLS	• Coordinated all weekly Chamber meetings for Feb., March, April, and May • Attended 2 seminars (Houston, Seattle) for hospital public relations • Trained and supervised 3 new interns at the Small Business Institute • Scheduled and chaired weekly intern meetings
EDUCATION	Eastern Oregon University B.S. in Marketing; Graphic Design minor—May 2012 GPA: 3.3/4.0; Dean's List, 5 semesters Contract Learning: Eugene Chamber of Commerce, Fall 2011 Internships: EOU's Small Business Institute, Spring 2011; Mercy Hospital, Fall 2011
EMPLOYMENT	Personal trainer (part-time and summers 2009–2011)—Acme Gym, Eugene Caddy and Pro Shop salesperson—Eugene Golf Club, summers, 2006–2008
REFERENCES	Available on request

FIGURE 9.2
A functional
résumé

Includes contact
information and
objective

Emphasizes
three skills areas
appropriate to the
job, with specific
accomplishments in
bulleted-list format

Includes but
deemphasizes
education



STRATEGIES for Creating a Résumé

- ▶ **Begin your résumé well before your job search.**
- ▶ **Tailor your résumé for each job.** Read the advertised job requirements, and adjust your career objective accordingly. Tailor your work experience, personal data, and personal interests to emphasize certain areas for certain jobs. Follow the instructions given on the job application or site.
- ▶ **Try to limit the résumé to a single page.** However, if your résumé looks cramped, you might need to go to a second page.
- ▶ **Stick to experience relevant to the job.** Don't list everything you've ever done.
- ▶ **Use action verbs and key words.** Action verbs (*supervised, developed, built, taught, installed, managed, trained, solved, planned, directed*) stress your ability to produce results. If your résumé is likely to be scanned electronically or if you post it online, list keywords as nouns (*leadership skills, software development, data processing, editing*) below your contact information and your statement of objective (see Figure 9.4).
- ▶ **Use bold, italic, underlining, colors, fonts, bullets, and other devices thoughtfully, for emphasis.** Do not use these features to be artsy.
- ▶ **Never invent or distort credentials.** Make yourself look as good as the *facts* allow. Companies routinely investigate claims made in résumés, and people who lie will certainly not be hired.
- ▶ **Proofread, proofread, proofread.** Don't rely on a computer spell checker. Famous résumé mistakes include winning a “bogus award” instead of a “bonus award” and “ruining” rather than “running” a business.

APPLICATION LETTERS

Definition and
function of an
application letter

An *application letter*, also known as a *cover letter*, complements your résumé when you apply for a job. The letter's main purpose is to explain how your credentials fit the particular job and to convey a sufficiently informed, professional, and likable persona for the prospective employer to decide that you should be interviewed. Another purpose of the letter is to highlight specific qualifications or skills; for example, you might have listed “Java programming” on your résumé, but for one particular job application you may wish to call attention to this item in your cover letter:

My résumé notes that I am experienced with Java programming. In fact, I also tutor Java programming students in our school's learning center.

Solicited and
unsolicited
application letters

Sometimes you will apply for positions advertised in print or by word of mouth or where you have been invited to apply (for example, by a recruiter who

visits your campus) (*solicited applications*). At other times you will write prospecting letters to organizations that have not advertised an opening but that might need someone like you (*unsolicited applications*). In either case, tailor your letter to the situation.

Solicited Application Letters

An application letter—whether solicited or unsolicited—consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion as in Figure 9.3.

In your brief introduction (generally, five lines or fewer), do these things: Name the job you’re applying for and where you have seen it advertised; identify yourself and your background; and, if possible, establish a connection by naming a mutual acquaintance who encouraged you to apply—but only if that person has given you permission.

Use the introduction to get right to the point

In the body, spell out your case. Without merely repeating your résumé, relate your qualifications specifically to this job. Also, be specific. Instead of referring to “much experience” or “increased sales,” stipulate “three years of experience” or “a 35 percent increase in sales between June and October 2013.” Support all claims with evidence. Instead of saying, “I have leadership skills,” say, “I served as student senate president during my senior year and was captain of the lacrosse team.”

Use the body to demonstrate your qualifications

In the conclusion, restate your interest and emphasize your willingness to retrain or relocate if necessary. If the job is nearby, request an interview; otherwise, request a phone call, suggesting a time you can be reached.

Use the conclusion to restate interest

Unsolicited Application Letters

Do not limit your job search to advertised openings. In fact, fewer than 20 percent of all job openings are advertised. Unsolicited application letters are a good way to uncover possibilities. They do have drawbacks, however: You may waste time writing to organizations that have no openings, and you cannot tailor your letter to advertised requirements. But there are also advantages: Even employers with no openings often welcome and file impressive unsolicited applications or pass them on to another employer who has an opening.

Because an unsolicited letter arrives unexpectedly, you need to get the reader’s immediate attention. Don’t begin, “I am writing to inquire about the possibility of obtaining a position with your company.” Instead, open forcefully by establishing a connection with a mutual acquaintance or by making a strong statement or asking a persuasive question as in the following example:

Use the introduction to spark reader interest

Does your hotel chain have a place for a junior manager with a college degree in hospitality management, a proven commitment to quality service, and customer relations experience that extends far beyond textbooks? If so, please consider my application for a position.

A forceful opening

Writer identifies
self and purpose

Establishes a
connection

Relates specific
qualifications from
his résumé to the
job opening

Applies relevant
personal interests
to the job

Expresses
confidence and
enthusiasm
throughout

Makes follow-up
easy for the reader

203 Elmwood Avenue
San Jose, CA 10462

April 22, 20XX

Sara Costanza
Personnel Director
Liberty International, Inc.
Lansdowne, PA 24153

Dear Ms. Costanza:

Please consider my application for a junior management position at your Lake Geneva resort, as advertised in the April 19 *Philadelphia Inquirer*. I will graduate from San Jose City College on May 30 with an Associate of Arts degree in hotel and restaurant management. Dr. H. V. Garlid, my nutrition professor, described his experience as a consultant for Liberty International and encouraged me to apply.

As you can see from my enclosed résumé, for two years I worked as a part-time desk clerk, and I was promoted to manager, at a 200-unit resort. This experience, combined with earlier customer relations work in a variety of situations, has given me a clear and practical understanding of customers' needs and expectations.

As an amateur chef, I'm well aware of the effort, attention, and patience required to prepare fine food. Moreover, my skiing and sailing background might be assets to your resort's recreation program.

I have worked hard to hone my hospitality management skills. My experience, education, and personality have prepared me to work well with others and to respond creatively to challenges, crises, and added responsibilities.

If my background meets your needs, please phone me any weekday after 4:00 p.m. at (555) 316-2419.

Sincerely,



James D. Purdy

FIGURE 9.3 A solicited application letter



STRATEGIES for Application Letters

- ▶ **Use caution when adapting sample application letters.** There are plenty of free, online sample letters that provide ideas for your own situation. But never borrow them whole. Most employers can spot a “canned” letter immediately.
- ▶ **Create a dynamic tone with active voice.** Instead of saying, “More and more management responsibilities were steadily given to me,” say, “I steadily assumed ever-greater management responsibilities.”
- ▶ **Never be vague.** Paint a clear picture for employers who may not be familiar with what you describe. Instead of saying, “I am familiar with the 1022 interactive database system and RUNOFF processing system,” say, “As a lab grader, I kept grading records on the 1022 database management system and composed lab procedures on the RUNOFF text processing system.”
- ▶ **Avoid being overly informal or overly stiff.** Avoid informal terms that sound unprofessional (“Your company sounds like a cool place to work”) as well as stuffy language (“Hitherto, I request the honor of your acquaintance”).
- ▶ **Never settle for a first draft—or even a second or third.** The application letter is your one chance to introduce yourself to a prospective employer. Make it perfect by trimming excess wording, double-checking the tone, and making sure that you have connected your qualifications directly to the job. After you are satisfied with the content, proofread repeatedly to spot any factual errors or typos.

Address your letter to the person most likely in charge of hiring. Consult company Web sites for names of company officers. Then call the company to verify the person’s name and title.

DIGITAL VERSUS PRINT JOB APPLICATION MATERIALS

Résumés and cover letters today are typically submitted as PDF or Word documents, uploaded to the online job application site for a particular organization. Social networking sites like *LinkedIn* or *Monster.com* also allow you to upload your résumé and other materials and connect these to your online profile. Some employers may also ask you to submit your materials as email attachments, especially if you were solicited to apply. Whenever possible, use PDF; these files retain the look and feel (fonts, page breaks, line breaks) of the résumé you worked so hard to create. PDF files also make it more difficult for a reader to

Using PDF files for
digital résumés

Print résumés are still important

accidentally insert a stray keystroke or change your formatting while reading your materials.

A printed résumé is also important to have on hand, especially in certain situations. For some jobs, you may still be asked to mail copies of your application materials. Also, if you attend a campus career fair or similar in-person event (for instance, a company holds an information session or comes to campus to recruit), having print copies of your résumé ready to give to recruiters is invaluable. You can point out items of interest on the spot and make a lasting impression. Be sure to use high-quality white stationery paper, available at most copy shops.

Scanned résumés

If you do hand out or mail print copies of your materials, keep in mind that prospective employers will probably end up digitizing your résumé by scanning a copy for their job database systems. Digital résumés, especially at large organizations, become part of a much larger database of applicants (for current or later job openings). Digital résumés are much easier to search via computer, with employers looking for keywords to help them narrow down the application pool.



STRATEGIES for Digital Job Application Materials

- ▶ **Follow the instructions of the job application site.** Employer job sites will tell you what format to use, how large the file size can be, whether to upload just the résumé or the résumé and cover letter, and so forth.
- ▶ **Unless otherwise noted, use PDF.** PDF files retain the formatting of the original no matter what computer platform a reader is using.
- ▶ **Use a simple font.** Stick with those fonts that are easiest to scan, such as Times New Roman or Helvetica.
- ▶ **Use simple formatting.** Especially for print résumés that may be scanned, avoid fancy fonts, tables, and too much formatting. You may substitute ALL CAPS instead of boldface, for example. But even with digital résumés (PDF or Word), keep the design simple and clean (see Figure 9.2 for an example).
- ▶ **Use templates carefully.** Word processing templates may not be the best choice for your particular audience and purpose. If you start off using a template, be sure to edit the formatting and layout to fit your needs.
- ▶ **Use keywords.** Use words that are likely to get hits if the document is searched. You may want to create a “qualifications” section at the top of your résumé. Include keywords for general skills (conflict management, report and proposal writing), specialized skills (graphic design, XHTML), credentials (B.S. in electrical



STRATEGIES *continued*

engineering, Phi Beta Kappa), and job titles (manager, technician, intern). Use nouns for keywords.

- ▶ **Avoid personal information for job materials that are widely available to the public.** For résumés uploaded to secure job application sites, you will want to use your actual address, phone number, and email address. But for materials you upload to a public space, such as your personal Web page, or even to job networking sites (where you can't predict who will see it), you may wish to avoid the potential for identity theft by leaving off your home address and phone number.

To create a print résumé that can be scanned easily and accurately, keep the formatting as simple as possible. Figure 9.4 provides one example of a résumé suitable for scanning.

LinkedIn and other job networking sites offer templates that help you take your profile and turn it into a résumé. Word processing programs, career advice Web sites, and many other sources also offer résumé templates. Use these templates carefully, always keeping audience and purpose in mind.

Use résumé
templates carefully

DOSSIERS, PORTFOLIOS, AND E-PORTFOLIOS

An employer impressed by your résumé and application letter will likely have questions about your credentials and your past work. These questions will be answered, respectively, by your dossier and your portfolio (or e-portfolio).

Definitions and
purposes of dossiers
and portfolios

Dossiers

Your dossier contains your credentials: college transcript, recommendation letters, and other items (such as a scholarship award or commendation letter) that document your achievements. Prospective employers who decide to follow up on your application may request your dossier. By collecting recommendations in one folder, you spare your references from writing the same letter repeatedly.

What a dossier
contains

Your college placement office will keep the dossier (or placement folder) on file and send copies to employers. Always keep your own copy as well, including any nonconfidential recommendation letters. Then, if an employer requests your dossier, you can photocopy and mail it, advising your recipient that the official placement copy is on the way, as sometimes dossiers may not be mailed immediately.

To facilitate online confidentiality, a P.O. box, rather than a street address, is used

Uses ALL CAPS for emphasis, rather than boldface, italics, etc.

Uses nouns instead of verb forms

Chooses a standard, not fancy, font

All text is flush to the left margin

KAREN P. GRANGER
P.O. Box 6772
New Bedford, MA 02720
Phone: (555) 864-9318
Email: kgrang@swis.net

OBJECTIVE
A summer internship in software documentation.

QUALIFICATIONS
Software and hardware documentation. Editing. Desktop publishing. Usability testing. Computer science. Internet research. Web collaboration. Networking technology. Instructor-led training. DEC 20 mainframe and VAX 11/780 systems. Adobe *Framemaker*, *RoboHelp*, *Webworks Publisher*, *PowerPoint*, *Excel*, and *Lotus* software. Logo, Pascal, HTML, and C++ program languages.

EDUCATION
University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (UMD): B.A. January 2014. English and communications major. Computer science minor. GPA 3.54. Class rank top 7 percent.

EXPERIENCE
Conway Communications, Inc., Marlboro, MA: Intern technical writer. LAN technology. Writing, designing, and testing hardware upgrade manuals. Designing and publishing of installation and maintenance manual. Specifying art and illustrations. Designing a fully linked home page and online help for the company intranet. Summers 2011 and 2012.

Writing and Reading Center, UMD: Tutor. Individual and group instruction in writing and word processing. Training new tutors. Newsletter editing. Scriptwriting and acting in a training video. Designing home page. Fall 2010–present.

The Torch, UMD weekly newspaper: Managing editor. Conducting staff meetings. Generating story ideas. Writing editorials and articles. Supervising page layout, paste-up, and copyediting. Fall 2011–present.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS
Writing samples published in Dr. John M. Lannon's and Dr. Laura J. Gurak's *Technical Communication*, 13th ed. (Pearson/Longman, 2014).
Massachusetts State Honors Scholarship, 2010–2012.
Dean's list each semester.

ACTIVITIES
Student member, Society for Technical Communication and American Society for Training and Development.
Student representative, College Curriculum Committee.
UMD Literary Society.

REFERENCES AND WRITING PORTFOLIO
Available on request.

FIGURE 9.4 A résumé that can be scanned, emailed, or posted online

Portfolios and E-portfolios

Portfolios, whether print or digital (e-portfolios, Figure 9.5), allow you to provide a potential employer with additional information and examples pertinent to your job search, such as copies of documents from your dossier as well as writing samples, more information about honors and awards, and multimedia or visual design projects. Your portfolio or e-portfolio should contain an introduction or mission statement explaining what you've included and why. Do not include items that are unrelated to the job search or your qualifications. An organized, professional portfolio or e-portfolio shows that you can apply your skills and makes you stand out as a candidate. It also gives you concrete material to discuss during job interviews.

What a portfolio contains

As you create your portfolio or e-portfolio, seek advice and feedback from professors in your major and from other people in the field. If you have a portfolio or e-portfolio, indicate this on your résumé, followed by "Available on request." If you have created an e-portfolio, provide the Web address on your résumé, but also bring printed copies of its contents to your interview. Many colleges and universities offer e-portfolio services via their career and student placement centers. You can also find software and templates online; many of these are quite simple to use. *LinkedIn* and other job sites also offer ways to create e-portfolios. Always check the privacy settings when using a social network or online portfolio site.



STRATEGIES for Dossiers, Portfolios, and E-portfolios

- ▶ **Always provide an introduction or mission statement.** Place this page at the beginning to introduce and explain the contents.
- ▶ **Collect relevant materials.** Gather documents or graphics you've prepared in school or on the job, presentations you've given, and projects or experiments you've worked on. Possible items: campus newspaper articles, reports on course projects, papers that earned an "A," examples of persuasive argument, documents from an internship, or visuals you've designed for an oral presentation.
- ▶ **Include copies of dossier materials.** Although they won't be official unless they go directly from your campus placement office to your prospective employer, have copies of your college transcript and recommendations on hand to give to employers during the waiting period and/or to post on your e-portfolio.
- ▶ **Assemble your items.** Place your résumé first (after your introduction/mission statement), and use divider pages to separate groups of items. Follow the same structure for an e-portfolio. Position your résumé file immediately below the introduction/mission statement file, and group similar items into appropriate files. In either case, aim for a professional look.



STRATEGIES *continued*

- ▶ **Omit irrelevant items.** Personal photographs and other items more appropriate for a Facebook page do not belong in your portfolio or e-portfolio.
- ▶ **Omit your street address or phone number from your e-portfolio.** If your e-portfolio is available to the public, post only your email address to avoid identity theft. If you post your references, include only their names and comments, not their contact information. Always check the privacy settings with any e-portfolio software.

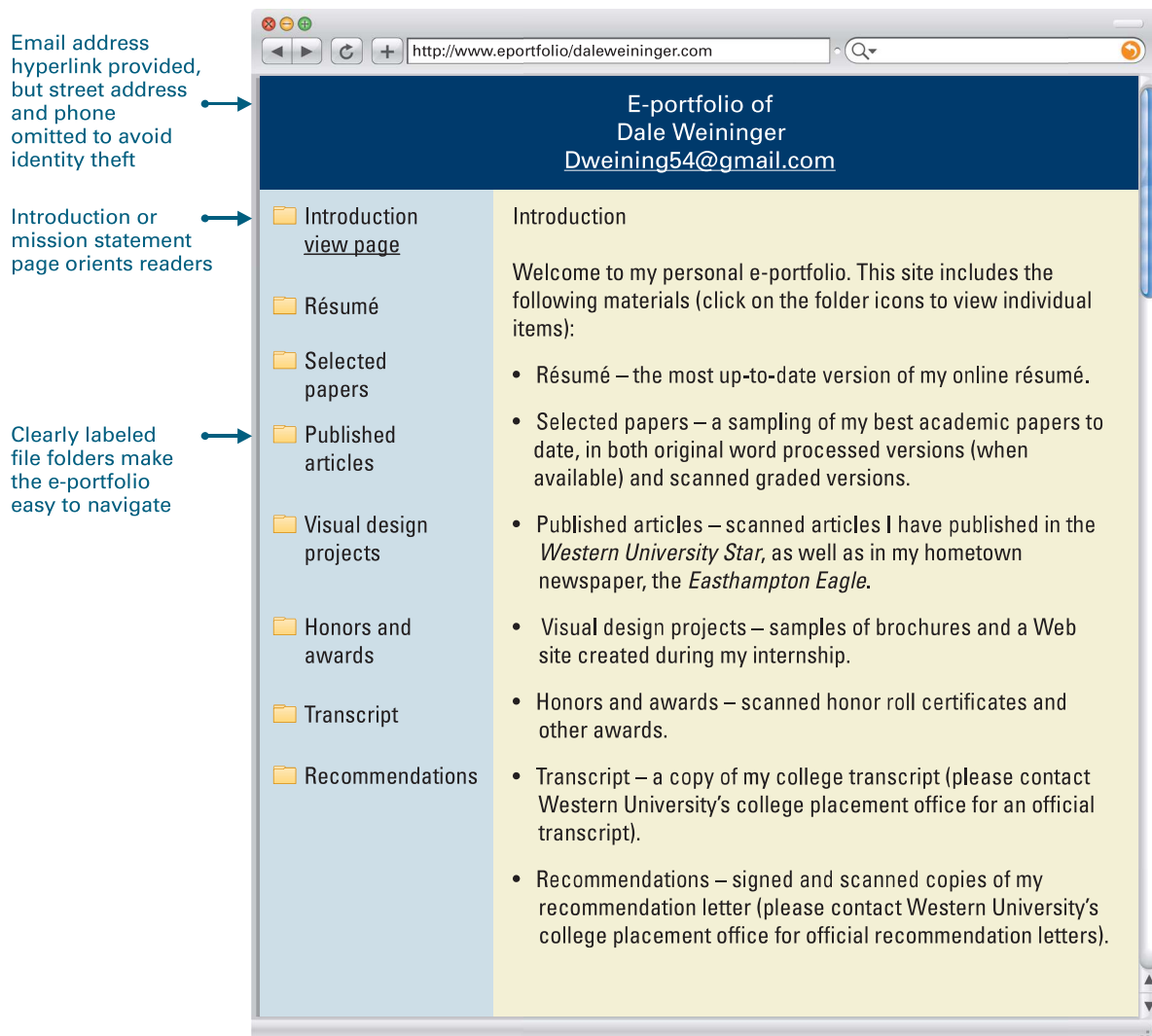


FIGURE 9.5 An e-portfolio

INTERVIEWS AND FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

All of your preparation leads to the last stages of the hiring process: the interview and follow-up to the interview.

Interviews

An employer who is impressed by your credentials will arrange an interview. The interview's purpose is to confirm the employer's impressions from your application letter, résumé, references, and dossier. You will likely be asked to present your portfolio (if you have one) at the interview, rather than beforehand. In addition to your original portfolio or the Web address for your e-portfolio, bring copies/printouts of all relevant documents contained therein. Offer to leave these copies with the interviewer.

Purpose of interviews

Interviews come in various shapes and sizes. They can be face to face or via telephone or video conference. You might meet with a single interviewer, a hiring committee, or several committees in succession. You might be interviewed alone or as part of a group of candidates. Interviews can last an hour or less, a full day, or several days. The interview can range from a pleasant chat to a grueling interrogation. Some interviewers may antagonize you deliberately to observe your reaction.

Types of interview situations

Careful preparation is the key to a productive interview. If you haven't already done so, learn what you can about the company from trade journals, industrial indexes, business magazines (like *Forbes*, *Fortune*, and *Business Week*), and other resources. Request company literature, including the most recent annual report. Speak with people who know about the company, or (well in advance) arrange an informational interview with someone at the company. In addition, visit the company's Web site. Once you've done all this, ask yourself, "Does this job seem like a good fit?"

The importance of preparing for an interview

In addition to knowing about the company, be prepared in other ways. Dress and present yourself appropriately. Be psychologically prepared and confident (but not arrogant). Follow the rules of business etiquette. Unprepared interviewees make mistakes such as the following:

- They know little about the company or what role they would play as an employee in this particular division or department.
- They have inflated ideas about their own worth.
- They have little idea of how their education prepares them for work.
- They dress inappropriately.
- They exhibit little or no self-confidence.
- They have only vague ideas of how they could benefit the employer.
- They inquire only about salary and benefits.
- They speak negatively of former employers or coworkers.

How people fail job interviews

Practice answering interview questions**Questions to expect during a job interview**

Perhaps the most important way to prepare for an interview is to practice answering typical questions. Think about how you would answer the following:

- Why does this job appeal to you?
- What do you know about our company? About this division or unit?
- What do you know about our core values (for example, informal management structure, commitment to diversity or to the environment)?
- What do you know about the expectations and demands of this job?
- What are the major issues affecting this industry?
- How would you describe yourself as an employee?
- What do you see as your biggest weakness? Biggest strength?
- Can you describe an instance in which you came up with a new and better way of doing something?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?

Prepare your own questions, too

Don't forget to prepare your own list of well-researched questions about the job and the organization. You will be invited to ask questions, and what you ask can be as revealing as any answers you give.

Be truthful

Finally, tell the truth during the interview—doing so is both ethical and smart. Companies routinely verify an applicant's claims about education, prior employment, positions held, salary, and personal background. Perhaps you have some past infraction (such as a bad credit rating or a brush with the law) or some pressing personal commitment (such as caring for an elderly parent or a disabled child). Experts suggest that it's better to air these issues up front—before the employer finds out from other sources. The employer will appreciate your honesty, and you will know exactly where you stand before accepting the job (Fisher 292).

Follow-up Letters

There are two types of follow-up letters: thank you letters and, if you are offered the job, acceptance or refusal letters. A typed or handwritten thank you, acceptance, or refusal letter is considered the most professional and formal way to follow up after a job interview or job offer. However, if email has been the primary way you and the potential employer have communicated, you may decide to send your follow-up via email. If so, be sure that, just like a print letter, the email is professionally written, checked for spelling and grammar, and formal in tone. (See Chapter 18 for more on this topic.)

Purpose and content of thank you letters

Thank You Letters. Within a day or so after the interview, send a thank you letter to the person who interviewed you. If you were interviewed by multiple people, send each one an individual thank you letter. Not only is this courteous, but it

also reinforces a positive impression. Keep your letter brief, but try to personalize your connection with the reader (Crosby 20).

Open by thanking the interviewer and reemphasizing your interest in the position. Then refer to some details from the interview or some aspect of your visit that would help the interviewer reconnect with the interview experience. If you forgot to mention something important during the interview, include it here—briefly. Finally, close with genuine enthusiasm, and provide your contact information again to make it easy for the interviewer to respond. Following is the text of an effective thank you letter from James Purdy, the entry-level candidate in hotel-restaurant management whose résumé and cover letter appeared earlier:

Thank you for your hospitality during my Tuesday visit to Lake Geneva Resort. I am very interested in the restaurant-management position and was intrigued by our discussion about developing an eclectic regional cuisine.

Everything about my tour was enjoyable, but I was especially impressed by the friendliness and professionalism of the resort staff. People seem to love working at the Resort, and it's not hard to see why.

I'm convinced I would be a productive employee at Lake Geneva Resort and would welcome the chance to prove my abilities. If you need additional information, please call me at (555) 316-2419.

Acceptance or Refusal Letters. You may receive a job offer by phone or letter. If by phone, request a written offer and respond with a formal letter of acceptance. This letter may serve as part of your contract; spell out the terms you are accepting. Remember also to accept a job offer with enthusiasm. Here is James Purdy's letter of acceptance:

Content and
approach of
acceptance letters

I am delighted to accept your offer of a position as assistant recreation supervisor at Liberty International's Lake Geneva Resort, with a starting salary of \$44,500.

As you requested, I will phone Bonnie Dunn in Human Resources for instructions on reporting date, physical exam, and employee orientation.

I look forward to a long and satisfying career with Liberty International.

You may also have to refuse a job offer, for example if you receive a preferable offer or decide that the position is not the right fit for you. Even if you refuse by phone, write a prompt and cordial letter of refusal, explaining your reasons and allowing for future possibilities. Remember to be diplomatic when refusing a job.

Content and
approach of refusal
letters

A courteous refusal and explanation can let the employer know why you have chosen a competing employer or why you have decided against taking the job for other reasons. Purdy handled one job refusal this way:

Although I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your company's headquarters, I have to decline your offer of a position as assistant desk manager of your London hotel.

I've decided to accept a position with Liberty International because the company has offered me the chance to participate in its manager-trainee program. Also, Liberty will provide tuition for courses in completing my B.S. degree in hospitality management.

If any future openings should materialize at your Aspen resort, however, I would appreciate your considering me again as a candidate.

Thank you for your confidence in me.



STRATEGIES for Interviews and Follow-up Letters

- ▶ **Confirm the interview's exact time and location.** Arrive early but no more than 10 minutes.
- ▶ **Don't show up empty-handed.** Bring a briefcase, pen, and notepad. Have your own questions written out. Bring extra copies of your résumé (unfolded) and a portfolio (if appropriate).
- ▶ **Make a positive first impression.** Come dressed as if you already work for the company. Learn the name of your interviewer beforehand so you can greet this person by name—but never by first name unless invited. Extend a firm handshake, smile, and look the interviewer in the eye. Wait to be asked to take a chair. Maintain eye contact much of the time, but don't stare.
- ▶ **Don't worry about having all the answers.** When you don't know the answer to a question, say so, and relax. Interviewers typically do most of the talking.
- ▶ **Avoid abrupt yes or no answers—as well as life stories.** Just saying yes or no doesn't leave any impression—elaborate on your answers, but also keep them short and to the point.
- ▶ **Don't answer questions by merely repeating the material on your résumé.** Instead, explain how specific skills and types of experience could be assets to this particular employer.



STRATEGIES *continued*

- ▶ **Remember to smile often and to be friendly and attentive throughout.** Qualifications are not the only reason a person gets hired. People often hire the candidate they *like* best.
- ▶ **Never criticize a previous employer.** Above all, interviewers like positive attitudes. Complaining about a former employer, whether or not your criticisms are legitimate, only makes you look negative.
- ▶ **Prepare to ask intelligent questions.** When questions are invited, focus on the nature of the job: travel involved, specific responsibilities, typical job assignments, opportunities for further training, types of clients, and so on. Avoid questions that could easily have been answered by your own prior research.
- ▶ **Take a hint.** When your interviewer hints that the meeting is ending (perhaps by checking a watch), restate your interest, ask when a hiring decision is likely to be made, thank the interviewer, and leave.
- ▶ **Follow up as soon as possible.** Send a thank you note to each person with whom you interviewed. Be sure to get the spelling right for each person's name.

**CHECKLIST**
for Résumés

MyWritingLab™

- ☐ Does my résumé's organization (reverse chronological or functional) emphasize my best characteristics?
- ☐ Is my contact information accurate?
- ☐ Does my statement of objective show a clear sense of purpose?
- ☐ Have I included a summary of skills or qualifications, as needed?
- ☐ Is my educational background clear and complete?
- ☐ Have I accurately but briefly described my previous jobs?
- ☐ Have I presented education versus experience in the appropriate sequence?
- ☐ Have I included personal data and interests, as appropriate?
- ☐ Have I listed references or offered to provide them?
- ☐ Have I offered to provide a portfolio, as appropriate?
- ☐ Have I used action verbs and keywords?
- ☐ Have I limited the résumé to a single page, if possible?



CHECKLIST *continued*

- ☐ Is the résumé uncluttered and tasteful?
- ☐ For print copies, have I used quality (white) paper?
- ☐ If I have a scannable résumé, does it use keywords and effective formatting?
- ☐ Am I being scrupulously honest?
- ☐ Have I proofread exhaustively?

CHECKLIST
for Job Application Letters

MyWritingLab™

- ☐ Is my letter addressed to a specifically named person?
- ☐ If my letter is *solicited*, do I indicate how I heard about the job?
- ☐ If my letter is *unsolicited*, does it have a forceful opening?
- ☐ Does my introduction get directly to the point?
- ☐ Does the body section paint a clear picture of qualifications sketched in the résumé?
- ☐ Does the conclusion restate my interest and encourage specific action?
- ☐ Have I made my case without merely repeating the résumé?
- ☐ Is my letter free of “canned” expressions?
- ☐ Is my tone confident without being arrogant?
- ☐ Have I avoided a tone that is overly formal or overly stiff?
- ☐ Have I avoided flattery and exaggeration?
- ☐ Have I proofread exhaustively?
- ☐ Am I being scrupulously honest?

CHECKLIST
for Supporting Materials

MyWritingLab™

- ☐ Is my dossier complete, with letters of recommendation and other supporting materials?
- ☐ Is my portfolio or e-portfolio up to date?
- ☐ If my portfolio has hyperlinks, are they all functioning?
- ☐ Have I prepared for interviews?
- ☐ Have I sent the appropriate follow-up correspondence?



APPLICATIONS

GENERAL APPLICATIONS

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1. If you have not already prepared a standard print résumé, prepare one following the guidelines in this chapter. If you already have a résumé, revise it not only to follow this chapter's guidelines but also to update your work experience, educational background, and other details. Remember to include persuasive action verbs, to design the résumé in an efficient but attractive way, and to include all relevant experience.
2. Write an application letter applying for a part-time or summer job in response to a specific ad and tailor your résumé for the job. Choose an organization related to your career goals. Identify the exact hours and calendar period during which you are free to work. Submit a copy of the ad along with your letter and résumé.
3. A friend has asked you for help with the following application letter. Read it carefully, evaluate its effectiveness, and rewrite it as needed.

Dear Ms. Brown,

Please consider my application for the position of assistant in the Engineering Department. I am a second-year student majoring in electrical engineering technology. I am presently an apprentice with your company and would like to continue my employment in the Engineering Department.

I have six years' experience in electronics, including two years of engineering studies. I am confident my background will enable me to assist the engineers, and I would appreciate the chance to improve my skills through their knowledge and experience.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the possibilities and benefits of a position in the Engineering Department at Concord Electric. Please phone me any weekday after 3:00 p.m. at (555) 568-9867. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

4. Write an unsolicited application letter to the human resources director of a company that interests you. Go to the company's Web site to research the various positions for which you may be qualified. Select one, and name that position in your letter. Also learn the name of the human resources director and address your letter to that person. Be sure to grab the reader's attention, to remain persuasive throughout, and to conclude with a call to action.

TEAM APPLICATION

Divide into groups and prepare a listing of five Web sites that job seekers should visit for advice about cover letters and résumés. Include a one-paragraph summary of the material found on each site. Compare the findings of your group with others in your class. In addition to sites mentioned in this chapter, see if you can find sites specific to your city, town, or state.

GLOBAL APPLICATION

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Assume that you and other students in your major would like to work in a particular country after graduation. Select a country and do some research on the economy, culture, and travel issues. Write a short memo that tells prospective students what they need to know about finding employment abroad.

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION

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Job networking sites usually provide advice for creating resumes, including samples for different careers. Go to one such site (*LinkedIn* is the largest) and compare the resume samples to the strategies provided in this chapter. Create a draft résumé for one of these sites and review it with your instructor.

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Visit Chapter 9, *Résumés and Other Employment Materials*, in MyWritingLab to complete this chapter's applications, to explore this chapter's overview, checklist, and flashcards, and to test your understanding of the chapter objectives.