A Guide to Written Job Search Tools

Job Center of Lake County
An Illinois workNet® Center
TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

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1 N. Genesee St. Waukegan, IL 60085

As You Begin . . .

There are many written tools that can help you get your next job: resumes, cover letters, emails, applications and social media. Before you can create an effective written package, though, you must **CREATE a plan!** Powerful messages are always designed around a target.
Frequently when people are first laid off, they have a hard time picturing themselves in a different type of job. For a few days, set aside your preconceptions about yourself and the work world. Start from the beginning . . .

Research Yourself

- Re-evaluate your strengths and values.
- Try out the online assessments on Illinois workNet. www.illinoisworknet.com
- Ask former co-workers or supervisors for their observations about your talents.

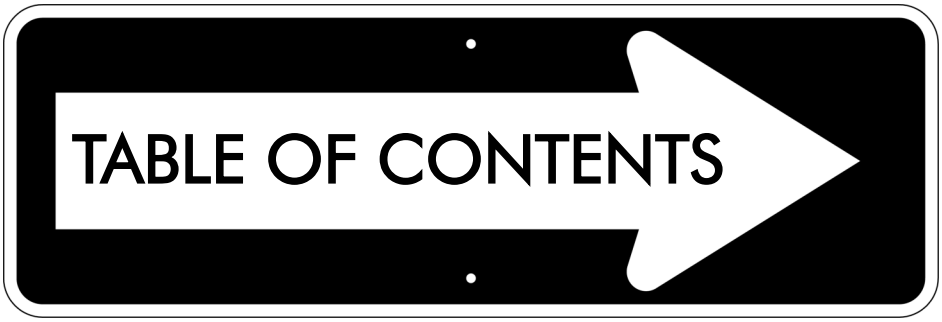
Research Career Options

- Identify a career that links to your passion and strengths.
- List a former job title on MySkillsMyFuture to be matched with careers that use similar skills. www.myskillsmyfuture.org
- Google career titles to read inside information about those careers. Some people write detailed blogs about their occupations.
- Conduct informational interviews. Identify individuals in interesting careers and arrange to interview them about their jobs. Google the words 'informational interviews' for tips.
- Register for the latest news about your desired industry. www.smartbrief.com

Research Companies

- Scour the company's website.
- Google the company name to see what others are saying about it.
- Check out the company's press releases.
- Research the company on Glassdoor where current and former employees anonymously disclose their salary information and information about the company. www.glassdoor.com
- If you know a current employee at the company, conduct an informational interview. Learn what the employer is really like and whether you want to work there.

Completing all the steps listed above requires a serious investment. Give yourself the gift of time. Your persistent research now will lead to long-term satisfaction in a career that suits you.



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Prepare Yourself

If you are trying to transition into a new field, you can increase your appeal to potential employers by updating or adding to your skills and knowledge.

- **Volunteer** in your desired field. Volunteerism shows passion and allows you to make valuable contacts while you hone or develop skills.
- **Join professional associations** in your desired industry. This will give you an opportunity to build your network and knowledge about the field.
- **Consider opportunities with placement agencies.** Starting through a placement agency can sometimes allow you to get your foot in the door of a targeted employer. Most agencies specialize in a given field. Find the right agency for you!
- **Take classes** in your desired field. Check out the options at your community college or other schools.
- **Look for free online training.**
- **Visit** your local Job Center to see what resources you can take advantage of.
- **Check out** the Job Center website and connect with us on social media.

www.lakecountyjobcenter.com

Like us on Facebook!
Lake County Workforce Development

Follow us on Twitter!
@LakeCountyJobs

Join our group on LinkedIn!
Lake County Illinois Workforce Development

Prepare Your Digital Image

Google your name. What can an employer find out about you? Your digital image may be the first impression an employer gets of you and creates a lasting impression!

Email
Often your first contact with an employer will involve an email message or online application to that employer.

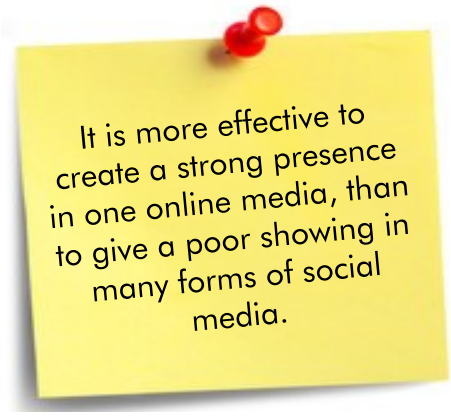
- Is your email address professional in nature?
- Are your email messages grammatically correct?

Facebook and Internet www.facebook.com
Block or remove any information about you on Facebook or the internet that you would not want an employer to see. Avoid posting inflammatory comments online. Pay attention to your online image.

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com
LinkedIn is an online networking site and can be a wonderful tool for anyone seeking employment. Employers use the site to find candidates. If I were to visit your LinkedIn account, would I see someone who I would want to contact right now about a job?

Twitter www.twitter.com
Do you absolutely need a Twitter account to find employment? No, but it can help you keep current within your field. Sign up for a Twitter account if you don't have one and make an effort to follow thought leaders in your field. Who is discussing your field and what are they saying? This might be information that you could insert into your next interview!

Blogs & Other Social Media
The list of additional social media is infinite: Pinterest, google+, blogger.com, wordpress.com . . . Think strategically. What do you want to accomplish using social media? Do you want to share graphic representations of your work with a potential employer? Pinterest might be a good choice. Do you want to position yourself as a thought leader in your industry? Research and start a blog. Because your choices are so varied, you will need to budget your time to maximize your impact on social media.



RESUMES: THE LATEST AND GREATEST

Much like clothing fashions, resume styles are evaluated subjectively. A format that appeals to one person may not appeal to another. Overall, there are some fundamental elements that most employers agree are more effective or up-to-date. Follow these guidelines for a document that will appeal to most employers.

Customize your résumé for different industries or levels of responsibility.

Green flag - Your resume definitely should:

- Be honest and factual
- Feature rich but concise content
- List the most relevant information at the top
- Show your qualifications through specific examples and accomplishments from previous experience
- Be easy to read
    - Balance positive and negative space.
    - 1" margins on the left and right work best!
    - Use a simple business font like Calibri or Georgia
    - Be error free

Yellow flag - Your resume probably should:

- Focus only on your past 5 to 15 years of work history
- Avoid the use of an objective statement
    - Older styles of resumes started with an objective statement. This is an ineffective marketing tool because it focuses on what you want. Focus instead on what value you offer to the employer. *(See Value Proposition Statement information on page 6)*
- Be an appropriate length for your level of experience and desired job
    - The one-page format for resumes is decreasing in popularity! A 2012 survey found that less than 32% of employers still preferred a one-page resume for non-executive positions. Less than 6% preferred that a resume be one page in length for executive positions. *From "Global Hiring Trends 2012" survey by Career Directors International* www.careerdirectors.com

Red flag - Your resume should NOT:

- Include the phrase "References Available Upon Request"
- Include commonplace words and phrases (team player, reliable, responsible, duties include)
- Use the word "I"
- Be written in all CAPITAL letters

Mature workers can avoid dating themselves by omitting their date of graduation and other older information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Value Proposition Statement?

A Value Proposition Statement uses concrete and unique language to describe what value you offer to the employer. It contains three main components:

-What is your expertise?
-What is the value you add?
-What makes you uniquely qualified (experience)?

Example: Communications specialist who writes effective newsletters, press releases and blogs. Design and deliver public presentations throughout community.

Example: Vice President of Marketing with expertise working with Fortune 500 companies. Manage a wide variety of brands successfully.

Your Value Proposition Statement can begin with the heading 'Profile' or 'Summary'. It should appear at the top of your resume (immediately after your name and contact information).

What is an Applicant Tracking System? Many companies process resumes through an Applicant Tracking System that scans each document for **key words**. Ensure your resume gets noticed by using relevant words included on the job posting.

Can I include *additional information* besides my work history on the resume?

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

- Volunteer experience
- Work at home
- Military history
- Certifications & licensing
- Membership in relevant associations
- Computer, technical & people skills

Where do I include *references* on a resume?

The names and addresses of your references belong on **a separate sheet of paper** and should only be given to the employer when requested.

What to Add to Your Basic Resume

Think about the experience you have gained on the job, at school or training and through volunteer or unpaid experience as you respond to the following:

- Describe your greatest accomplishment(s).

- Describe any awards, recognition or promotions you received.

- Describe any special projects or process improvements you were involved in.

- Describe relevant organizations that you belong to.

- Describe relevant certificates or other refresher courses that you recently completed.

- Describe anything that you wrote or created that was used in your job.

Joe Smitherton

Gurnee, IL
111.555.1111
jsmitherton@someemail.com

Summary

Safety-conscious employee with experience in warehouse and assembly.
Type C driver's license; excellent driving record
Operate sit-down and stand-up forklifts; also drive box trucks

Accomplishments

- Recommended a new system for putting away and storing merchandise that decreased inventory times and increased accuracy of monthly inventory.
- Volunteered to train two new team members in Microsoft Word.
- Developed and presented a safety lecture at the Kenosha County board meeting in 2015.

Experience

Sykes Supplies — Milwaukee, WI
Shipping & Receiving Clerk/ Porter — 2010 to 2017
- Received and checked in supplies; put materials away using a hand-jack.
- Inventoried supplies and notified supervisor when more supplies needed to be ordered.

Craig's Garage — Milwaukee, WI
Mechanic/ Tow Truck Driver — 2008 to 2010
- Performed basic mechanical work on starters, brakes and exhaust systems.
- Picked up cars and towed them to shop.

Pictures R Us — Milwaukee, WI
Assembler — 2007 to 2008
- Assembled custom frames, inserted pictures and packaged finished product.
- Inspected completed products to ensure they met customers' specifications.
- Labeled boxes, shrink-wrapped and placed on pallets.

Americall Inc. — Lansing, IL
Telemarketer — 2006 to 2007
- Cold-called potential customers and discussed insurance service.
- Reviewed terms and conditions of program with customers before registering them.
- Forwarded interested customers to quality assurance department.

Normally you should list your highest level of education on a résumé. If you do not possess a GED or high school diploma, though, omit the 'Education' heading and focus on your experience.

Priya Patel

Grand Rapids, Iowa
ppatel@someemail.com
333.555.4983

PROFILE

Multi-lingual administrative support team member who models goal setting and organizational skills on a daily basis.

- Proficient in English, Spanish and Hindi
- Proficient in Microsoft Office: Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Word

WORK HISTORY

Grand Rapids Health Department — Grand Rapids, Iowa
Office Coordinator — January 2013 to present

- Answer multi-line telephone; schedule community members for appointments or transfer to appropriate personnel as needed
- Greet incoming customers of busy health clinic; pull appropriate health files and alert medical staff members on duty of customer arrival
- Enter confidential customer data into computer system
- Translate for customers and staff members as needed (Spanish/ English)
- Inventory and order departmental supplies on monthly basis

Accomplishments

- Redesigned reception area to decrease time required to pull and process customer files
- Mentored two trainees regarding reception duties

Grand Rapids Community College — Waukegan, Illinois
Receptionist — January 2010 to December 2012

- Assisted the Director of Adult Education with meetings, answered phone calls, and assisted instructors and students; translated for ESL (English as a Second Language) students
- Ordered office supplies and kept storage room organized
- Assisted staff with use of copiers, printer, and faxes
- Created computer login sheets and ensured that outdated material is removed on time
- Sorted and distributed incoming mail

EDUCATION

Grand Rapids Community College — Grand Rapids, Iowa
Associate in Applied Science

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer weekly at the Hope Food Pantry — 2012 to present

- Interact with needy families
- Enter confidential client data into computers

Omit a mailing address if it might distract from your overall message (i.e. if you are applying outside your local area or if your home address is otherwise confusing).

STEFANO SILVESTRI
www.linkedin.com/in/stefanos
847.555.2222
ssilvestri@someemail.com

QUALIFICATIONS

Production leader with up-to-date training in electro-mechanical systems.
Familiar with standard computer software including Microsoft Word and Excel; used specialized production software daily at previous position.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Recommended a change in the order of a production line that resulted in a 5% increase in daily production of custom kits.
- Selected to serve as a mentor/ trainer for 5 new employees in production department.
- Received perfect attendance award for each of the last 3 years.
- Created and updated safety manual for department.

TRAINING

College of Lake County — Grayslake, IL
Completed **Mechatronics Certificate** — January 2016 to August 2016
Coursework involved 30 college credit hours in high tech manufacturing including:

- Robotic design
- Mechanical systems
- Electrical systems
- Pneumatics
- Hydraulics
- Automation

EXPERIENCE

Codley Health — Mundelein, IL
Team Lead — 2013 to 2015

- Oversaw a team of 10 involved in assembly and packing of surgical kits; directed the production of custom kit orders consisting of 8 to 120 different components.
- Completed performance reviews of temporary employees.
- Communicated with shift supervisor regarding performance of the team.
- Documented all production activities in computer system.
- Inspected kits for quality compliance.

Richco, Inc. — Chicago, IL
Customer Service Specialist — 2007 to 2013

- Received inbound calls and responded to customers' orders or questions.
- Entered order information into the computer system.
- Member of team responsible for ensuring ISO 9001 certification for Customer Service department.

MILITARY

Sergeant, United States Army, honorable discharge

Include military experience on your resume as a unique heading.

EDUCATION

High School Diploma Tremper High School
Chicago, IL

Leona Lawrence

Chicago, IL
222.555.4444
llawrence@somemail.com
www.linkedin.com/leolawrence

NUTRITION ◆ DIETETICS ◆ WELLNESS ◆ HEALTH

PROFILE

Program Manager with experience and knowledge of health & wellness trends, prevention guidelines, disease control and program development. Drive wellness programs through innovation, education and corporate level motivation.

Use graphics on a resume only if they reinforce your message. If you use a graphic, be consistent. Use the same logo or symbol on all your written documents: resumes, cover letters, business cards, etc.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- U.S. Army Commendation for 'Outstanding Contributions to the Community': 2008
- Developed and delivered national level conference presentation titled "Dietetics as a Career": 2012
  Developed and implemented the Nutrition Makes A Difference Program for HIV+ patients and soldiers stationed both nationally and internationally
- Served as a grant evaluator for the Physical Activity Initiative Evaluation Board: Paso Del Notre Health Foundation

EXPERIENCE

Timely Healthcare Ministries: Colorado Springs, CO
Family Wellness Supervisor 05/2012- 04/2017

- Managed budget of over $1.2 million and cost containment; developed and administered programs on physical fitness, weight-reduction, disease control, smoking cessation and quality of life enhancement
- Managed team of 36 (staff, volunteers, temporary staff and interns); installed a working team that exceeded departmental projections and goals
- Created an internal workflow process improving projected quotations, communications, documentation and outcomes
- Acted as nutrition, exercise science and management resource to colleagues; incorporated staff preventive health issues into risk management interventions

Colorado Springs Wellness Center: Colorado Springs, CO
R.D./Fitness Coordinator 04/2010- 02/2012

- Collaborated with a diverse multidisciplinary team on best practices for optimal patient health improvement; proactively revised to meet changing patient needs
- Presented health program plans and deliverables to shareholders with special consideration towards area special needs and culture specific health issues
- Ensured and effectively motivated clients through individualized programming to control and prevent complications associated with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases
- Coordinated with vendors; produced educational presentations, newsletters and marketing materials for assorted internal and external corporate outreach programs

Wellness Works: Japan
Business Owner and Military Contractor 10/2008-12/2010

- Negotiated business contract with United States Military; established as top private health contractor on two military bases within one year based on health and wellness management
- Generated programs to meet the needs of the United States Army personnel and community and exceeded supervisory expectations on diet, fitness and health requirements through wellness programming
- Executed competitive and strategic market analysis and utilized multiple media outlets to cultivate business; Co-health expert on radio talk show and local columnist
- Developed, scheduled and managed onsite exercise, nutrition and lecture classes

Idyll Hospice, Inc.: Colorado Springs, CO
Hospice Dietitian 11/2004-7/2008

- Planned, organized and conducted dietetic education on "physical and metabolic effects of illness" for the multidisciplinary team and patient/family population on end-of-life nutritional care issues

Mason Management Specialists: San Francisco, CA
Clinical Dietitian 10/2002-7/2004

- Provided medical nutrition therapy to critically ill and malnourished patients
- Organized outreach programs and activities that included support groups, training programs and developed educational materials; developed and provided in-service training to medical staff on nutrition and wellness
- Assessed compliance and educated patients of pre/post renal transplants, diabetes, bariatric surgery, heart disease, obesity and other various disease states

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration, University of Colorado 2009
Master of Science Health & Physical Education, Colorado Tech University 2004
Bachelors of Nutrition and Dietetics, Colorado Tech University 2001
Certified Personal Fitness Trainer, Aerobics & Fitness Association of America 2005

ORGANIZATIONS

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly ADA), House of Delegates-Diversity Committee
- District Dietetic Association, District Chair (2005) and Membership Chair (2010)
- Aerobics and Fitness Association of America
- National Organization of Women In Nutrition-Chair 2009-2011

Email Your Resume to An Employer

In most cases, you will send an employer a brief email note, rather than a traditional cover letter. However, you should know how to prepare a traditional letter. All your correspondence with employers should be customized, professional, and interesting!

How to email your resume to an employer:

- Unless instructed otherwise, attach your resume as a Word-compatible document.
- Then type or paste the body of your cover letter into the body of the email. Spell-check!
- Be sure to include a professional-sounding subject on the "subject" line of your email.
- Test your email by sending it to a friend or family member. Ask them to proofread your email note one more time.
- Send the email on to the employer. Be sure to spell his/ her email address correctly!

SUBJECT: Assistant Account Clerk, Job ID# 1234a
I saw on your company website that Smythe Inc. has an opening for an **Assistant Account Clerk**. The job seems to be an excellent match for my experience and interests. As you will see on my attached resume, I have 5 years office experience and just recently completed an accounting class at Crofton Community College. I really enjoyed this chance to polish my skills with Microsoft Excel and learn the latest finance methods. I will call you next week to answer any questions you may have. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at this email address, via phone at 222.555.4444 or via LinkedIn with the profile information provided below. Thank you for your time! Li Long *www.linkedin.com/in/lilong123*

A Note About Cover Letters

A cover letter should be sent to a manager regarding the particular position you're applying for. Whenever possible, address your cover letter to a specific person.

Jose P. Juarez
Chicago, IL
312.555.1111
JPJuarez@emailmessage.com
www.linkedin.com/in/josepjh3

May 4, 2016

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

Dear Toni Smith:

In response to your advertisement on the *Dice.com* website, I am submitting my résumé for the position of **Account Representative** at Computer Technology Institute.

After completing professional development courses in business with two years experience in accounting 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 $50K and $60K. However, my salary requirements are negotiable based on the responsibilities of the position.

I will contact your office 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 312.555.1111.

Sincerely,

Jose P. Juarez

When appropriate, show your enthusiasm by following up with a phone call after sending your cover letter. Respect the employer's wishes, though. If the job listing specified 'no phone calls', then allow them to make the first move!

Thank You

After an interview or any time an employer spends time with you, share your gratitude with a thank you email, note or letter. Do not forget this important step! A thank you letter will guarantee that the employer does not forget YOU.

SUBJECT: interview for Circulation Assistant position yesterday
Thank you for the time you spent yesterday describing the Circulation Assistant position and the culture at Jefferson Shipping Inc. After hearing more about Jefferson's expansion plans, I am even more interested in working for your company. I am particularly interested in your new direct marketing initiative. Feel free to contact me if you need any additional information. Sincerely, Mary Thompson 222.555.2222

Remember to ask your interviewer for a business card. You can use the business card to correctly address a thank you note to him or her later!

Record keepers are winners! Set up a filing system with copies of job postings that you have applied for and customized résumés and cover letters.

A Word About Timing

When should I send a thank you note after an interview?

Right away! Your best option is to send an email note immediately after the interview. Then, mail a formal letter to arrive within a week.

Should I call an employer if I don't hear back after I send my thank you note?

Evaluate the situation. Respect the employer's time and wishes; typically, a follow-up call is appropriate after about one week.