

Writing Your Résumé for Success

Your résumé is the first and most important tool in your job search. It is your sales brochure. It is a portrait of your ability, experience and personality. A poorly constructed résumé will not likely make it past the first stages of consideration in the hiring or placement process. It is rare that a potential employer will reconsider an applicant who gives him/her a secondary version of a résumé.

The Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research is pleased to provide you with the new *Writing Your Résumé for Success* publication. It includes tips for great résumés, terms and topics to avoid, employer expectations, and sample résumés and cover letters.

Certified Professional Résumé Writers (CPRWs) are available in our *CTWorks* Career Centers to assist you with the development of your résumé. This is a valuable service provided at no cost to you. For a list of *CTWorks* Career Centers, go to the Connecticut Department of Labor's Web site at www.ct.gov/dol.

You can find additional help in résumé writing, as well as the most comprehensive information on jobs and careers in Connecticut through the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* Web site. Located at www.ctjobandcareer.org, the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* contains job descriptions, education and training requirements, wage information, and employment projections for nearly 800 occupations in Connecticut. The site also provides access to education and training programs and hundreds of job openings.

The Office of Research is Connecticut's leading producer of information and statistics on the economy, workforce, occupations, and careers. The Office prepares a variety of print and electronic resources for assessing the state's needs for skilled workers, for assisting in economic development initiatives, for aiding in the program planning of education and training providers, and for guiding the career choices of job seekers and students.

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For a complete list of electronic products and print publications, please visit the Office of Research online at:

www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi



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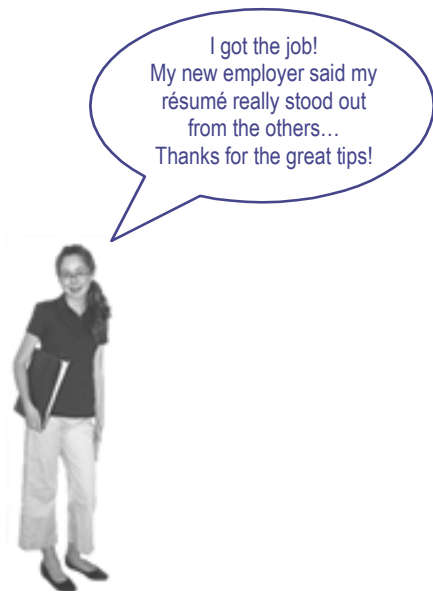
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tips for Great Résumés	2
The Employer’s Bottom Line on Résumés	3
Ten Things to Avoid on Your Résumé	4
Action Words for Résumés	5
Types of Résumés	6
Chronological Résumé.....	7
Functional Résumé.....	8
Combination Résumé.....	9
Scannable and Electronic	10
Sample: Scannable and Electronic Résumés.....	11
Your Cover Letter.....	12
Tips for Great Cover Letters	13

Tips For Great Résumés

Research indicates that many employers prefer a **chronological** résumé format. Below are tips for developing a great chronological résumé:

1. Start with your present or most recent position and work backwards.
2. Keep your next job target in mind. The most effective résumés are clearly focused on a specific job title and address the employer's stated requirements for the position.
3. Provide detail on relevant positions for a work history of no more than 10 to 15 years.
4. Use month and year designations to indicate periods of employment. Greater detail can be given in the interview or on the job application.
5. With each position listed, emphasize the major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your full competence to do the job. Do not repeat details that are common to several positions. Once the most significant aspects of your work are defined, it is generally unnecessary to include lesser achievements.
6. Education should not be included in the work experience section. As a general rule, education should go at the top of the résumé if completed within the last five years; if you completed your education more than five years ago, include it at the bottom.
7. Recent graduates can list relevant classes along with a G.P.A. of 3.5 or higher in the education section.
8. If possible, consolidate your résumé onto one page; however, a two-page document is acceptable to most employers.



I got the job!
My new employer said my
résumé really stood out
from the others...
Thanks for the great tips!

The Employer's Bottom Line on Résumés

Sell yourself to the reader in the top half of the résumé.

- If there is an objective, it should be simply stated with a particular employment goal in mind.
- Your strongest skills and qualifications should be listed either at the top of the résumé in a skills summary, or in the first job description.
- The position titles and company names should be easy to see.
- Present the information using consistent format throughout the document (e.g., font type, text alignment, bullet type, etc.).

Keep the employer in mind when writing your résumé.

- Customize your résumé to the kind of job(s) you are seeking. If you are applying for different jobs, you will need several different versions of your résumé. Adapt each version for a specific job and its requirements.
- When listing qualifications in your résumé, emphasize your accomplishments and skills that match those listed in the employer's job specifications.

Emphasize your accomplishments.

- Make it easy for the employer to identify your accomplishments when reading your work history. Itemize them with bullets.
- Avoid long sentences. Use phrases with action verbs.

Make your résumé visually appealing.

- The résumé should look clean and professional.
- It should have adequate space between paragraphs, and there should not be too much information crammed onto one page.

Know what employers look for in a résumé.

- Does the candidate have the necessary and appropriate work experience?
- Is the candidate missing any critical training or job skills?
- Does the candidate have the required technical knowledge?
- Does the candidate have sufficient supervisory, management or leadership skills?
- Has the candidate demonstrated a proven track record of career growth with increasing levels of responsibility?

Ten Things to Avoid on Your Résumé

On average, employers spend less than a minute reviewing résumés. To give your résumé an edge, avoid the following mistakes:

1. **Your résumé must be error free.** Don't submit a résumé with spelling, typing, or grammatical errors. First impressions are crucial. An employer will assume that mistakes on a résumé are an indication of a carelessness. Proofread your résumé before it is printed and again before it is mailed!
2. **Don't write corrections or notes on your résumé.** Résumés should always be completely typed. A laser-printed copy is preferred.
3. **Don't forget about the cover letter!** Too many résumés are mailed without cover letters and end up on the wrong desk with no indication of the position being applied for. If you are submitting your résumé to more than one employer, make sure that the accompanying cover letter corresponds to the correct position and employer.
4. **Don't provide salary history and salary requirements.** If salary history is requested, it should be included in the cover letter or on the job application.
5. **Don't lie about your background or stretch the truth.** Hiring authorities will call your previous employers to verify your work experience. In addition, they may contact the colleges and universities referenced on your résumé to verify your degree(s).
6. **Don't include personal information such as ethnicity, age, weight, gender, or marital status.** Photos should also be excluded.
7. **Don't use the word "Résumé" for a title, or the phrase "References furnished upon request."** If an employer requires references, he/she will ask you to provide them.
8. **Don't staple or tape your résumé pages.** For mailing, use a large envelope if you wish to keep your résumé and cover letter flat, or a regular size (size 10) envelope, with neatly folded résumé and cover letter enclosed.
9. **Don't use your present employer's fax, e-mail, envelopes, or mail department to send your résumé.** *CTWorks* Career Centers offer these services free of charge, and local libraries have computers with access to the Internet. Office supply stores and some pharmacies offer faxing services for a fee. For a list of *CTWorks* Career Centers, go to the Connecticut Department of Labor's Web site at www.ct.gov/dol.
10. **Don't use a résumé that looks cluttered or lacks white space.** Remember that an employer will first glance at your résumé. If it is not neatly organized with information quickly available, it will probably not be read. Since a résumé is a quick reference for employers, it should not be more than two pages in length.

Action Words for Résumés

This list of action words is provided for reference in describing your achievements and work experience. Beginning each phrase with action words makes your performance active instead of passive.

Accommodated	Developed	Illustrated	Presented
Accounted	Devised	Implemented	Prevented
Achieved	Directed	Impressed	Processed
Acted	Dispatched	Initiated	Programmed
Advanced	Displayed	Inspected	Qualified
Advised	Distinguished	Inspired	Quoted
Analyzed	Documented	Instructed	Ranked
Arranged	Earned	Integrated	Received
Articulated	Elected	Interpreted	Reconciled
Ascertained	Eliminated	Invented	Reduced
Attended	Encouraged	Judged	Regulated
Automated	Enforced	Lectured	Repaired
Built	Engineered	Led	Represented
Calculated	Ensured	Licensed	Restored
Categorized	Enumerated	Limited	Scheduled
Caused	Equalized	Listened	Secured
Chaired	Estimated	Located	Seized
Clarified	Exchanged	Manufactured	Selected
Collaborated	Exhibited	Mapped	Simplified
Communicated	Explored	Mastered	Spearheaded
Conceived	Fashioned	Maximized	Steered
Concentrated	Figured	Measured	Streamlined
Contributed	Filed	Motivated	Supplied
Controlled	Finalized	Navigated	Supervised
Cooperated	Financed	Negotiated	Tailored
Counseled	Fine-tuned	Notified	Taught
Created	Focused	Observed	Tested
Customized	Followed	Ordered	Trained
Decided	Formulated	Organized	Translated
Decreased	Gathered	Packaged	Treated
Dedicated	Generated	Participated	Tutored
Delivered	Granted	Patterned	Updated
Designed	Guided	Persuaded	Upgraded
Determined	Hired	Predicted	Verified

Types of Résumés

The two most frequently used résumé formats are the Chronological and Functional. However, the Combination format is quickly gaining popularity among job seekers and employers.

Below is a brief outline of the main features of each:

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

The Chronological Résumé format is organized by job titles beginning with your most recent position, and lists up to 15 years of employment history.

It details your current or most recent job and highlights companies, job titles, dates, and achievements.

Advantages:

- Employers prefer this format since it can be easily reviewed and they are more familiar with this style
- Easy to organize employment history
- Emphasizes professional growth and company loyalty through length of time on any one job

Disadvantages:

- Shows employment gaps and "job hopping"
- Highlights job duties rather than job skills; therefore, it may undersell your assets

Use the Chronological Résumé if you:

- Have extensive qualifications which you've compiled over the years and can demonstrate a logical job history
- Have a recent work history or have been in one job for two or more years
- Are looking for a job similar to your current or previous job(s)

FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

The Functional Résumé format shows experience and accomplishments in accordance to the skills or functional areas they demonstrate.

It allows you to tailor information specifically to a desired job while eliminating irrelevant information. Chronology of work experience is not usually established.

Advantages:

- Allows you to control, mold, and develop the image you want to project
- Presents you as a strong, goal-oriented applicant accustomed to producing results
- Allows you to fully describe your skills and accomplishments
- Conceals any history of employment gaps or job hopping

Disadvantages:

- Many employers do not like this format and presume it is used to disguise a poor work history or lack of experience
- May conceal a stable work history

Use the Functional Résumé if you:

- Have short periods of employment or no work history
- Are changing careers
- Have been out of work for two or more years

COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

The Combination Résumé format is gaining popularity among job seekers and employers.

This type of résumé highlights an individual's skills, accomplishments, experiences, and qualifications needed for the occupation in the top part of the résumé, thus improving the chances for consideration.

Advantages:

- Effective for all career fields and skill levels. Employers can easily identify the candidate's qualifications
- A 'headline' statement at the top of the résumé includes the job title being applied for and related occupational skills
- The headline statement replaces the 'objective' statement which, in many cases, does not address the needs of the employer

Disadvantages:

- Interest is focused on one type of occupation, which may narrow the job search

Use the Combination Résumé if you:

- Are applying for a specific job or trade with essential skills
- Have extensive qualifications which you have compiled over the years, and that are applicable to the job of interest
- Are looking for a job similar to your current or previous job(s)

Chronological Résumé

Jack Brown
55 Tracey Drive
Enfield, CT 06082
(860) 555-5555
jbrown@abc.com

Objective: To obtain greater challenge and responsibility as Director of Services in an organization whose main goal is to improve children's lives and protect their welfare.

Summary of Qualifications

- Visionary counselor with over 15 years of experience working with children.
- Organized and presented career planning assemblies for over 250 students and parents.
- Pioneered and strengthened programs with dramatic results in high school dropout rates.
- Supervised and motivated a staff of seven to be solution-oriented.

Work Experience

1/00 - present

Director of Guidance Counseling, *Blue Leaf High School*, Enfield, CT

- Responsible for large student programs, budgeting, and overseeing a staff of seven while providing individual guidance counseling for students.
- Decreased the dropout rate by 10% through new programs coordinating students, counselors, parents, and teachers.
- Enabled students through education and peer groups to address physical and mental health concerns.

7/95 - 12/99

Guidance Counselor, *Eagle High School*, Tolland, CT

- Developed expertise in guiding students with education, career, and life choices.
- Mentored in "Proud Eagles" program to increase school pride and students' self-confidence.
- Organized student events including fund-raisers, class trips, and guest speakers.

9/91 - 9/93

Administrative Assistant, *Green Hill High School*, Oakdale, CT

6/92 - 9/92

Camp Counselor, *Helping Hand*, Red Rock, TN

- Planned activities and raised funds for a summer camp for underprivileged children.
- Raised \$2,500 to help fund this summer program for children aged 5-10 years.
- Learned facets of multi-cultural backgrounds.

Education

M.A. School Counseling, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT, 1995

B.A. Psychology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, 1993

Functional Résumé

G. Rosa Lee

Current Address

56 Blueberry Circle
Manchester, CT 06040
860-121-1212
lee@ls.edu

Permanent Address

1510 Sunshine Lane
Ellington, CT 06029
860-343-3434
rosa.lee@home.com

OBJECTIVE

To offer a health care facility my customer service, administrative, and communication skills.

EDUCATION

Manchester Community College
Manchester, CT
A.A. in Liberal Arts, expected May 2007
G.P.A. 3.6/4.0

Ellington High School
Ellington, CT
Diploma, June 2002
G.P.A. 3.5/4.0

EXPERIENCE

Customer Service

- Placed special orders for customers
- Prepared correspondence & presentations using PowerPoint and Excel software
- Handled routine and complex inquiries from customers and employees

Administration

- Organized and managed the office operations
- Maintained office budget and expenditures
- Performed basic accounting (accounts receivable) work

Communication

- General reception/customer service duties
- Answered telephone, responded to electronic (e-mail) inquiries
- Met and greeted customers

WORK HISTORY

- Receptionist, CAM Industries, Wallingford, CT
- Cashier, Jessica's Hardware, North Haven, CT

SPECIAL SKILLS

- Fluent in Spanish
- Proficient in WordPerfect, Word, and Excel computer applications
- Type 65 words per minute

Combination Résumé

Lynn T. Wyler
35 Gridleon Street
Bristol, CT 06010-6207

Home: 860- 555-5555
Cell: 860- 666-6666
ltwyler@yahoo.com

Diligent Team Player Offering Extensive Administrative & Customer Service Experience

PROFILE

Well-organized and proficient at multitasking and prioritizing. Detail-oriented, accurate and focused. Highly effective communication skills, verbal and written. Outstanding customer service aptitude. Excellent interpersonal skills having dealt with a broad diversity of populations. Easily establish rapport and trust. Troubleshooter adept at identifying problems and implementing solutions. Computer skills include Word, Excel and Internet savvy.

CORE SKILLS

Office Management
Word Processing
Marketing
Event Planning

Office Support
Order Processing
Writing
Proofreading

Customer Service
Supervising
Research
Communication

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Store Manager—Almost Famous (Watertown, CT) **1/05 to Present**
Manage all facets of daily operations for upscale retail apparel and accessories store with annual sales of \$2M.

- Oversee activities and efforts of 23 sales associates. Train staff in providing superior customer service.
- Establish and coordinate work and vacation schedules. Arrange coverage for absences.
- Orchestrate recruitment efforts including screening resumes/applications, interviewing and hiring personnel. Refer for termination. Conduct exit interviews.
- Evaluate staff and deliver constructive performance appraisals. Compensate employees based on corporate guidelines and policies.
- Maintain and monitor computer sales and inventory programs. E-mail weekly reports to District Manager.
- Coordinate creative merchandising efforts by adapting corporate-provided materials to customer demographics.
- Address and resolve problems with vendors and suppliers.

Customer Service Manager—Four Star Video (West Hartford, CT) **7/00 to 11/04**
Oversight of operations for independently-owned video rental store with average weekly revenues of \$22k.

- Supervised and assisted 12 Service Representatives in establishing memberships, processing rentals, arranging merchandise and dealing with customer service issues.
- Trained staff to provide courteous and efficient service.
- Handled recruiting functions including reviewing applications, conducting on-site interviews, hiring and performance reviews. Counseled, disciplined and terminated staff in appropriate instances.
- Maintained, monitored and updated sales and inventory records on customized software program.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Management — University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

American Red Cross
Blood Drive Volunteer

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Fundraiser Volunteer

Chamber of Commerce—Northwest CT
Member

Scannable and Electronic Résumés

Many companies use scanners, e-mail, and Internet recruitment to build an electronic résumé library for their hiring needs. The traditional résumé, even from the most perfect candidate, may be lost if it is not redesigned for the computer's eye.

Keywords are more important in scannable and online résumés because computers often rank an application according to the number of keyword matches. For example, an administrative assistant position might look for "typing score," "WordPerfect," and "Excel." The more times a match is found, the better a résumé ranks.

Contact the company to see if scanners are used and if they require special fonts, paper, or styles of type. When sending a résumé via email, it is important to copy and paste your résumé into the message because an employer may not have the appropriate software to open a document as an attached file.

Follow the general guidelines below to make your résumé technology friendly:

- Post your résumé online before you see an appropriate job opening. Often employers begin reviewing résumés as soon as there is an open position, and if they find an appropriate match, they may never post the opening.
- Check to see how often résumés are purged from the system. Typically, résumés are removed after six months and you might want to re-send yours to remain a candidate for employment.
- Always place your name as the first item at the top of the page since the scanner assumes that the first line is the applicant's name. Your name and phone number should be on separate lines.
- Provide a laser-printed original if possible. Scanners cannot read a faxed résumé. If you fax a résumé, be sure to also mail a hard copy. Use white or light-colored 8.5" x 11" paper, printed on one side only. Do not fold or staple the résumé.
- Use font size 10 to 14 points (avoid Times New Roman—10 point). Standard serif and sans serif fonts (e.g., Helvetica, Arial, Times New Roman, Courier) transmit best. Avoid font types where the characters touch. Make sure the character spacing between each letter is set at 'normal' not 'condensed.'
- No line should exceed 65 characters. End each line by hitting the enter key - automatic word wrapping will create long lines that may not be readable. Left justify the entire document.
- *Italics*, **boldface**, underlined, and **reverse** type cause problems for scanners, especially if combined.
- Use CAPITAL LETTERS for emphasis, or set off words with asterisks (*). When using asterisks, there should be a space between the asterisk and the text.
- Avoid bullets and other symbols, vertical or horizontal lines, graphics, shading, or shadowing as these formats are generally not suitable for electronic transmission.

Sample: Scannable and Electronic Résumé

Gerald White
123 Sesame Street
Happyton, CT 06074
860-555-5555
gwhite@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE

Seeking advanced challenge and responsibility to employ my management and communication skills as a training manager within an international pharmaceutical firm.

KEYWORD SUMMARY

Proficient in Excel and Access, willing to travel globally, advanced verbal and written communication skills, seven years of management and training experience.

EXPERIENCE

Statewide Manager, Feel Good Pharmacy, 1/03 - present

- * Utilized Access and Excel software to organize employees' records
- * Traveled to local stores for in-house training of new managers
- * Created written materials, including handbooks and reference guides

Store Manager, Quickease Pharmacy, 1/97 - 12/02

- * Increased sales by 25% in first year of management
- * Managed and scheduled a staff of fifteen employees

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

American Red Cross volunteer, 7/98 – present

Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteer, 6/96 - present

EDUCATION

B.A. in Business Management, Central Connecticut State University

A.A. in Business Management, Manchester Community College

Your Cover Letter

The cover letter introduces you to the prospective employer and should always be included when you mail your résumé. It should be unique and express your interest in both the company and the position for which you are applying. Never write a form letter to be duplicated and mailed. Address the cover letter to a specific person.

As with your résumé, do not cram a lot of information on a page. The recommended margin length is one inch or greater. Your cover letter and résumé should have the same font type and paper style. Do not fold or staple the cover letter with the résumé.

Don't forget to proofread! Mistakes on a résumé or cover letter are inexcusable.

Keep a copy of all correspondence you send and receive during your job search for reference in follow-up conversations and interviews. **Salary information should only be provided upon request.**

Your mailing address

Your phone number, including area code

Date letter is mailed

First/Last Name

Title of person you are applying to

Company Name

Mailing Address

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. Last Name: (If the person has a unisex first name, use his or her full name. For women, use "Ms." unless you know they use the prefix Mrs.)

First Paragraph: In your initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and indicate from which resource (placement center, news media, friend, employment service) you learned of the opening. Your first sentence should catch the reader's attention and reflect your interest in the company.

Second Paragraph: Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services—above all, clearly state what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you had some practical work experience, point out your specific achievements or unique qualifications. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in your résumé.

Final Paragraph: In the closing paragraph, refer the reader to the enclosed résumé or application, which summarizes your qualifications, training, and experiences. Indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. If the job announcement requests no phone calls, repeat your phone number in the letter. If no such request is made, state that you will call on a certain date to set up an interview.

Sincerely yours,

(Your Signature)

Your typed name

(Enclosure)

42 Blossom Drive
Wethersfield, CT 06109
(860) 555-5555

December 12, 2006

Chris Thompson
Editor
American Literature Monthly
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chris Thompson:

I understand that American Literature Monthly has nearly doubled its circulation in the past ten months. It is wonderful to know more people are exploring American Literature and broadening their horizons. I hope that I can be part of this phenomenal growth by filling the Assistant Writer position advertised in the Hartford Gazette.

I have recently graduated from Southern Connecticut State University, where I focused on American Literature. While attending, I had the good fortune to work as an intern for Name First, an advertising firm servicing local businesses. Utilizing my writing and computer skills, I created a variety of promotional materials and press releases to suit individual company needs.

My knowledge of American Literature, along with my writing and marketing skills, would be an asset to American Literature Monthly. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss some of my ideas on the subject. Enclosed is my résumé for your review and I will telephone you on December 19th to set up a meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Smith

Jennifer Smith

(Enclosure)

Tips for Great Cover Letters

Next to your résumé, your cover letter is the best way to sell yourself on paper. It allows your personality to come through and identifies the benefits of hiring you.

It should always accompany your résumé or job application. Follow these tips for writing effective cover letters:

1. Always include important information.

Your name, address and telephone number (including area code) should be easily visible on every cover letter you submit. The reader will need this when trying to contact you. In the first few sentences of your letter, identify the specific job for which you are applying.

2. Make it personal - address your letter to a specific person within the company.

If possible, call for a contact name. “To whom it may concern” and “Dear Sir/Madam” letters are not read as often as those addressed to a specific person.

3. Make the opening sentence charismatic.

When employers read letters, they scan them for content. Attention-grabbing first sentences (ones that describe why you’re the best person for the job or that address the employer’s needs) will be more likely to persuade the reader to continue reading.

4. Each letter you mail should be unique.

There’s no such thing as a ‘one size fits all’ cover letter. Each job and company for which you apply is different. Express interest and awareness about the company. Having specific knowledge about their products and services is sure to impress an employer. Local newspapers, business magazines, trade journals, and the company’s website are excellent sources of information.

5. Describe your skills as they relate to the job.

Saying you worked for a company in a job does not mean the reader will make the connection between you, your previous job, and the job in question. Relate your experience, training, and accomplishments to show that you have the skills to successfully perform the job.

6. Always type and proofread your cover letter before sending it.

Cover letters must be professional; mistakes are simply unacceptable. Errors may negatively affect the employer’s judgment of you. If your letter is neat and professional, the employer is more likely to believe that you are too.

7. Be brief and use action words to describe your accomplishments.

Some employers receive many cover letters and résumés daily, so they want to know as much about you as possible without having to read a lot.

8. Always keep a copy of every cover letter you send.

Maintaining copies of past letters will make your job search and follow-up go smoothly.

9. Always request a response or an interview.

Your goal is to obtain an interview, so explain that you will call on a specific date (usually seven to ten business days after the mailing) in order to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.

10. Be sure to sign your letter.

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