

## AP Spanish Language and Culture

### Proyecto Final: Portafolio de Preparación Profesional

Para este proyecto final van a crear un portafolio profesional que contendrá cinco piezas: una carta de introducción, curriculum vitae y tres cartas de recomendación. Tendrán que elegir una carrera en que solicitarán el puesto de trabajo.

#### Puestos posibles:

- Ingeniería – Ingeniero mecánico automotriz
- Comunicación- Reportero de Univisión
- Marketing- Director de Marketing en un hotel de 4 estrellas
- Docencia -Profesor de una escuela secundaria

También, habrá una entrevista que será el examen final del curso.

#### El portafolio contendrá lo siguiente:

- Una carta de introducción (Letter of introduction/cover letter)
- Un curriculum vitae (Resumé) y Pagina de referencias (Reference Page)
- Tres cartas de recomendación escrita para ustedes por un compañero. (Letter of recommendation)

#### Los pasos:

1. Elegir uno de los puestos posibles e investigar sobre las tareas y responsabilidades del oficio.
2. Leer el paquete "The Top Pitfalls in Resume Writing"
3. Escribir el curriculum vitae (borrador+revisión)
4. Escribir carta de introducción (borrador+revisión)
5. Escribir la página de referencia
6. Pedir a tres compañero escribir una carta de recomendación. (3 cartas en total)
7. Revisar, perfeccionar e imprimir el portafolio
8. Vestirse profesionalmente para la entrevista
9. Practicar preguntas posibles con un compañero
10. Entrevistar

<b>6 borradores</b>	120 pts
<b>6 ediciones finales</b>	60 pts
<b>Portafolio Final</b>	100 pts (Proyectos)
<i>6 piezas</i>	
<i>Presentación del proyecto</i>	
<b>Entrevista (Interview)</b>	100 pts (Examen final)

**Puntos Posibles 380 = \_\_\_\_\_**



# The Top Ten Pitfalls in Resume Writing

- 1. Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to one page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from a technical or business writer or a career center professional.
- 2. Typographical, grammatical or spelling errors.** These errors suggest carelessness, poor education and/or lack of intelligence. Have at least two others proofread it before submitting. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.
- 3. Hard to read.** A poorly typed or copied resume looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a 12-point font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional's opinion.
- 4. Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. *A, an* and *the* can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
- 5. Too sparse.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.
- 6. Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience; but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
- 7. Obviously generic.** Too many resumes scream, "I need a job—any job!" The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.
- 8. Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.
- 9. Boring.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
- 10. Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

## The Three Rs

The three Rs of resume writing are **Research, Research, Research**. You must know what the prospective company does, what the position involves and whether you will be a fit, before submitting your resume. And that means doing research—about the company, about the position and about the type of employee the company typically hires.

**Research the company.** Read whatever literature the company has placed in the career library. For additional information, call the company. Ask for any literature it may have, find out how the company is structured, and ask what qualities the company generally looks for in its employees. Ask if there are openings in your area, and find out the name of the department head and give him or her a call. Explain that you are considering applying to their company, and ask for their recommendation for next steps. Thank that person for the information, and ask to whom your resume should be directed.

The internet is another key tool to utilize in your research. Most companies have Web sites that include information regarding company background, community involvement, special events, executive bios or even past annual reports. Be sure to take advantage of the World Wide Web during your job search.

**Research the position.** The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself and to

target your resume to that position. If possible, interview someone who does that same job. In addition to finding out the duties, ask if there is on-the-job training, whether they value education over experience (or vice versa) and what kind of turnover the department experiences. Ask what they like about the position and the company; more important, ask what they don't like about it.

**Finally, research yourself.** Your goal is not just to get a job. Your goal is to get a job that you will enjoy. After you find out all you can about the company and the position, ask yourself honestly whether this is what you really want to do and where you really want to be. The odds are overwhelming that you will not hold this position for more than two or three years, so it's not a lifetime commitment; however, this first job will be the base of your lifetime career. You must start successfully so that future recommendations will always be positive. Furthermore, three years is a long time to spend doing something you don't like, working in a position that isn't challenging or living somewhere you don't want to live.

One last word of advice: Before you go to the interview, review the version of your resume that you submitted to this employer. The resume can only get you the interview; the interview gets you the job.

# Writing Resumes and Employment Letters

## RESUME GUIDE

### General Rules

- Your resume should be one page in length. Use two pages only if you have extensive, relevant experience.
- Be sure it is concise, grammatically correct, and perfectly spelled. Have someone else edit it for you.
- Avoid personal pronouns or complete sentences.
- Laser print your resume on good, light-colored paper so it will copy and fax well.
- Organize your resume so it is clear, visually pleasing, and easy to read. Limit the number of graphics and colors.
- The body of your resume should be in 10, 11, or 12 point font; your name in 16-24 point font; and section headings in 10-14 point font.

### Resume Example

**Rosalie B. Goode**  
 224 Mission Street • Chico, CA 95928 • (530) 555-1212  
 384 Crenshaw Road • Santa Rita, CA 90208 • (213) 242-8040  
 rbg123@hotmail.com

**Education** California State University, Chico  
 ■ Master of Arts in **Recreational Administration**, May 20xx  
 ■ Bachelor of Arts in **History**, 2009

**Computer Literacy:** WordPerfect, Microsoft Works, Excel, SPSS, Lexis/Nexis, Internet

**Relevant Experience**  
**Grant Writer/Logistics**, American Red Cross, Santa Rita, CA 9/xx - 8/xx  
 Researched sources and wrote grants for various programs. Coordinated volunteer recruitment, training, and assignment in disaster and routine situations. Procured and distributed supplies during disaster and routine situations.

**Interpreter/Educational Aide**, Sutter County Schools, Marysville, CA 6/xx - 6/xx  
 Familiarized teachers and administration with the legal requirements and procedures necessary to establish a successful mainstream program. Assisted in developing positive relations between county and district employees. Interpreted (sign language, ASL, SEE) for communicative handicapped students in mainstream classes (physics, biology, trigonometry, etc.). Assisted with educational programs and the modification of materials presented in the mainstream classrooms.

**Waitress/Hostess**, M.J.'s Restaurant, Chico, CA 2/xx - 4/xx  
 Provided quality customer service in a high-pressure environment. Developed skills in communicating with people from various cultures, ages, and ethnicities. Worked cooperatively with other staff to quickly seat and serve customers. Developed excellent memory and multi-tasking skills.

**Management/Public Relations**, Biggs Opportunity Center, Biggs, CA 8/xx - 12/xx  
 Developed and implemented the Community Awareness Program for the region. This program assisted in establishing positive public relations with members of the community and the center. Recruited and trained volunteers. Successfully raised money to aid in the financial support of the Center by contacting and working with members of the business community.

**Community** Shelter Manager, Red Cross of Sutter County, Winter, 20xx - xx  
 Secured food, clothing, and beds for hundreds of people. Made decisions easily in high-stress situations.

**Activities** Leader, 4-H Club, Glenn & Kern Counties - Taught cooking and animal care  
 Member, women's softball team, Chico, CA 20xx - xx

**Callout Boxes:**  
 - Top left: Use a 16-24 point type for your name and 10-12 point for the body.  
 - Top right: Your phone number and email may be the most important parts of your address.  
 - Middle left: Most recent degree goes first. You only need to list schools from which you received a degree.  
 - Middle left: Keep the focus on your accomplishments. Bolding certain words will help.  
 - Middle left: Describe your jobs using words that show your skills. Skills are transferable; duties are not. Use strong verbs and few adjectives.  
 - Middle right: List programs you have used to show you can learn new ones.  
 - Middle right: Put jobs in date order starting with the most recent. Put relevant jobs first if you have worked more than four jobs.  
 - Bottom right: Listing extra-curricular activities shows you are well-rounded and have ways of coping with stress.

## Recommended Format

- 1. Name:** This is the first thing you put on your resume. It should be larger than the type on other parts of your resume, but not so large that it totally dominates your resume: 16-24 point type is usually a good bet.
- 2. Address/Phone Number:** It is a good idea to list both your local and permanent addresses and telephone numbers (Do not forget area and zip codes!). Interviewers will call you once or twice and, if they cannot locate you, will call the next person on their list. Also include your fax number, e-mail, and web page addresses if you have them.
- 3. Career Objective:** This is an optional item. Some employers like this; most do not care. If you decide to list an objective, be sure it is specific to the job and industry for which you are applying. At a minimum, your objective should state the job title(s) in which you are interested. If you are considering more than one career field, omit the objective from your resume.  
**Example: Objective:** A position in career counseling for a public or private agency specializing in adult outplacement.  
(Note: If you are this specific, you may miss out on other possibilities you would enjoy. But if you know exactly what you want, say it.)
- 4. Education:** List your most recent degree first. You do not need to list all the colleges you attended—just those where you received a degree, had a different major, or attended in a particular city where you want to obtain a career. **List your degree, major, minor, date achieved, institution name, city, and state and your GPA if it is fairly high.**

**Example:** Bachelor of Science in Biological Science  
Emphasis: Ecology, May 20xx  
California State University, Chico 2.95 GPA

You may also want to add:

- any **certificates or licensing** you have received. If so, use the same format as you used for your degree.
  - **fluency in a second language.**
  - **computer and/or technical skills.** If the list is extensive, use a separate heading for them.
  - **your relevant course work and class projects.** If you do, keep the lists short, but make sure they highlight important skills and training.
- 5. Experience:** This section should include (1) work experience related to your career, (2) internships or volunteer work related to your career field, and (3) other supportive work experience. List your job title first, then your employer name, city, and state. The date may follow at this point or follow your description of the experience.

**Example:** Sales Clerk, Sears, Chico, CA May 20xx-August 20xx.

In your description of your jobs, focus on the skills you acquired in the performance of your duties unless you have professional-level experience in the field. The skills you acquired are transferable to other occupations; your duties usually are not. Focus on accomplishments and results, using numbers whenever possible. Use action verbs, key words, and short phrases.

**Example:** Promoted customer relations through friendly and efficient service.

To assist you with this area, we have prepared another publication, the **Resume Assessment Form**, so you can evaluate your experiences in terms of transferable skills.

- 6. Activities/Honors:** Use this section to show your extracurricular activities such as membership in clubs, fraternities/sororities, professional associations, and other organizations. You may also use this section to list your academic honors and scholarships, prizes you have won for athletics, hobbies, academics, or work you have published. As in a job, list your title first.

**Example: Member, California Engineering Society, 20xx-xx**  
**Recipient, R.U.R. Technical Innovation Scholarship, 20xx.**

If you have held an office with extensive duties, you may want to include that office and duties in the experience section. Avoid adding personal data to your resume such as height, weight, physical condition, etc. These may prejudice a hiring officer or committee against you. For this reason, think before you add extensive activities involving religion, politics, or sexual orientation.

- 7. References: Do not put your references on your resume.** At most, simply indicate that references are available on request. Develop a separate form for references that you can supply to the employer at the time of the interview. Include at least three (and no more than five) references. These references should be your employers, faculty, co-workers, or even family friends who will give you a positive recommendation. Check with each one before including on your form. For each, list name, title, place of employment (if applicable), address (of business or home), telephone number, e-mail address and relationship to you.
- 8. Remember, your resume reflects you, so be sure you are happy with the final product.** There are many ways to format a resume. You can see several examples of resumes in our office, in this booklet, and on our web site. We will help you with your resume and other job-related matters. Good luck!

## COVER LETTERS

### General Rules

- Use either a standard or block format. The block format is easier because all text begins at the left margin. (See the example.)
- Single-space your letter and double-space between paragraphs.
- Keep your paragraphs brief and relevant.
- Laser-print your letter on good quality bond paper.
- Tailor your letter to the position and company. You are selling yourself, so show how your qualifications match the job duties and company goals.
- Proofread your letter carefully. Misspellings and grammatical errors suggest that you are slipshod.

### Addressing the Letter

Usually you will start with your address. Some people like to use the same letterhead and print style they use on their resumes. That is perfectly acceptable. In this case, your name will be first. After your address, space down at least two lines and enter the date. Space down two more lines and type the name of the person to whom you are addressing your letter. You can type the person's title on the same line or on the line below. On the next line, type the company name, followed by the address on the next two or three lines.

Begin your salutation with Dear Mr. or Ms., followed by the person's name and a colon. **Example: Dear Ms. Krebs:** Be sure to confirm the name and gender of the addressee before you start. If you absolutely cannot find the name of the recruiter, personnel director, or director, use the person's title as a salutation. **Example: Dear Human Resource Manager:**

### Grab Their Attention With Your Opening Paragraph

Employers receive hundreds of resumes for each position. You want your resume to stand out, so start with an exciting opening. Following are a few examples of openings that are effective and interesting.

- ✓ **1. Name drop.** Mention someone the employer knows and respects as a reference to the position.

**Example:** Laurel Flower, who supervised my work as an intern with your company, recommended that I apply to you for the position of assistant sales manager.

**Example:** One of my friends, Mark Star, works for your organization. He recommended that I write you about a position as a management trainee. He really enjoys his work and, from his description of company management philosophy, I am sure I would, too.

- ✓2. **State your career objective and/or relevant training and experience.** This is a simple, direct approach that appeals to many employers because it matches you to the position immediately.

**Example:** I am a computer science graduate with extensive training in networks and graphics. I am looking for a professional position with your company because of your excellent reputation and career opportunities in my fields of interest.

- ✓3. **Refer to company or career research you have done.** Companies like to know that you have "done your homework." The more you know about a company and the careers it offers, the better you can match your qualifications to the employer's position. They will be flattered and you will increase your chances of getting an interview.

**Example:** I read the April 6th issue of the *Wall Street Journal* with great interest. The article "Future Directions of Ten Corporations" mentioned that your company is looking for college graduates with marketing backgrounds who are bilingual in Vietnamese and English for your new office in Saigon. I believe my qualifications will interest you.

- ✓4. **Refer to the content of the employer's ad.** Mention the position for which you are applying and link the position requirements to your own skills and qualifications.

**Example:** When I read your ad in the *Daily News* for a civil engineer, I almost believed you had written it for me. I have three years' experience, etc.

Avoid referring exclusively to the name of publication and date.

**Example:** I am responding to your ad in the *Searchlight* on May 25, 20xx, for a civil engineer.

Employers usually know which ad you are responding to because of address codes. Besides, it is a boring opening and you are trying to grab their attention.

- ✓5. **Ask a question.** Starting with a question that relates your qualifications to the position or has the potential to solve a problem compels the reader to continue. This is a bold opening strategy for risk-takers but it can backfire if you do not get it right.

**Example:** Are you looking for an individual who has set sales records for two different companies and has reorganized an ad campaign to reach thousands more customers?

**Example:** How much are rising production costs affecting your bottom line?

## Flesh Out the Middle

Develop your opening theme in this section. This is the place for you to discuss your qualifications and skills, giving examples from past work experience to illustrate your strong points.

Employers consider achievements to be indicators of future success, so do not be modest about yours. Show how your experience and achievements match the position requirements or company goals. The better job you do at matching yourself to the position, the more likely you are to get an interview.

**Example:** While I was the fundraising chair for my fraternity, I planned the campaign; researched and identified possible donors; and organized phone solicitation efforts, visits to potential donors, and several one-day events. As a result, we raised \$50,000 — a 200% increase over the prior year. To be successful, I trained teams in solicitation techniques, acted as mediator when tempers became frayed, and recruited committees who worked together to anticipate and resolve difficulties before they became crises.

## An Action Close

Your closing paragraph or sentence should encourage action. Offer one of two choices: either you call me or I will call you. Whenever possible, take a proactive stance and write that you will call to arrange a time to meet and then do it.

If you have not already said in another part of your letter that you believe your skills and qualifications will be an asset to the company, now is the time.

**Example:** I believe that my sales skills, organizational abilities, and technical expertise will benefit your company. I will call you in a week to arrange a mutually convenient time for us to meet. Or you can reach me at (phone number). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Finally, thank the employer for taking the time to read and consider your letter.

## Cover Letter Example for Job Inquiry

**Garrett S. Benjamin**

555 Rio Chico Ave., Chico, CA 95926-5500  
(530) 555-2000  
gsbenjamin@aol.com

March 7, 20xx

Hewlett Packard  
1501 Page Mill Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Dear College Recruiter:

In December, I will be graduating with a degree in Computer Engineering from California State University, Chico. I have learned a lot and acquired many skills during my academic career. After applying myself to achieve this goal, I am very anxious to join a team and significantly contribute to the design and the development of high-quality, technological projects.

As a Computer Engineer, I am interested in hardware and software design. I consider myself a strong C/C++ programmer and I am very familiar with the UNIX operating system. I have a strong background in computer science, built upon ample exposure to programming since high school. I chose computer engineering to challenge myself while integrating my skills in computer science. The hardware knowledge I have obtained from the engineering discipline has not only increased my understanding of computer systems, but has enriched my programming expertise. Ideally, I look forward to participating in projects that will challenge my software and hardware abilities.

This past summer, during my internship at Amdahl, I had the wonderful opportunity to experience a professional environment where hundreds of people dedicated themselves to the success of a large project. It was exciting to observe and to experience with other engineers the cooperation, frustration, and camaraderie necessary to make an idea become reality.

On a final note, I am a responsible and reliable self-starter. I enjoy working in a fast-paced team-oriented environment where new and exciting challenges test my abilities. I am confident that I can be a significant asset to any technical project in my field of study if given the opportunity to prove myself.

I look forward to talking with you, and can be reached by phone at (530) 555-2000 or e-mail at [gsbenjamin@aol.com](mailto:gsbenjamin@aol.com). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Garrett S. Benjamin

## Final Words

End your letter with "Sincerely" followed by a comma. Type your name four spaces below that so you have enough room to write your signature. **A word to the wise:** The biggest mistake applicants make is to focus on their own needs with little regard to what the company wants or needs. Write and review your letter with this in mind. For more examples of cover letters, market broadcast letters, and thank-you letters, ask to see our booklet called the *Cover Letter Guide*.

## Interview Thank-You Letter

- You should write a thank-you letter or card to each person who interviews you within three days of the interview.
- You should type it if your handwriting is hard to read.
- Refer to the interview date and company.
- Express your interest based on information you received.
- State why you are confident you will perform the job well.
- Thank the interviewer for the time and consideration (s)he gave you.
- Let your personality speak through your words.

## Letter Seeking Additional Information

You can send this before an interview to obtain more information about the company or position or after the interview to obtain

answers to questions you still have. Whether you write a letter or call the company, do not accept a position unless all aspects of the offer are clear.

- Refer to your last communication with the company.
- Express interest in the position.
- Ask for information you need. Be specific and confident.
- Express gratitude and appreciation for the consideration they are giving you.

## Letter of Acceptance

Most employers require that you accept the position in writing. Even if they have a form for you to sign, it is usually a good idea to send your own note of acceptance.

- Refer to the offer letter or phone call.
- Accept the offer.
- Reiterate the details of the offer as you understand them.
- Indicate your date of arrival and if there is anything you need for the transition.
- Express your pleasure at joining the organization.

## Letter Declining an Offer

Most offers are accepted or declined over the phone, but it is still courteous to write and express your appreciation for the offer and your regret that you are unable to accept the offer.

# Self-Assessment

**T**he toughest part about career planning is getting started. Once you begin this undertaking, however, you will learn more about yourself and the world around you—and many of you will enjoy the experience. You are the best person to determine the course of your career. You can begin by taking time to assess your skills and interests, and clarify what's most important to you in a career.

## Identify Skills

Careers are often differentiated by the use of different skills. It would be useful for you to develop a skills list to help you determine the best careers for you. An activity that might get you started in identifying your skills is to review the following list of skills or active verbs. You should circle the 10 to 15 skills that you feel you would enjoy using in your professional employment.

## Transferable Skills

### Information Management

account  
adapt  
analyze  
assess  
attend to detail  
categorize  
collaborate  
communicate  
consult  
contribute  
critique  
design  
examine  
explain  
identify  
implement  
operate  
organize  
plan  
prepare  
prioritize  
reason  
reorganize  
review  
schedule  
simplify  
sort  
summarize  
tabulate

### Organization Management

administrate  
analyze  
apply policies  
apply theory  
assign  
assume responsibility  
budget  
clarify  
coordinate  
delegate  
demonstrate  
diagnose  
discriminate  
empower  
evaluate  
expedite  
give directions  
innovate  
interpret policies  
interview  
leadership  
make decisions  
meet deadlines  
motivate  
recommend  
set priorities  
solve problems  
supervise  
time management

### Investigation & Research

analyze data  
calculate  
classify  
collect  
compare  
define  
detect  
diagnose  
evaluate  
examine  
experiment  
gather information  
interpret  
invent  
modify  
observe  
organize  
prioritize  
record  
research  
review  
simplify  
survey  
synthesize  
systematize  
tabulate  
theorize  
think critically  
validate

### Communication & Persuasion

advise  
advocate  
assess  
clarify  
collaborate  
communicate  
contribute  
counsel  
define  
demonstrate  
discuss  
edit  
encourage  
explain  
influence  
initiate  
interview  
listen  
motivate  
negotiate  
perform/present  
persuade  
promote  
recommend  
sell  
summarize  
train/teach  
translate  
write

### Creative / Design & Planning

act  
analyze  
anticipate problems  
cartoon  
compose  
conceptualize  
create  
dance  
demonstrate  
design  
design programs  
develop  
draw  
examine  
express  
inspire  
interpret  
invent  
observe  
paint  
perceive  
plan  
play music  
recruit new ideas  
screen  
sculpt  
sing  
sketch  
visualize

## Personality Characteristics: Adaptive Skills

accountable  
adaptable  
adventurous  
alert  
ambitious  
analytic  
assertive  
astute  
aware  
calm

candid  
composed  
cooperative  
courageous  
creative  
curious  
decisive  
dependable  
diligent  
diplomatic

dynamic  
energetic  
enthusiastic  
ethical  
flexible  
friendly  
generous  
genuine  
goal-oriented  
honest

humorous  
independent  
intelligent  
leader  
logical  
loyal  
mature  
mechanical  
open-minded  
optimistic

organized  
original  
patient  
persistent  
persuasive  
poised  
positive  
precise  
principled  
proactive

professional  
punctual  
resourceful  
responsible  
self-confident  
self-motivated  
sensible  
stable  
trainable  
tolerant



# Sample Resumes

## Emma Fernandez

249 West 3rd Avenue • Chico, CA 95926 • (530) 898-8406 • emmafernandez@yahoo.com

### Education

California State University, Chico  
 Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, May 2009  
 Emphasis: Health Services Administration  
 Certificate: Emergency Medical Services Administration

### Health Services Experience

Butte County Behavioral Health  
 Health Services Administration Intern  
 Chico, CA  
 January 2009-May 2009

- Assessed client needs in private and group settings
- Coordinated meetings with clients and personnel in a legal environment, such as probation hearings
- Provided a comforting environment for dual diagnosis clients through each phase of the program

Health Services Department, CSU Research Foundation  
 Research Assistant  
 Chico, CA  
 February 2009-February 2009

- Utilized research and writing skills to build abstracts for an article database
- Acquired knowledge of the processes and procedures of implementing a Level II trauma center
- Demonstrated the ability to work quickly and accurately under a deadline

Sunset Retirement Community  
 Dining Room Server  
 Ukiah, CA  
 May 2006-September 2008

- Provided a comfortable environment for residents during meals and social events
- Demonstrated the ability to handle difficult situations and make accurate decisions to better accommodate the residents
- Provided outstanding customer service to residents needing extra assistance

### Management/Customer Service Experience

Ac Hardware  
 Office Manager  
 Chico, CA  
 May 2004-October 2005

- Managed accounts receivable of customer accounts on a daily basis
- Demonstrated the ability to multi-task efficiently in a fast-paced customer service environment
- Trained and supervised employees on registers and how to handle customer accounts

Newmas Center  
 Student Leader/Choir Leader  
 Chico, CA  
 August 2003-September 2004

- Provided a cheerful environment for the congregation
- Led an enthusiastic and highly praised choir of four people
- Demonstrated positive "team-player" skills at events

Johnny Rockets, Inc.  
 Waiter/Entertainer  
 Irvine, CA and Costa Mesa, CA  
 February 2000-March 2002

- Earned a 100% on a secret shopper survey for providing excellent customer service
- Contributed to the 194th atmosphere by performing for customers (singing and dancing with ketchup bottles)
- Collaborated with corporate personnel to achieve sales and operational goals
- Demonstrated flexibility by rotating between three locations to accommodate corporate needs

### Activities

President, CSU Chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives  
 Hospitality Chair, CSU Chapter, Up 51, Dawn with St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital

## Kasey D. Wheel

222 W. 7th Street, Chico, CA 95928 • (530) 231.1212 • 621 Vallejo Place, Carrizo, CA 94070 • (707) 321-1222  
 kdwheel@gmail.com;csu@csu.edu

### EDUCATION:

California State University, Chico  
 Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering - May 2009  
 Certified EIT

### PROJECTS:

**Sun Tracking Solar Array:** Designed LED light sensors to track the sun on a daily axis, motorized control of seasonal axis, and performed structural design of working components. Performed COSMOS stress analysis testing on working components. Collaborated with county officials to gain final approval of the solar array.

**Hazmat Powered Vehicle Project:** Collaborated on identifying funding for the 2005 ASME HPV competition. Contributed to organization of the 2004 ASME HPV competition hosted in Chico. Competed as a female rider in the 2004 and 2005 competitions.

### COMPUTER SKILLS:

Operating Systems: Windows (98/2000 Pro/XP Pro), UNIX, Linux  
 Applications: Microsoft Office, OpenOffice, Visto, Visual Studio.NET, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Photoshop

### EXPERIENCE:

**Grader**  
 Mechanical Engineering Department, CSU, Chico (August 2007 - December 2008)  
 Selected by faculty to work as a grader for thermodynamics class of junior level Mechanical and Civil Engineering students. Course focused on properties of substances, heat and work, laws of thermodynamics, analysis of closed and open systems, entropy, gas and vapor power cycles, refrigeration, and psychrometrics.

**Engineering Analyst**  
 Durdon Engineering, Chico, CA (August 2006 - November 2007)  
 Performed heat transfer and fluid dynamics engineering and software analysis. Analyzed a low cost micro channel reformer for production of natural gas.

**Equipment Technician**  
 ScanLix, Milpitas, CA (June 2002 to August 2004, June 2005 to August 2006)  
 Tested and validated equipment for production. Collaborated on the design of efficient method for cooling a visual light inspection table and the maintenance of production machines. Designed a strip bender for testing durability of a variety of strips.

### ACTIVITIES:

Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Treasurer (2008/2009), Secretary (2006/2007)  
 American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), member  
 Tau Beta Pi, member  
 Phi Eta Sigma, member

# Sample Resumes

**Eric Miley**  
emiley@mail.csuchico.edu

**Local Address:**  
420 Ebert 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. #6  
Chico, CA 95926  
(530)964-3243

**Permanent Address:**  
3456 Meads Way  
Yreka, CA 96097  
(530)842-3456

**Education:**  
California State University, Chico  
Masters of Public Administration  
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

Study Abroad: Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica  
Coursework emphasis: City Management

**Work Experience:**  
Fine Jewelry Sales Associate  
Gotschalk's, Chico, CA

- Achieved the ranking of #1 sales associate for 2005, out of 11 employees, for selling 22% of total department sales.
- Communicated between various vendors to promptly receive merchandise and deliver to customers.
- Maintained open communication between customers and managers to improve the quality of customer service.

**Fundraising Internship**

United Way of Butte and Glenn Counties, Chico, CA

- Made cold calls to potential donors and set up meetings with local non-profits, providing education about the United Way's mission.
- Created a database on MS Excel to track donors and donations.
- Established donation goals based on total donations received in prior years and communicated new goals to management.
- Facilitated fundraising opportunities to secure funds throughout the fiscal year.

**Swim Instructor Supervisor/Lifeguard**

Paradise Parks and Recreation District, Paradise, CA 2003-2004

- Coordinated programs with staff members and swim teams.
- Generated staff and work schedules to maximize facility use and revenue.
- Acted as liaison between pool staff and patrons, demonstrating ability to manage and communicate with a diverse population.
- Implemented and enforced safety procedures and conducted a wide variety of staff trainings to ensure public and employee safety.

**Senior Counselor**

Boys and Girls Club of the North Valley, Paradise, CA February-August 2003

- Communicated with board members to maximize fundraising efforts.
- Recruited new members on a weekly basis by creating ads for local newspapers
- Organized and supervised activities and delegated implementation to staff.
- Created and maintained membership records on MS Word and Excel.

**Honors & Activities:**

- Kappa Delta Pi Honors Society
- Chico State Bowling Club
- Red Cross Certificates in CPR, Title 22, Life Guarding, Instructor Training and First Aid

**Gabriela L. Butler**

333 Walnut St, Chico, CA 95928 • 234 Bellvue Court, Vallejo, CA 94070  
(530) 231-1234 • (707) 231-2211 • gbutler@mail.csuchico.edu

**Education:**

California State University, Chico  
Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, May 2009 GPA 3.14  
Option in Organizational Communication  
Minor in Marketing

**Special Projects:** Researched and presented a report on small business marketing. Completed a research project on superior/subordinate communication. Created a marketing campaign for bottled water.

**Related Coursework:**

Organizational Communications      Communications in Business      Service Marketing  
Interpersonal Communications      Marketing Relations      Advanced Public Speaking  
Intercultural Communication      Consumer Behavior      Business Law

**Experience:**

- Marketing Intern, CSU, Chico**  
Intercollegiate Athletics Department & Marketing Department - 05/08 to present
- Worked diligently and creatively to initiate and launch a new information sport magazine
- Served as a liaison between local businesses and Chico State to improve communications and financial support.
- Utilized integrity and attention to detail to meet client needs

**News Intern, KCRB Channel 13, Sacramento, CA**

Promotions and Public Relations Department and Newsroom - 05/06 to 08/07

- Consistently met absolute deadlines and exceeded expectations
- Performed tasks and assignments in a stressful and fast-paced atmosphere
- Actively participated in news reporting segments and duty assignments as needed
- Demonstrated flexibility and ability to change
- Solved problems creatively, logically and quickly
- Demonstrated confidence and tact in working with very temperamental celebrities

**Sales Representative, Max Mara Fragrances, Bay Area, CA - 05/05 to 12/06**

- Actively listened to determine and respond to customer needs
- Asservately worked to meet the company's goals and fulfill customer requests
- Identified and met daily and long term financial goals

**Recreational Leader III, Adventurer's Day Camp, City of Vallejo, Vallejo, CA - 05/04 to 04/05**

- Provided a positive role model for 80 children on a daily basis
- Organized, designed and planned projects and programs for children
- Instilled self-confidence and self-esteem in adolescent campers
- Mediated conflicts using solid communication and reasoning skills
- Communicated closely with parents, listened and acted on their concerns

**Honors & Activities:**

- Intercollegiate Soccer, CSU, Chico
- All League: 2005, 2006 and 2007
- Received Athletic Scholarship, 2005-2007
- Contra Costa Realtors Association Scholarship, 2004

## Cover Letter

**Katie Nadeau**  
1261 Alyssum, Chico, CA 95926 - (530) 321.1955  
knadeau@comcast.net

March 22, 2009

Aaron Ciccone  
COUNTY OF YOLO  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
625 Court St., Room 101  
Woodland, CA 95695

Dear Mr. Ciccone:

In response to your county's advertisement regarding the social work practitioner position, I am enclosing a resume for your review. In May of this year I will have completed my Masters degree in Social Work (MSW). Upon graduation, I would enjoy returning to Yolo County to work with your team. I spent many of my childhood years in Woodland and I feel connected to the area and the population.

I have extensive knowledge of human development and I have experience working with children and families. I have worked collaboratively with primary caregivers, school professionals, health care professionals, and other counselors to create service plans, increase family communication, and promote safety for children.

My current internship is with Butte County Behavioral Health (Chico Community Counseling Center). This county position has provided a clinical setting to perform individual, family, and group counseling. I am confident my knowledge of family systems, the DSM-IV mental health diagnoses, and my understanding of state and local laws and regulations would make me an excellent addition to your team.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Katie Nadeau*

Katie Nadeau  
Enclosure: resume

## Cover Letter

**Amanda Charles**  
1231 Woodland Avenue, Chico, CA 95928 - (530) 650.5911  
acharles@mail.csuchico.edu

February 19, 2009

Dane Campbell  
Manager, Recruiting and Training  
E & J Gallo Winery  
30825 Weigman Road  
Hayward, CA 94544

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I am graduating in May 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies with an option in Organizational Communication from California State University, Chico. I am interested in a sales position at E & J Gallo Winery because it has established a worldwide reputation in the wine industry and remains family-owned.

Growing up around an agricultural company has taught me the different challenges a person faces when working in the industry. In addition, as a senior at Chico State, I learned to deal with a variety of management and sales challenges through courses in human resource management, speech communication, interpersonal communication, and negotiation. Along with my education, my experience as a sales coordinator for Taylor Farms has continued my interest and success in a sales career.

I understand Gallo is dedicated to turning challenges into opportunities and change into growth. This growth has resulted in a reputation for high quality and strong customer relationships. This is the type of organization where I am confident my skills and knowledge would be best suited. Some of my skills and knowledge include:

- Proven sales experience
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Experience in the agricultural industry
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Strong public speaking skills

Although my resume provides a summary of my background and experiences, I would like to meet with you in person to discuss any available opportunities with E & J Gallo Winery. I can be reached at (530) 345-0009 or acharles@mail.csuchico.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Amanda Charles*

Amanda Charles

## Cover Letter

**William O. Bryant**

152 Walnut Ave., #2, Chico, CA 95926 - (530) 216.3121 / 23 Belvaire Court, Yreka, CA 96097 - (530) 322.2121  
wbryant@ccat.csuchico.edu - Web Page Address: www.ccecc.csuchico.edu/~cebarron

September 7, 2009

Human Resources Coordinator  
Electronic Data Systems  
Folsom, CA 95630

Dear Human Resources Coordinator:

I am writing to let you know of my interest in your open PC Support Analyst and Production Support Technician position. I am in my senior year at California State University, Chico and will graduate in December 2009 with a degree in Business Information Systems. As you can see by my enclosed resume, my education and experiences, including a 3.4 GPA, effectively demonstrate my qualifications.

Throughout my college career I have maintained part-time jobs while attending the university full-time, allowing me to develop a deep work ethic and excellent time management skills. My employment history ranges from that of a Help Desk Analyst to a Member Service Representative to various clerical positions. Because of my diverse experience, I recognize and appreciate the importance of setting and reaching goals. I also feel that my educational and professional experiences demonstrate my ambition, a quality that would benefit EDS.

In addition to my time management skills and my strong work ethic, I can offer you direct technical experience from my current position at Chico State's User Services. EDS's long-standing reputation was established by employing people like me who are skilled in technology and are customer focused. If I am hired, I feel that my colleagues and customers will appreciate my eagerness to learn and my ability to be flexible. Furthermore, I welcome change, and my experiences have prepared me to take a leadership role in a changing environment, like that at EDS.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you and possibly meeting for an interview. I can be reached at the contact information listed above.

Sincerely,

*William Bryant*

William O. Bryant  
Enclosure

## Thank-You Letter

**Sophie Noel**  
300 Magnolia St., Apt. A  
Chico, CA 95928  
snoel@mail.csuchico.edu

February 23, 2009

Ms. Jenna Miller  
Human Resources Manager  
St. Paul Travelers Insurance  
2201 Walnut Ave.  
Fremont, CA 94537

Dear Ms. Miller:

I appreciated the opportunity to interview with you today; thank you for your time. I was very intrigued by the information you shared and I am enthusiastic about applying my education and experience to your claims position.

I am particularly interested in St. Paul Travelers because of the opportunities for growth, as well as the team-oriented work environment. As we discussed in the interview, I am confident my ambition, strong communication skills and energy will be an asset to your company. My solid work history demonstrates my ability to perform on the job, and if hired, I am eager to prove myself with St. Paul Travelers.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

*Sophie Noel*

Sophie Noel

# Researching the Company

**B**efore interviewing, and ideally even before you apply for a position, you need to have information about the company and the job they are offering. Having this information can make the difference between your receiving a job offer letter or a job rejection letter.

## Questions You Need to Answer

1. Who owns the company? Is it a subsidiary of a large company?
2. Is it a public or private company?
3. How profitable is the company? How stable?
4. Is the company expanding? Where?
5. What are the firm's major products or services?
6. What new products or services are being planned?
7. What are the company's goals and objectives?
8. What is the company's reputation in the industry?
9. What is the economic outlook for the industry?
10. What are the company's major operating units? Where are they located?
11. What is the corporate culture?
12. What are the opportunities for future training?
13. Who would be your direct supervisor?
14. How essential is your department and position to the organization?
15. How competitive is the salary and benefits package?

Luckily, there are several excellent sources on campus for company information.

## The Career Center

When employers schedule interview dates with us for on-campus recruiting, we ask them to e-mail information about their companies. When they send it to us, we add the information to our database for students to read. We encourage you to read this information and to seek additional sources. We may also be able to assist you with information about the company culture, location, salary, and benefits.

## Internet

You should check Internet resources for the company's home page. We maintain links to company sites for the companies that recruit on campus. You can access these in our recruiting database, which is accessible through our website [www.csuchico.edu/careers](http://www.csuchico.edu/careers).

## Call the Company

If you cannot find any information about a company from these sources, call the company and ask them for their web site address. Even public and private non-profit organizations have information about their goals and services that can help. Most for-profit companies publish their annual reports and will send you one if you ask.

# Interviewing

## Review Your Qualifications

- What experience have you had that prepared you for this career?
- What skills have you developed that would enable you to perform the duties?
- What interests you about the position and company?

## Practice for the Interview

- Practice can help overcome nervousness and hesitancy. You should be assertive without being arrogant. Answer the questions listed in this article. Do not memorize them, but practice to the extent you feel you can answer these and similar questions fluently. After reviewing the questions silently and out loud, answer them again in front of a mirror. Pick a mirror that allows you to see yourself while you are sitting. **Tip:** If you record the questions on a tape player, you can practice your responses more effectively.
- Observe your posture. Practice sitting up with your shoulders square and your hands relaxing on the arms of the chair or in your lap. Sit comfortably so you look relaxed, neither rigid nor lax.
- Keep your facial expressions pleasant. Avoid annoying language habits such as excessively saying "er," "um," or "you know," through practicing what you want to say.
- Use proper English in your answers and examples. The language you use with your friends may irritate a future

employer. **Example:** Incorrect—"Like he says, 'I want a different color.' And I go, 'Cool! Like we have tons of colors to match your mood.'" Correct—"The customer asked me for a different color. I showed him our color chart and explained that we could order the item in any of fifteen different colors."

- Maintain good eye contact, but do not stare.
- Avoid broad or too frequent hand gestures. Use your hands occasionally to emphasize points or to add a little liveliness.

## Dress Appropriately

If you have had a chance to observe or learn about the company culture, you will have an idea of how to dress for an interview. Some companies are very conservative and some are very relaxed. If you are not comfortable with the dress code, odds are you will also be unhappy with the company.

If you do not know how people in the company dress and cannot find out, the usual way to dress for an interview is in a suit. Choose one that looks good on you and that you will want to wear again. There are a lot of things to avoid when dressing for an interview. For instance, women should avoid perfume, heavy makeup, conspicuous jewelry, and very short skirts. Similarly, men should avoid perfumed after-shave, socks that do not match their suit, conspicuous jewelry, and loud ties. If you are unsure about appropriate dress or accessories, ask for assistance. A salesperson or career professional will be happy to assist you.

## The Interview Structure

Interviews may be formal or informal, one-on-one or in panel format. No matter what the interview structure is, you must **1) be on time; 2) be positive; 3) understand what the company needs; and 4) sell yourself by matching your skills to the requirements of the position.** Meeting these expectations is easier in the first interview session than in the fourth. No matter how bored or tired you get, act as if it is the very first time you have answered the question. The last person you talk to may be more important than the first.

## Interview Questions

We would like to assure you that if you practice the answers to these questions, you will ace the interview. Unfortunately, we can't do that. The interviewer may include questions about your subject knowledge that we cannot anticipate, nor would we have space to list them. The current interview trend places more emphasis on behavioral questions—questions that ask how you have faced certain issues to determine how you will react in similar situations. We have included some of those, but our best advice is to have examples from past experience that demonstrate the skills you included on your resume. Questions you can ask are included at the end of this section.

## Questions You Might Be Asked (Including Answer Tips)

### Your Qualifications

#### Q1. Tell me about yourself.

A. This is not an autobiographical question. Focus on why you would like this job and how you have prepared yourself experientially and academically.

#### Q2. Why should we hire you?

A. Similar to #1. Focus on what your particular contribution will be to company success: hard work, dedication, humor. We all bring something unique.

#### Q3. How have your education and employment prepared you for this position?

A. See #1.

#### Q4. Do you think your grades are an accurate indication of what you have learned in college?

A. If you don't, give examples to illustrate your answer.

#### Q5. Tell me about an accomplishment from the past year that you are the most proud of. Why?

A. Focus on work-related. You can use a personal example if it's related in some way to the job description.

#### Q6. Tell me about one of your failures and what you learned from it.

A. Be honest but don't bare your soul—this is not a counseling session! Demonstrate that you can use failure to achieve future success.

#### Q7. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?

A. Reading the company's job announcement or web page should help answer this question. If you can talk to an employee of the company beforehand, that would be a wonderful way to find out. Career fairs are excellent for this reason.

#### Q8. What qualifications should a successful manager (sales person, engineer, etc.) possess?

A. Read an occupational description, then tie that to your own skills.

#### Q9. Which one of your jobs did you like the best? Least? Why?

A. For the best, use examples you know relate to the job for which you are applying. For the least, focus on job tasks that you knew were necessary and performed well, but were routine, unpleasant, or required little involvement. Don't criticize your supervisor or employer.

#### Q10. Describe your strongest communication skills.

A. Describe means give an example. Remember, listening is also a communication skill.

#### Q11. Give me an example of something you did that saved your employer time or money.

A. If you cannot come up with an example, remember that your own dedicated job performance has saved your employer time and money.

#### Q12. Think about a large task you organized. Describe the steps you followed.

A. You can use either a work- or school-related project to illustrate. Be specific.

#### Q13. Do you consider yourself a leader? Why?

A. Give an example from your participation in group projects, volunteer situations, clubs, athletics, or your work situation.

#### Q14. Describe your managerial (sales, engineering, etc.) skills.

A. Refer to question #8.

#### Q15. Are you creative?

A. Again, give an example. Creativity is not just drawing, dancing, acting, or playing music. It is also your ability to look at things in a new way and be innovative in solving problems.

#### Q16. Please describe a situation when you used your creativity to solve a problem.

A. See #15.

#### Q17. What are your greatest strengths?

A. Tailor your answer to the job. For instance, if one of your strengths is leadership and you are applying for a sales job, show how your motivational skills work in both situations, or how you hope to reach a regional manager's spot in a few years.

#### Q18. What is your greatest weakness?

A. Everyone has weaknesses, but avoid red flags and show how you have turned your weakness into a positive. Anger, for instance, is a red flag. Remember, weaknesses are the flip side of strengths. Faulty time management may be the flip side of concentration and dedication. Procrastination may be the result of wanting to consider all the information and make an informed decision. Downplay the negative and play up the positive.

#### Q19. Tell me about your customer service experience.

A. Tell how and where you acquired the experience and give an example to show your dedication and success.

#### Q20. Give me an example of going the extra mile to help a customer.

A. Same as #19.

#### Q21. Describe a situation when you gathered and analyzed facts to arrive at a decision.

A. It is O.K. to use educational experience if you do not have a work-related example.

#### Q22. Do you enjoy routine? Why? Why not?

A. Some routine is fine and necessary, like eating, going to work, etc. After that, it depends on you. Choose a job that fits your needs. If you hate routine, don't apply for a job that has a lot of it, like inside claims adjusting.

**Q23. How do you prioritize your work to meet deadlines?**

A. Give an example to demonstrate how you have done this. Pulling an all-nighter is not a good answer. Planning ahead and keeping lists are good answers.

**Q24. If you have a customer in front of you, a client on the phone, and a boss who wants to see you, what do you do?**

A. To answer this well, you need to know the company's policy. If you don't know how that company would do it, say that you would find out, but give an example from a past experience to demonstrate your ability to stay calm, juggle tasks, and set priorities.

**Q25. Tell me about your computer experience.**

A. If you don't have much experience, focus on what you have and the steps you are taking to gain more. Enthusiasm and willingness to learn are key.

**Q26. Why did you leave your last job?**

A. Opportunity for advancement, finding work to fit your skills, moving, downsizing, changing careers are all legitimate answers. If you were fired or hated your job, do not bad-mouth the job, the company, or your supervisor. Talk about the positive first, then the lack of communication and what you learned from it that has improved your performance and outlook. Great people fail often, but they use failure to learn and improve their performance.

## Your Style and Personality

**Q27. How would your friends (or teacher or supervisor) describe you?**

A. Keep it honest and positive. Remember, this is not necessarily how you would describe yourself. Your friends may see your good humor and quirks while your supervisor might see your dedication and adaptability.

**Q28. What motivates your best work?**

A. Consider the job. If you need praise, excitement, or deadlines, remember that not all jobs offer these. Give an example.

**Q29. Give me an example of a problem you have had with a team member, co-worker, or employee and how you resolved it.**

A. Talking it over with the person involved, and using non-accusatory language and a caring, problem-solving approach, is the first step. Discussing it with your team members or a supervisor, as applicable, is next. Describe the resolution, whether it was a reprimand, expulsion from the group, firing, your agreement with that person's point of view, or the person's change of behavior.

**Q30. What is your biggest weakness as a manager or leader?**

A. See #6.

**Q31. How do you keep track of things you need to do?**

A. You are on your own. Most answers will work, except saying that you just remember everything.

**Q32. Would you rather write a report or give it verbally? Why?**

A. State your preference, but indicate your comfort with either approach as the situation warrants. Knowing the job requirements will assist with this question. Many jobs require both skills.

**Q33. Give me an example of a high-pressure situation you have faced this past year and how you resolved it.**

A. Your skills in organization and prioritization of tasks, your willingness to request your supervisor's assistance with establishing priorities, or your ability to stay calm in pressure situations, are all appropriate to mention if applicable.

## Your Interest and Commitment

**Q34. Why are you interested in working for our company?**

A. Your research of the company will pay off when answering this question. You can talk about their approach to training, their goals for the future, their success or reputation, but be able to back up your statement with specific examples that include how you can contribute to the company's success.

**Q35. Why did you choose your major?**

A. If possible, talk about how you perceived your major would increase your skills and further your career goals. If you selected a major because you liked the subject matter and didn't have a clue how that would further your career, you can indicate that, but talk about how the skills you learned apply to the job for which you are interviewing. If you changed majors more than once and ended with one you didn't think was right for you or if you were influenced by someone else's preference, talk about what you learned about yourself from that situation and how it will help you make better decisions in the future.

**Q36. If you had to choose a school or major again, what would you change?**

A. Most answers are appropriate, but avoid negativity or blaming the school, teachers, town, etc. Talk about what you learned from the experience if you do not feel one of these was perfect.

**Q37. Do you have plans for continued study?**

A. Employers are interested in people who have a commitment to life-long learning, but may not support your education plans if they are not related to the goals of the organization. Tie in your own goals with those of the employer. Unless you are applying for a temporary position, it is inappropriate to mention that you plan to work for a year and then attend graduate school.

**Q38. How do you feel about travel or relocation?**

A. Knowing the job requirements will help you avoid the wrong answer. For instance, most management positions require both. Some sales and most consulting positions require extensive travel, but may allow you to return home at night, while others require significant time away from home. You can ask what the travel requirements are if you have not been able to determine them ahead of time.

**Q39. How do you deal with stress?**

A. This is similar to #33, but you can also mention activities you engage in that help reduce stress, such as running, walking, working out, etc. You can mention boxing, but not punching someone out; karate, but not fighting in a cage or being a member of a fight club; dancing, but not exotic dancing.

**Q40. What area of this position would be the most difficult for you?**

A. Again, knowing the requirements is essential to this question. Answer truthfully, but indicate your reasons along with your willingness to perform the difficult task and how your approach to it will help minimize the difficulty.

**Q41. How long do you plan to stay with us?**

A. As long as you can grow and contribute to the goals of the organization.

## Questions You Can Ask

Remember, you are expected to find out as much about the company as possible before the interview, but you may not have been able to find the answers to these questions, or you may need clarification.

- Q 1. What are your expectations for the person you hire?
- Q 2. What kinds of projects might I be working on?
- Q 3. Why do you like working for this company?
- Q 4. What level of client contact should I expect?
- Q 5. Would you describe the typical training program?
- Q 6. How is the company structured in terms of departments or divisions?
- Q 7. Would I work for more than one person?
- Q 8. Please describe the travel involved in this position.
- Q 9. How often is relocation required for advancement opportunities?
- Q 10. What are the advancement opportunities for this position and the typical time frame for advancement?
- Q 11. What are some of the biggest challenges facing your company and your plans for meeting them? Or better yet,
- Q 12. While researching your company, I read that one of your challenges is xxx....How do you plan to meet this challenge?
- Q 13. Who do you consider to be your major competitors? How does your company compare to them?
- Q 14. What are your plans for expansion in the next few years?
- Q 15. Is this a new position? If it is, why was it created? If it isn't, does the company have more than one opening?
- Q 16. I am very interested in this position—what is the next step?

### Questions with Legal Implications

It would be great if all interviewers avoided questions that they should not ask—questions about your race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, physical handicap, marital status, and age. Unfortunately, they do not. Often they ask these questions because they are untrained and they are concerned about a job-related aspect. The tactful thing to do would be to answer their intent rather than the question. If the question is really offensive to you and seems to indicate a pattern of impropriety, you can indicate that the questions are inappropriate to determine your potential as an employee and walk out. Of course, you will not receive a job offer in that case, but that is probably all right with you. Assuming the question is well-intentioned but ignorant, what do you do? You need to have a plan of action in case you are asked one of these questions. If you don't want to confront the interviewer, you can just answer the question. There are other options, however.

Following are some questions and possible answers. Use your own words and style when deciding how to answer.

**Q. If the interviewer asks your age, it is usually because you are older and he or she is concerned that you will not adapt to change well or be enthusiastic.**

A. You can say that you are a few years above legal age (which might be humorous if you are well above), but you are enthusiastic about the job and bring a positive attitude and adaptable nature (tactful), or you can answer that the question is illegal or inappropriate and you prefer not to answer it (assertive, but may hurt your chances for the job).

**Q. If the interviewer asks about your marital status or if you have children, it is often because of concern that you will get married and leave, that your spouse or children may be a problem if the job requires travel or relocation, or that you will miss work because of sick children or child care problems.**

A. You can state that marriage or children will not interfere with your ability and willingness to give 100% to the job (tactful) or that you prefer not to answer personal questions but would be happy to address job-related concerns (assertive).

**Q. If the interviewer asks about your national origin, it is usually because they are concerned you might not be authorized to work or because they have noticed you speak with an accent or have said you have bilingual skills. They may be trying to be friendly in an inappropriate way.**

A. You can either answer that you are authorized to work and are confident you will make a positive contribution to the company or that you need an employer to sponsor you, but are confident that your contribution will be well worth it because of your skills and dedication (tactful). You can also ask how the question relates to the job requirements (assertive).

**Q. If the interviewer asks about your health or disability, it is usually because of concern that you will miss work or will not be able to perform the required tasks.**

A. If you have an obvious physical disability, you can answer that you have everything you need to perform the job well above expectations, or that with a small, inexpensive adjustment to the work environment, you will be the most productive member of their team and promote a positive image for the company. Health is a confidential matter between you and your doctor, so you can ask if there are physical requirements for the job that you can address.

**Q. If the interviewer asks about your religion, he or she will usually do it by asking if there are any days you cannot work or by asking about your non-work or extracurricular activities.**

A. You can reply that there will be no trouble with your ability to fulfill the work requirements (tactful) or you can ask how the question is related to the job requirements (assertive).

**Q. The interviewer asks if you have ever been arrested or used illegal drugs.**

A. You can reply that you have never been convicted of a felony and your employers have always considered you to be hard-working and trustworthy (tactful), or you can say that you understand that employers can ask if you have ever had a felony conviction if it is related to job performance, but you don't understand the relevance of the question in these circumstances (assertive).

### Selecting the Job: Making Decisions

You've interviewed successfully and have more than one job offer. How do you decide between them?

- Primarily, think about your values, skills, and interests, and rate the job offers accordingly.
- Compare the salaries with your financial needs. Don't forget to include fringe benefits.
- Is the job geographically where you want to be?
- Can you see yourself in 3-5 years from now advancing toward your long-range goal?
- Is the atmosphere right (conservative, liberal, young staff, progressive)? Do you feel comfortable about fitting into the work setting?

All of the above should be weighed before a decision can be made. Relatives, friends, and faculty can give positive feedback. Don't forget your placement advisers. They, too, are available to assist you in assessing your job offers.

Notify the Career Center when you get a job offer and when you make a decision.

# Are You Ready for a Behavioral Interview?

**T**ell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her weight." If this is one of the leading questions in your job interview, you could be in for a behavioral interview. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is gaining popularity among recruiters.

Today, more than ever, each hiring decision is critical. Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that might cloud the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant's actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions that can sometimes be misleading, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

A manager of staff planning and college relations for a major chemical company believes, "Although we have not conducted any formal studies to determine whether retention or success on the job has been affected, I feel our move to behavioral interviewing has been successful. It helps concentrate recruiters' questions on areas important to our candidates' success within [our company]." The company introduced behavioral interviewing in the mid-1980s at several sites and has since implemented it companywide.

## Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

If you have training or experience with traditional interviewing techniques, you may find the behavioral interview quite different in several ways:

- ✓ Instead of asking how you *would* behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you *did* behave.
- ✓ Expect the interviewer to question and probe (think of "peeling the layers from an onion").
- ✓ The interviewer will ask you to provide details and will not allow you to theorize or generalize about events.
- ✓ The interview will be a more structured process that will concentrate on areas that are important to the interviewer, rather than allowing you to concentrate on areas that you may feel are important.
- ✓ You may not get a chance to deliver any prepared stories.
- ✓ Most interviewers will be taking notes throughout the interview.

The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information and works from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job. Because the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous positions are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you may or may not have exhibited these behaviors. Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency.

If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the target position:

*"Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it."*

*"Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project."*

*"What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?"*

Follow-up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

*"Can you give me an example?"*

*"What did you do?"*

*"What did you say?"*

*"What were you thinking?"*

*"How did you feel?"*

*"What was your role?"*

*"What was the result?"*

You will notice an absence of such questions as, "Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses."

## How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

- ✓ Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.
- ✓ Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- ✓ Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle and an end; i.e., be ready to describe the situation, your action and the outcome or result.
- ✓ Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).
- ✓ Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- ✓ Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

A possible response to the question, "Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn't pulling his or her weight" might go as follows: "I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn't showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn't passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and got a 'B' on it."

The interviewer might then probe: "How did you feel when you confronted this person?" "Exactly what was the nature of the project?" "What was his responsibility as a team member?" "What was your role?" "At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?" You can see it is important that you not make up or "shade" information and why you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

## Don't Forget the Basics

Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional interview and the behavioral interview: The traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might or should do in a given situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

# Dressing for the Interview

Depending upon your fashion style, whether it is the latest trends for the club scene or merely college senior casual, a job interview may be cause for some drastic wardrobe augmentation.

For your interviews, some of your individualism might have to be shelved or kept in the closet. In most business and technical job interviews, when it comes to your appearance, conservatism and conformity are in order.

While many companies have adopted the "office casual" dress code, don't try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet.

Here are some guidelines for formal interviews:

## Men and Women

- A dark-colored business suit
- Well-groomed hairstyle
- Do not wear cologne or perfume
- No visible body piercing, except one earring in each ear is acceptable for women
- No more than one ring on each hand; wedding/engagement ring acceptable
- No visible tattoos
- Use a breath mint before the interview
- Be sure suit is free of lint, pet hair or missing buttons

## Men

- Long-sleeved shirt in white or a light color
- Conservative necktie in color and pattern; avoid cartoon characters or "theme" ties
- High-fitting dark-colored socks
- Business-style leather shoes, well-shined and polished
- Match shoe and belt color
- Briefcase or portfolio

## Women

- A neutral colored blouse with a conservative neckline
- A skirt suit is considered the most formal; the pant suit is acceptable for many interviews
- Skirts should be no higher than one inch above the knee when standing
- Plain, polished, closed-toed shoes with low- to medium-heels that match the skirt color
- Skin-colored hosiery
- Briefcase or portfolio in place of a handbag or purse
- Conservative, understated makeup and nail polish
- Minimal, classic accessories and jewelry; avoid dangling or oversized earrings
- Simple hairstyle, no "big hair" or elaborate styles

## Staying Within a Budget

For recent graduates just entering professional life, additions to wardrobes, or complete overhauls, are likely needed. Limited funds, however, can be an obstacle. Image consultant Christine Lazzarini suggests "capsule wardrobing." For example, by mixing and matching, she says, an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can generate up to 28 ensembles.

Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50% of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, "even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different."

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. "If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers," says a women's fashion director for a major national retailer. "Then add a black turtleneck or a white shirt. These are the fashion basics that you can build on."

A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different gabardine pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it offers more versatility.

One accessory recommended by company representatives is a briefcase. "When I see one," says one recruiter, "it definitely adds to the candidate's stature. It is a symbol to me that the individual has done some research and that he or she is prepared."

## Taking a Casual Approach

"Business Casual" is becoming the accepted mode of dress at more and more companies. The rules, however, for casual attire are subject to tremendous company-to-company variance. At some, "casual day" is a Friday-only observance, where the dress code is *slightly* relaxed—a sports coat and slacks for men and slacks and a sweater for women. At others, especially entrepreneurial computer companies, it's shorts and sandals every day.

The safest fashion rule for new employees to follow is *dress about the same as your most conservatively attired co-worker*. As a new hire, don't try to "push the boundaries" of casual attire.

**Fashion Arrests:** 1) Never wear blue denim jeans or shorts unless the vast majority of others do; 2) Don't dress too provocatively—you're at work, not at a dance club; 3) "Casual" doesn't mean "sloppy"—your clothes should always be free of stains or holes; 4) Workout wear belongs at the gym.

**Play it Safe:** 1) Chinos or corduroy slacks are usually a safe bet for both sexes; 2) As for formal business attire, buy the best that your budget will allow; 3) If you will be seeing clients, dress appropriately for their workplace, not yours; 4) Go to the mall—most department and specialty stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.

## **How to Write a Letter of Recommendation**

If you've not written a letter of recommendation before, the process can seem a bit intimidating. Fortunately, all letters of recommendation involve common elements that you can master easily. Read on to learn how.

### **Part I**

#### **Writing The Letter**

1.

**Use standard formal letter writing conventions to begin.** A letter of recommendation is like any other professional communication, and follows the same general rules and guidelines.

- Place your address on the top right, followed by the date---spelled out.
- Below that, on the left, place the recipient's name (if known) and address.
- Open the letter with a formal business greeting. Ex:
- Dear Ms. Smith,
- Dear Sir or Madam, (if you don't know the recipient's name)

2.

**Open with a short, but enthusiastic, bit of praise.** Let the company know right off the bat that you believe in this person. You don't have to be over the top or insincere, but a positive note to start will make a big difference.

- "It makes me extremely happy to recommend Michael for the position of Director of Development at YXX Corporation."
- "Any company should count themselves lucky to have an employee as bright, friendly, and dedicated as Gina."
- "No matter what she does, Helena Bonham does it well."

3.

**Describe how you know the person.** Give some context for your recommendation. Let the reader know how you met them, how you worked together, and your basic qualifications.

- "As VP of Application Development, I was Michael's direct supervisor from 2009 through 2012. We worked closely together on several key projects, and I got to know him very well during this time.
- "I was both Gina's adviser and teacher throughout her time at Hamilton College. I watched her shine both in the classroom and in office hours, and had the joy of watching her meet and then exceed expectations with her thesis."

- "As the Dean of Students, I deal with many young people throughout the day. However, I was lucky to spend several hours a week with Ms. Bonham in her role as Committee President. In my 32 years as Dean, I have rarely been so impressed."

4.

**Be specific about the candidate's qualifications and successes.** Describe what the person has done using specific instances and examples, rather than generalities. Whenever possible, give evidence or stories to back yourself up.

- "Michael's sophisticated grasp of database architecture, combined with an innate feel for UX design and a warm, personal approach to his in-company client base dramatically improved the productivity of our company's merchandising, creative, and editorial departments. His approach to managing application support, maintenance, and training was highly professional and greatly respected, both by end users and by the executive team."
- "Gina was always inquisitive but never pushy. Despite being able to answer almost any question, Gina would rather sit back and help others find the answer for themselves. Countless students, who I thought were doomed to struggle, happily told me how tutoring sessions with Gina helped them turn the corner. And I had many conversations, both as her professor and a peer, that I will remember happily for years."
- "When Ms. Bonham hears the word "no," you can almost see the gears start to turn. She is mover and a shaker -- interfacing with students, faculty, staff, and even outside agencies to find solutions to any problem."

5.

**Make comparisons to illustrate their success.** To put the candidate's accomplishments into perspective, include comparisons so that the recipient will have some basis to understand why you are recommending this person.

- "Michael's output of completed projects has exceeded the combined results of all other development efforts I've witnessed during my 8 years at UVW Company."
- "The best students are ones that genuinely love to learn. A student that pushes themselves every day to learn more and be better, and enjoys every minute. Gina is that kind of student."
- "I can say with confidence that my job working with the Student Committee was never easier, nor more enjoyable, than when I got to work with Ms. Bonham."

6.

**Don't exaggerate -- show where and how they can improve.** Don't put the candidate on a pedestal. Not only does it not look plausible, it will also set expectations for them that will be next to impossible to meet. If they have an Achilles' heel, don't exaggerate it, but don't hide it, either.

- "Despite coming in as a novice, Michael has worked hard to improve his documentation and commenting of scripts and processes, making it easier for those filling his shoes in the future to work effectively."
- "Gina is always on the move -- tutoring, taking classes, joining clubs, etc. -- and though her schedule is perhaps too tightly packed, she somehow manages it all with a smile on her face."
- "Of course, Ms. Bonham's determination and drive occasionally led to butting heads and conflicting opinions. However, though she is never one to shy away from conflict, Ms. Bonham's passion was never mean-spirited or rude."

7.

**Keep your writing action-oriented.** Begin each paragraph with a punchy, active affirmation of the candidate's qualities or character. Strong verbs are your friend.

- Don't say "Over the course of the last couple years, I have been pleased to watch the ongoing development of Michael's talents." Say instead, "Michael's skills have grown rapidly in the last couple years."
- "Gina exhibits the drive and dedication of the best students. Her writing is clear and concise, a rarity among many young people but effortless for her."
- "Ms. Bonham fights for what she believes is right, even if it doesn't mesh with her own preferences. This clear-eyed and selfless attitude will catapult her far in life."

8.

**Close the letter affirmatively.** Reiterate your recommendation of the candidate and, if appropriate, invite the recipient to contact you.

- For example, say, "For all of these reasons, I think Michael will make a fine addition to your team. Should you have any questions, I invite you to contact me at the number or address, above."
- "Gina is the kind of person I would love to hire to work for me, and I know she will be an incredible asset for you."
- "I have no qualms about giving Ms. Bonham the highest recommendation for the position. If you have any questions, please contact me."

9.

**Use a business closing and sign your name.** Above all, be professional. If you're sending a physical letter, print it out and sign it by hand. Otherwise, just typing your name will do.

- "Sincerely,"
- "Best regards,"
- "Thank you,"

## Part 2

### Starting to Write

1.

**Break down the letter into short, but specific, paragraphs.** Don't ramble, but do flesh out your key points. Try to keep it at one page, covering the various aspects of their recommendation in brief, specific detail.

- **Introduction**
- Your qualifications, how you know the candidate, general recommendation.
- **Professional Success**
- Why they will be effective, productive workers. Examples of successes.
- **Personal Testimony**
- Why they will be a great addition to work and office culture.
- **Closing.**
- Reaffirm your willingness to recommend them, offer contact information.

2.

**Target the recommendation.** Is it for an academic post, a job, a volunteer position, a background check, or a personal reference? Write your letter so that it is focused on this purpose.

- For example, if the letter is part of a job application package, it should focus on the professional qualifications and conduct of the candidate.

3.

**Familiarize yourself with the position.** Get a copy of the job description, if you can, and talk to the person you will recommend. If you know the intended recipient of the letter, ask them about the position as well.

- The more you know about the position, the better you will be able to tailor your letter to suit the needs of both parties.

4.

**Inform yourself about the person you are recommending.** Spend some time talking to them about their goals and the position they are applying for. Gather together their current resume, any memos or notes you may have on them, and any other information that will help you as you write the letter. The best recommendations are thorough and specific, and having all the information at hand will make the process much easier.

- You put your own reputation on the line when you write a letter of recommendation. If you feel you do not know the person well enough, or they are somebody you cannot in good conscience recommend, decline their request.

5.

**Get feedback.** If you're not sure of your letter-writing skills, or if your letter will carry a great deal of weight for the candidate's application, ask for feedback from a trusted colleague who may also know the candidate. If you are putting your reputation on the line for this person, you want to put your best foot forward with this letter.

### **Tips**

- Keep the tone and the content factual, businesslike, and specific throughout.
- Be complimentary and positive, but be honest.
- The first time you name the candidate who is the subject of the letter, use his or her full name. After that, use either the first name or a title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) and the last name, depending on how formal you want to be. Whichever you choose, be consistent.
- Type the letter. It is more formal and businesslike—and your recipient won't have to decode your handwriting.
- If you are put in the position of writing your own letter of recommendation, perhaps for somebody else to sign, be honest and specific. Try to write as you would write about a candidate with your qualifications. Get help from a friend or colleague seeing yourself as others see you. Ask your friend to tell you how your letter comes across.
- If you ask a candidate to write their own letter of recommendation, recognize that many people find it difficult to write about themselves in this way. Read the letter and make sure that you agree with what they have written before you sign it.

### **Warnings**

- Decide carefully whether to give a copy of the letter to the candidate, particularly if you express reservations. A recommendation may hold more sway if the recipient knows that the views in it are candid, and not written for the gratification or flattery of the candidate.
- A letter of recommendation should focus on the key knowledge, skills, and abilities of an individual. Don't spend your time inflating your letter of recommendation with excessive positive tones, as this is generally overlooked by recruiters.

### **Sources and Citations**

- University of Washington
- Good Letter Writing