Employment Communication Assignment

Job Search, Letter of Application, Resumé, Interview Questions, Follow – Up Letter

The red is the summary for the overview—the green link in box (on overview page) is what is below not highlighted

Many people will submit their resumés in hopes of being chosen to interview for a particular position; however, those few individuals who are invited to interview are picked primarily on the basis of the content and quality of their letter of application, their resumé, and their professional references.

When you realize the competitive nature of a job search in the United States, the quality of your communication with the employer acquires added importance. Your resumé, cover letter, and thank you letter should be personalized, concise and error free documents that you have designed to reflect your particular accomplishments and academic and professional credentials. This assignment consists of five related tasks:

- Locate an existing, advertised full time, part time, or internship that is commensurate with your current skills.
- Write a persuasive letter of application.
- Format and write a professional resumé that includes a professional reference page.
- Answer behavioral and situational employment interviews.
- Follow up an interview with a properly drafted thank you letter.

Task 1: Job Search and Position Announcement

Begin this first task as a new document in MSWord.

Your first task is to find a position that is suitable with your current education and experience level. This may be a full – time position, part – time position, or an internship; however, this position must actually exist and be verifiable.

Once you find a suitable position, copy and paste this advertisement / job description into an MSWord file and underline or highlight the specific job qualifications.

Tip 1: Review your Textbook

Tip 2: You may use any search engine you prefer; however, you should also explore FIU's Career Services Pantherlink.

- FIU's Career Services
- FIU's Career Management Services

Sample Advertisement And How to Highlight or Underline Job Qualifications

Administrative Assistant

Disability Care Links requires and Administrative Assistant to work in its central London office. The organization is a specialist in the field of disability care services. <u>The successful candidate</u> <u>will enjoy working as part of a dedicated team</u>, with the added satisfaction of working for an <u>organization committed to the care and support of disabled people</u>.

The job involves a variety of <u>administrative duties</u>. These will include <u>filing</u>, <u>letter writing</u>, <u>sorting</u> <u>post</u>, <u>obtaining information from a computer</u>, <u>photocopying and maintaining records</u>. Training will be provided, if necessary, to equip the job – holder with <u>computer skills</u> to enable them to use the organization's computer system.

Applicants are required to have completed at least 30 college credits at grade C or above.

This position is available on a <u>full – time or part – time</u> basis.

Please write for an application form to:

Personnel Department 123 Main Street Miami, FL 33333

For further information contact Ms. Edna Smith at smith@emailaddress.com

Task 2: Employment Letter of Application

Begin this task on a separate page in the same MSWord file. You can do this by using the Insert / Break / Page Break function in MSWord.

Now that you have found a suitable position, it's time to apply by writing a **one page**, properly organized and formatted letter of application.

Tip 1: Review Your Textbook and Sample Letters For Ideas

Tip 2: Select The Correct Letter Format

- Be sure to include your email address, return address, and signature block.
- Avoid addressing your letter to "Whom It May Concern," Dear Prospective Employer," or "Dear Sir/Madame." I realize your book has an example of a letter addressed to *Dear Hiring Manager;* however, the American Management Association recommends writers use the <u>simplified letter format</u> (*Simplified Letter Format can be found in Module 9*) if you are uncertain of a recipient's name. If the name of the recipient is provided in the advertisement or if you know the name of the recipient, you may use <u>the modified block format</u> (*The Modified Block Format can be found in Module 7*).
- If your job posting does not list an address or a name, it is permissible to incorporate one of the addressees listed above, such as "To Whom it May Concern," "Dear Sir/Madam", etc.

• Similarly, if there is no physical address to mail an application, and you are left with no choice but to send an application via email, search for the main address of the company headquarters in a search engine and include it in your cover letter.

Tip 3: Use Appropriate Language

Avoid repeated use of "I" and abstract language such as "think", "feel", "wish", or "hope" in your letter.

- I think I would make a great candidate...
- I hope you like my resumé....
- I wish I had more skills, but.....

Rather, adopt the *you view* (write from the reader's point of view), indicate how your skills and qualifications will benefit the organization and its customers. and use courteous language.

- Your position advertised on your company's website is an excellent fit with my qualifications.
- My background includes a bachelor's degree in marketing and three years of administrative experience that could be used to benefit your organization.
- Please contact me at your convenience to schedule an interview.

Additional Examples of Appropriate Language

Tip 4: Proofread Your Letter

Check for format, content, grammar, and punctuation "mis-steaks."

Organization of The Letter of Application For This Assignment

- Heading/Date/Inside Address: If you are writing a traditional (not email) letter, select a standard business-letter format such as block style, modified block, or simplified. Your letter's design should match your resumé (See example below).
- Salutation: It's best to address your letter to a specific person (e.g., "Dear Ms. Jones:"). Avoid stale salutations such as "Dear Sir/Madam:" and "To Whom it May Concern:"
- Opening (One Paragraph): Hiring managers are busy and do not care to wade through fluff. Your opening paragraph should clearly state the position for which you're applying. Include a reference code if requested and the referral source (e.g., recommendation from a current employee, Monster, etc.). Your opening may also include a synopsis of why you are a top candidate for the position:

Your position advertised on Monster is an excellent fit with my qualifications, as the enclosed resumé will attest. My background includes 10 years of success managing international sales programs, top-ranked regions and Fortune 500 accounts. I offer particular expertise in the high tech sector, with in-depth knowledge of networking technology...

• Body (One or Two Paragraphs): Your letter's body contains your sales pitch. In one or two paragraphs, this is your chance to outline the top reasons why you're worthy of an interview.

Before deciding what to include in the body of this letter, review the job advertisement and the qualifications you highlighted and/or underlined. Weave these qualifications into the body of your letter, perhaps as a bulleted list.

Back up achievements with specific examples of how your performance benefited current and former employers. Precede your bulleted list with a statement such as "Highlights of my credentials include:" or "Key strengths I offer include:."

When writing the body text, keep in mind that hiring managers are self-centered --they want to know what you can do for them, not learn about your life story. Demonstrate how your credentials, motivation and track record would benefit their operation.

Keep your letter positive and upbeat. This is not the place to write a sob story about your employment situation. Put yourself in the hiring manager's shoes -- would you call yourself in for an interview?

- Closing (One Paragraph): Your final paragraph should generate a call for action, so express your strong interest in an interview and request an interview. Do not establish parameters for when and how you can be contacted such as. "Please contact me after 5:00pm but before 9:00pm on June 3." Would you hire this person?
- Signature Block: Depending on the format of the letter you have selected (block, modified, or simplified), create the signature block appropriately.

Task 3: Professional Resumé And Reference Page

Begin each task on a separate page in the same MSWord file you used to complete Task 1 and 2. You can do this by using the Insert / Break / Page Break function in MSWord. Now that you have found a suitable position and written a letter of application, it's time to properly organize and format your resumé and your professional reference page.

Tip 1: Select the Correct Resumé Format

Depending on your current skills and qualifications, you will need select the appropriate resumé type:

Chronological Resumé (Preferred By Most Employers)

The chronological approach is the most common way to organize a resumé, and many employers prefer it. This approach has three key advantages:

- (1) Employers are familiar with it and can easily find the information;
- (2) It highlights growth and career progression; and
- (3) It highlights employment continuity and stability.

The work experience section of the resumé dominates and is placed at the most prominent slot., immediately after the name and address and optional objective statement. You develop this section by listing your jobs sequentially in reverse order, *beginning with the most recent position and working your way backward toward earlier jobs*. Under each listing, describe your responsibilities and accomplishments, giving the most space to the most recent positions.

If you're near graduation from college with limited work experience, you can vary this chronological approach by putting your educational qualifications before your experience, thereby focusing attention on your academic credentials.

Functional Resumé

Sometimes called a *skills resumé*, the functional resumé emphasizes your skills and capabilities, and identifies your employers and academic experience in subordinate sections. This pattern stresses individual areas of competence, so it's useful for people who are just entering the job market, want to redirect their careers, or have little continuous career related experience.

The functional approach also has three advantages:

- (1) Without having to read through job descriptions, employers can see what you can do for them;
- (2) You can emphasize early job experience; and
- (3) You can de-emphasize any lack of career progress or lengthy employment.

You should be aware that not all employers like the functional resumé, perhaps partly because it can obscure your work history and partly because it's less common. In fact, Monster.com lists the functional resumé as one of employers' *Top 10 Pet Peeves*.

Combination Resumé

The combination resumé is simply a functional resumé with a brief employment history added. Skills and accomplishments are still listed first; the employment history follows. You need to reveal where you worked, when you worked, and what your job position was. This will allay an employer's worries about your experience, and it still allows you to emphasize your talents and how you would use them for the job you are applying for.

While most employers might still prefer a chronological resumé, this is a good alternative to the functional.....

Tip 2: Review Your Textbook For Samples and Guidelines

Tip 3: Pay Attention To Details

Contact Information: Include your full legal name, complete mailing address, a working email address, and no more than two telephone numbers.

Job Objective: A good job objective statement is much like a thesis sentence in a paper; it ties the resumé together, giving it focus and direction. Avoid vague, generic phrases such as "challenging, responsible position," "management training," "position dealing with people." It is usually a good idea to indicate the position you consider yourself best qualified for, and also tie in related skills you can bring to bear on that position. Well written, effective job objective statements should include several of the following:

(1) The type of position (Management Trainee, Retail Buyer, Sales Representative, Nurse, Credit Analyst, Teacher)

(2) The type of field (Public Affairs, Arts, Operations, Public Administration, Engineering, Finance, Health, Higher Education);

(3) The type of Industry (Communications, Electronics);

(4) The type of organization (small vs. large; urban vs. rural, public vs. private; local vs. international), and

(5) Your functional skills (public speaking, leadership, organization, research, supervisory, computer).

Employment History: A listing in *reverse chronological order* (most recent first) of your employment experience, including name and location of employers, dates, job titles, and perhaps brief descriptions of your accomplishments..

Educational Record: In this section list schools in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Make sure you spell out the degree(s) you received indicating dates, and the university where they were earned, your grade point average, however, is optional. If you don't include your GPA, be prepared to explain why in your interview.

Relevant Course Work: Considered optional, it lists classes in your field of concentration or course work relevant to your job objective.

Honors and Awards: Although usually considered an optional section, it includes all scholastic or outside recognition received (generally beginning with your college career).

Skills/Experiences Related to Job Objective: This section is usually found only on a functional resumé. Here you relate your experience, whether it be through summer employment, activities, or special projects that helps you qualify as the best candidate for the job.

Activities and Interests: A section that can be included in all resumé types that provides the opportunity to set yourself apart from the other applicants and to show you are a well-rounded and accomplishmentoriented individual. Be cautious of including religious, social, political affiliations

References: On a separate page of your resumé titled Personal References, include the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of three references that you have asked and have agreed to serve as a reference. Attempt to find three people from different areas of your life, who can professionally comment on your education, work history, and/or personal character.

Tip 4: Proofread Your Resumé

Check for format, content, grammar, and punctuation.

Resume "Musts" For This Assignment

Include Your Email	Include at least one telephone number in the contact information of your
Address and Phone	resumé; however, you should avoid more than two telephone numbers. In
Number As Part Of Your	most cases, an employer isn't going to track your down by making several
Contact Information	phone calls to different numbers. Obviously, don't place a phone number
	on your resumé that won't be answered in a professional manner.
	Demonstrate your technological skills by linking your email address in your
	contact information at the top of your resumé.
Use Reverse	When listing your work experience and education on your resumé, begin
Chronological	with the most recent dates and work backwards in time. For example,
Order At All Times When	May 2005 – present
Listing Education and	• June 2000 – April 2005
Work History	 March 1995 – May 2000
Indicate City and State	It isn't necessary to provide a complete mailing address; however, you
For Employers and	should include the city and state for employers and education institutions.
Educational	If you worked or attended school outside of the United States, include the
Institutions	
manunona	 city and the country rather than the city and the state. Florida International University, Miami, FL
	United States Postal Service, Pittsburgh, PA
ļ	Sorbonne, Paris, France
Include University,	Don't forget to include your most recent education at Florida International
Degree(s), and	University. Even if you have only been attending FIU for a brief time, it's
Major(s)	significant that you applied for admission and you were accepted. Indicate
	the degrees you have completed (AA. AS, BA, BS, BBA) and the degree
	you are currently pursuing (BBA, BA, BS, MA, MS, PHD) You should also
	include your major or majors.
	If you are not sure of the name of the degree you are pursuing (Is it a BBA
	or a BA?) please ask your academic advisor. This information is important
	to your potential employers; you don't want to appear as if you aren't
	aware of the degree you are pursuing. You certainly don't want to provide
	them with incorrect information or have your ethics questioned.
Eliminate References	In most cases, it is advisable to eliminate all references to your high school
To High School	education, achievement and activities. If you are attending a prestigious
	high school that has a large alumni base, you should consider placing this
	information on your resumé.
	However, by indicating your high school, your potential employer will be
	able to determine your approximate age. Also, in most cases, what you did
	in high school will have little impact on your employer's perception of your
	potential success in a professional occupation.
L	
Use Action Verbs	Enhance your resumé by describing your accomplishments powerfully
That Emphasize	using action verbs and avoid weak statements.
Accomplishments	
Rather Than Duties	Review page 445 of your text for a list of appropriate action verbs and
	examples of results oriented statements.
	Generated 35 new accounts last month.
	Developed new accounting system that reduced paperwork by 50
	percent.
	I

Eliminate All Pronouns	I, Me, My, He, His, She, Her, It, You, Your, We, They, Our, and Us do not belong on your resumé.
Create Full Pages Rather Than Partial Pages	It is advisable to limit your resumé to one full page or two full pages of text. Don't forget to include a heading on the second page. This may require that you make decisions regarding the content and format of your resumé.
Include a Separate Reference Page	On a separate page titled, "Professional References," list at least three references. Select references who can speak about your education, work – related skills, accomplishments, and personality traits. Avoid listing family members, neighbors, and casual acquaintances. It is strongly recommended you request permission to include a person on your list of references. Person's Name Name of Position and/or Title Name of Organization Mailing Address (If applicable) Email Address Phone Numbers

Task 4: Employment Interview Questions

Begin this task on a separate page in the same MSWord file you used to complete Task 1, 2, and 3. You can do this by using the Insert / Break / Page Break function in MSWord.

Congratulations! Your potential employer liked your letter of application and your resume and is interested in interviewing you for the position.

Pretend you are being interviewed by Ms. Rosemary Ferguson for the position you indicated in Task 1. Write your honest response each question of the ten questions listed to the right.

Tip 1: Create A Positive Impression

The initial impression you make on the others is, if not indelible, certainly a huge determinant in how they will feel about you for quite some time. This judgment is only magnified at job interviews -- an activity designed to make sure you fit within an organization both personally and professionally.

Tip 2: Review Your Textbook For Interviewing Tips

Tip 3: Proofread Your Answers

Check for format, content, grammar, and punctuation "mis-steaks."

Employment Interview Questions For This Assignment

When answering these questions, be certain to refer to your relevant skills for the vacant position. Avoid being arrogant, and don't criticize current or previous employers, bosses, or peers Rather, be confident, well spoken and answer each question as it relates to the position.

1.Tell me about yourself.

It seems like an easy interview question. It's open ended. I can talk about whatever I want from the birth canal forward. Right?

Wrong. What the hiring manager really wants is a quick, two- to three-minute snapshot of who you are and why you're the best candidate for this position.

So as you answer this question, talk about what you've done to prepare yourself to be the very best candidate for the position. Use an example or two to back it up. Then ask if they would like more details. If they do, keep giving them example after example of your background and experience. Always point back to an example when you have the opportunity.

"Tell me about yourself" does not mean tell me everything. Just tell me what makes you the best.

2. Why should I hire you?

The easy answer is that you are the best person for the job. And don't be afraid to say so. But then back it up with what specifically differentiates you.

For example: "You should hire me because I'm the best person for the job. I realize that there are likely other candidates who also have the ability to do this job. Yet I bring an additional quality that makes me the best person for the job--my passion for excellence. I am passionately committed to producing truly world class results. For example . . ."

Are you the best person for the job? Show it by your passionate examples.

3. What is your long-range objective?

Make my job easy for me. Make me want to hire you.

The key is to focus on your achievable objectives and what you are doing to reach those objectives.

For example: "Within five years, I would like to become the very best accountant your company has on staff. I want to work toward becoming the expert that others rely upon. And in doing so, I feel I'll be fully prepared to take on any greater responsibilities which might be presented in the long term. For example, here is what I'm presently doing to prepare myself . . ."

Then go on to show by your examples what you are doing to reach your goals and objectives.

4. How has your education prepared you for your career?

This is a broad question and you need to focus on the behavioral examples in your educational background which specifically align to the required competencies for the career.

An example: "My education has focused on not only the learning the fundamentals, but also on the practical application of the information learned within those classes. For example, I played a lead role in a class project where we gathered and analyzed best practice data from this industry. Let me tell you more about the results . . ."

Focus on behavioral examples supporting the key competencies for the career. Then ask if they would like to hear more examples.

5. Are you a team player?

Almost everyone says yes to this question. But it is not just a yes/no question. You need to provide behavioral examples to back up your answer.

A sample answer: "Yes, I'm very much a team player. In fact, I've had opportunities in my work, school and athletics to develop my skills as a team player. For example, on a recent project . . ."

Emphasize teamwork behavioral examples and focus on your openness to diversity of backgrounds. Talk about the strength of the team above the individual. And note that this question may be used as a lead in to questions around how you handle conflict within a team, so be prepared.

6. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or professor? How was it resolved?

Note that if you say no, most interviewers will keep drilling deeper to find a conflict. The key is how you behaviorally reacted to conflict and what you did to resolve it.

For example: "Yes, I have had conflicts in the past. Never major ones, but there have been disagreements that needed to be resolved. I've found that when conflict occurs, it helps to fully understand the other person's perspective, so I take time to listen to their point of view, then I seek to work out a collaborative solution. For example . . ."

Focus your answer on the behavioral process for resolving the conflict and working collaboratively.

7. What is your greatest weakness?

Most career books tell you to select a strength and present it as a weakness. Such as: "I work too much. I just work and work and work." Wrong. First of all, using a strength and presenting it as a weakness is deceiving. Second, it misses the point of the question.

You should select a weakness that you have been actively working to overcome. For example: "I have had trouble in the past with planning and prioritization. However, I'm now taking steps to correct this. I just started using a pocket planner . . ." then show them your planner and how you are using it.

Talk about a true weakness and show what you are doing to overcome it. Perhaps the fact you have not completed your degree but you are working on it, would be the perfect answer to this question...

8. If I were to ask your professors to describe you, what would they say?

This is a threat of reference check question. Do not wait for the interview to know the answer. Ask any prior bosses or professors in advance. And if they're willing to provide a positive reference, ask them for a letter of recommendation.

Then you can answer the question like this:

"I believe she would say I'm a very energetic person, that I'm results oriented and one of the best people she has ever worked with. Actually, I know she would say that, because those are her very words. May I show you her letter of recommendation?"

So be prepared in advance with your letters of recommendation.

9. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?

Focus on two words: leadership and vision.

Here is a sample of how to respond: "The key quality in a successful manager should be leadership--the ability to be the visionary for the people who are working under them. The person who can set the course and direction for subordinates. The highest calling of a true leader is inspiring others to reach the highest of their abilities. I'd like to tell you about a person whom I consider to be a true leader . . ."

Then give an example of someone who has touched your life and how their impact has helped in your personal development.

10. Do you have any questions for us?

Of course you do. Refer your text for appropriate questions to ask the employer.

Task 5: Thank You Follow – Up Letter

Begin this task on a separate page in the same MSWord file you used to complete Task 1, 2, and 3. You can do this by using the Insert / Break / Page Break function in MSWord.

The interview was a success, and the interviewer, Ms. Rosemary Ferguson, was impressed with your skills and your interview style.

Now it's time to distinguish yourself from the other candidates by sending your interviewer a well written thank you letter that acknowledges the interviewer's time and courtesy as well as conveying your continued interest in the position.

This letter should show the reader that you are thorough, courteous, efficient, and sincerely interested in the job. On the personal level, writing this letter allows you to wrap up your application for the job; it is your last chance to tie up all the loose ends neatly.

Tip 1: Review Your Textbook For Samples and Guidelines

What do you include in the thank you letter?

Convey your gratitude at being selected for an interview.

- The tone of the letter is courteous and thankful.
- Consider including an analysis of your visit to the company or your interview.
- This may include impressions of the company itself, analysis of the interview proceedings or new facts you learned about the company.
- Include any new information about your qualifications or education since your interview.
- This letter will show the interviewer that you are thorough and sincerely interested in the job

Tip 2: Select The Correct Letter Format

Select either <u>the simplified letter format</u>, the <u>block format</u> or the <u>modified block format</u> for your letter. *These Letter Formats can be found in Module 7 and Module 9.* Tip 3: Proofread Your Letter Check for format, content, grammar, and punctuation "mis-steaks."

Avoid Abstract Language. Adopt More Professional Language

I think I am qualified for the community liaison position with your organization. As a recent graduate of ABC University with a major in marketing, I offer solid academic credentials as well as industry experience gained from an internship at GHI Company. If given the chance, I know that my strong business and marketing foundation would benefit your department, customers and bottom line.

I am hoping to receive an interview to discuss my qualifications. Please contact me at 555-5555 or email.com at your convenience to discuss my qualifications in more detail.

I feel your company has a lot to offer me. Your company is truly a leader in health care information -- you offer solutions that ultimately enhance the quality of health care delivery. I am excited by your mission and would be able to translate this excitement by providing top-notch administrative services to you and your team members.

Organization of the Thank You Letter For This Assignment

Opening (One Paragraph)

The purpose of the follow-up to an interview is to convey your thankfulness at being given an interview.

In the opening paragraph, refer to the position, the date of the interview, and thank the interviewer for allowing you to learn about the position and the company.

Body (One or Two Paragraphs)

Build on the strengths of the interview and once again emphasize the match between your skills, the position, and the organization.

In the body of your letter, present a personal analysis of your interview and visit. It is important to avoid clichés and generalizations such as, "My visit to your company was very informational and interesting." Write about your impressions of the company and your review of the interview proceedings.

You may also want to point out any new information that you learned about the company during your visit. If there is any new information about your education or work experience that you believe would be increase your chance of getting the position, present those as well.

Closing (One Paragraph)

Restate your understanding of the next step in the process and your continued interest in the position. Close by thanking your prospective employer for his/her time.

In your conclusion it is important to be positive and reflect goodwill. The letter's intent is to show the interviewer that you are thorough, courteous, efficient and, most importantly, that you are sincerely interested in the job. It is likely that sending this letter will set you apart from the crowd.

Evaluation of the Employment Assignment

90-100%

80-89%

Your assignment will be evaluated for content, organization, grammar, spelling, mechanics and your ability to follow instructions. Incomplete assignments are not eligible for evaluation.

Outstanding: You're hired! This assignment requires little or no revision. All tasks have been completed and each task demonstrates superior application of business communication concepts and principles outlined in the readings and exercises. The assignment contains few errors in content, grammar, spelling, punctuation, format, and/or typographical errors. Above Average: You're a strong candidate. This assignment needs some minor revisions. All tasks have been completed and each task demonstrates above average application of business communication concepts and principles outlined in the readings and exercises. The assignment has a moderate number of minor errors in content, grammar, spelling, punctuation, format, and/or typographical errors.

Satisfactory: You're one of a number of qualified candidates.This assignment needs moderate revision. All tasks have been completed and each task
demonstrates satisfactory application of business communication concepts and principles
outlined in the readings and exercises. The assignment has a number of errors in content,
grammar, spelling, punctuation, format, and/or typographical errors.70-79%Poor: You may be qualified, but the employer will most likely continue the search.
This assignment needs significant revision. At least one task or portion of a task was not
completed satisfactorily. The assignment has an inconsistent application of business
communication concepts and principles outlined in the readings and exercises. The
assignment has frequent and serious errors in content, grammar spelling, punctuation, format
and/or typographical errors that distort meaning.60-69%Incomplete: Your file was incomplete or late. The employer can't consider your50-69%

application.

This assignment is not eligible for evaluation because it was **not submitted before the due date and/or a significant portion of the assignment was not completed** according to the written guidelines.