Step-by-Step Go-To Guide:

A Handbook for Resumes, Cover Letters, Job Searches, and Interviews

Mansfield University Career Center
570-662-4133
http://career.mansfield.edu
Ground Floor, Alumni Hall

Contents

Your Career Center

The Step-by-Step Go-to Guide is designed to help you launch your career. It's not exhaustive, and it isn't the only way to do things, but it will help you get started on the basics … resumes, job hunting, and interviewing.

The Career Center is your partner as you begin your career. We are a "one stop shop" to help you with…
- Career exploration and planning (using FOCUS software)
- Resume writing workshops and one-to-one sessions by appointment
- Resume review and critique
- Campus career fairs and employer recruiting visits
- Special events (i.e. featured speaker, discussion panels)
- Contacts to PA's State System of Higher Education and other colleges' job fairs
- Job postings and internship announcements via the Mountie Career Connection (http://career.mansfield.edu)
- Mock interviews
- Information on graduate schools
- Resource library and computer work area
- Professional Clothes Closet – free professional clothing for current students

Our events calendar will tell you what's going on with the Career Center.
View it at **http://career.mansfield.edu** and click on the calendar link.

Work with us… and we'll get you to work!

Call us: 570-662-4133

Creating a Strong Resume

A resume details your professional preparation and background as they relate to your current career objective. It should be easy to read and a potential employer should be able to quickly identify your strengths and abilities. No resume lands you the job, but a good resume convinces an employer you are worth the time to interview.

There is no one right way to prepare a resume; but there are **general principles**:
- ✓ One to two pages is acceptable for a new college graduate.
- ✓ Must be error free. This is non-negotiable.
- ✓ Use lists. A resume is not a letter; don't use paragraphs or full sentences.
- ✓ Balance text with white space and use graphic elements carefully.

Talk with a CC staff member about your particular needs. You may email your resume to us for an online critique (attach your resume as Word document). **For more help**: The Resource Room in the Career Center has many books with hundreds of sample resumes for you to study. Make an appointment with us to review your resume to make sure it's the best it can be!

> ***Your resume is the first impression an employer has about you;***
> ***first impressions last.***

Ways to Organize your Resume

Two resume types are **Chronological** and **Functional (**sometimes called **Skills)**.

Chronological resumes are commonly the first resume written by students. Chronological resumes are easy to prepare. The information categories (education, employment history, achievements, activities) are listed in a time order, from the most recent to the least recent (backwards). The employment section details your work history and responsibilities.

Functional resumes focus on your skills. Information is organized based on skill categories, such as computers, communication, leadership, project management, editing, performance, fund raising or marketing. The skills-based resume also includes your educational credentials and your employment history. Each skill is listed and described in detail. It focuses on what you have done, and your experiences that match the employer's need.

Whatever style you choose, the essential information is the same. The difference is in how you organize your information and what you choose to emphasize. For some students who may have a substantial work history, a Functional resume is better suited.

Major Categories (usually) included on a Resume

1. Contact Information: Name and Address

- Your name should be listed at the top and prominent in some way (bigger font size; bold it). Use your full name, do not include nicknames. If your resume is more than one page, your name should be at the top of each successive page (like a header on a term paper).
- If you include two addresses (college and permanent), set them up in an easy-to-read style (see samples in this booklet). Include your phone number(s). Be sure that the phone number you are using will be answered in a professional manner. Now is not the time for silly outgoing messages.
- Include your e-mail address only if it is professional and tested to make sure it is working. Remember everything on your resume gives the employer an impression of the type of employee you will be. Even your email address can create a negative impression. For example, "partybrat@..." isn't a strong start.
- Make your contact information symmetrically formatted at the top of the page.

2. Candidate Summary Statement (also known as Profile, Summary of Qualifications, etc)

- Write your summary so it communicates what you can offer the employer; not what you want from the employer. Express what skills and knowledge you bring.
- Be specific. Review the job descriptions thoroughly. Offer yourself as a solution to the reader's problem: "exceptional organization skills developed through various leadership positions held through college career"
- If you are applying for more than one type of job, prepare a different resume for each, with its own slant for that particular job.
- A Summary is simply that: a condensed (two sentences max) statement of your key abilities and skills relevant to the specific job for which you are applying. "Skilled, dedicated and enthusiastic marketing professional seeking to join a cutting edge advertising firm with a socially-responsible client base."

3. Education Credentials

- Colleges and Universities should be listed in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Do not include high school information.
- Don't use abbreviations for your degree. Bachelor of Science (not B.S.) is correct.
- Our official name is Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. Use it.
- If you are several months or more away from graduation—use "Candidate for Bachelors in Arts, May 200X . . ." Make sure you include your major!
- If your grade point average is above a 3.00 (GPA 3.41/4.00), list it. If it's above a 3.00 only in your major, you need to label it that way (Major GPA 3.62/4.00). Be sure to include the 4.00 (some colleges use a 5.00 scale).
- Major courses can be listed as a subheading of education. Listing key coursework helps the reader know what you've learned. But be selective.
- Academic honors and awards can also be listed as a subheading, if there are two or more.
- If you have completed a senior thesis/project, or a significant internship, you should include this as part of the Education section.
- You should also include industry-related certifications and licenses a separate section usually titled "Certifications/Licenses".

4. Skills
- If you have chosen a skills (or functional) resume, this should be the main focus on your resume. Consider your experiences and break them up into relevant categories. For example, "Computer," "Project Management," "Teaching/Coaching," "Leadership," "Marketing," "Communication," "Organization, "Customer Service," "Performance" might be categories to use.
- For teachers, you might include a brief list of courses you are prepared to deliver.
- For a chronological resume, you will be listing each employment experience (in reverse order), and your duties or responsibilities for each job. These are the skills that you would want the employer to notice. Be precise in the skill name.
- Use industry related "keywords," abbreviations, lingo, buzzwords, etc., whatever is accepted within the field.

5. Employment/Relevant Experience (may be placed before or after skills)
- Usually listed from the most recent work experience and work backwards.
- Include dates of employment (August 2001 to December 2002, not 08/2001-12/02), correct name of company/organization ("The American Red Cross"), accurate job title, ("Volunteer Coordinator").
- Be Specific! Include specific job duties, accomplishments and achievements. Use percentages, numbers or statistics to demonstrate the quality of your work. Bullets or lists are often used to set apart each responsibility.
- Sometimes you may want to create a "Relevant Experience" section, which lists those jobs most pertinent to the one you're going for, and another section, "Additional Experience" which shows the rest of your work history.
- Include full-time, part-time, summer and volunteer work, on-campus work and internships. If you have several under one category you can separate by type of work.
- Don't include pay rates unless the job application instructions require you to do so.

6. Activities, Interests, Affiliations, Honors
- List only those that relate best to your career. Include any that demonstrate leadership.
- Include leadership positions such as Captain, President, etc.
- Only include interests if they are directly related to your career objective or if you have limited work experience.
- Do not include interests or affiliations that would be considered controversial or unimpressive to the employer. Religious, political or social activism groups may be interpreted negatively.
- Use a brief explanation if the reader might be unfamiliar with the purpose of a specific award or title.
- Be cautious about including social organizations to which you belong. Membership in a fraternity or sorority can be helpful, but it also can carry very negative stereotypes.

7. References
- Create a separate reference sheet. Including your professional references helps the reader move you forward in the hiring process. By offering needed information up front, the employer doesn't have to chase you down to ask you for it.
- Use 3-5 references. Include name, title, place of work and phone number.
- At least one reference should be a faculty member, and at least one reference should be work-related. Do not include personal/family members. They really can't speak objectively about your credentials as a potential employee.
- *If you are posting your resume online, do not include references' information. It is inappropriate for you to "post" someone else's contact information.

Truths about Resumes

- Your resume will only receive about 10-15 seconds for the first reading by an employer to decide if you are "interview worthy".
- The top 1/3 of the resume (after the contact info) is considered the "selling zone". Put your most impressive information here.
- There should be no misspellings or typing errors. Using spell check is not enough: you might be spelling the word correctly, but using the wrong word. Four human checkers are recommended.
- Do not use the word "I;" do not use the first person. A resume is not a letter.
- Avoid paragraph structure. Use lists, bullets and "easy to spot" layout.
- Highlight, bold, underline the points that you want the reader to see first, but be selective. Don't overdo the graphics.
- Use action verbs such as examined, detailed, prepared, improved, searched, compiled, tutored (See pages 10-11 for more action verb examples).
- Stick with one format and make sure that everything lines up. Inconsistent margins and spaces create a messy look.
- Do not change fonts.
- Do not mention why you left a position. Do not mention salary, unless specifically asked to do so.
- Do not include information unless you are able to discuss it or prove your ability.
- Don't use templates. They do not allow you to change their set format. This is your resume; make your own template. Template-generated resumes mark you as someone who unable to create your own document.

Today, many resumes are only accepted online through a company's website. Resumes collected this way go into a database, which is then queried by recruiters to find skill sets they need to fill positions within the organization. Thus, it's very important that your resume is "scan-able", which means a clean font, not too many bullets, and includes keywords, acronyms and buzzwords that will be found during a search. If you fail to name the key skills that are relevant to your major, then your resume won't be retrieved when a recruiter goes looking for a particular skill set.

If nothing else, remember this: Your resume should be written for the reader, not for you. Give the reader a reason to be interested in you. Help the reader like you. You have, on average, only 10 seconds to get the reader's attention.

The Resource Room in the Career Center has many, many books with hundreds of sample resumes to study for ideas. Come on in!

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Monique Mountie

Mmountie11@mounties.mansfield.edu   607-555-1234

Home Address   Campus Address
783 S. Main St.   40 Chesterfield Ave.
Bath, NY 14810   Mansfield PA 16933

Summary of Qualifications:
- Designed and facilitated technology trainings for various constituencies.
- Advanced knowledge of computer applications including MS Office, C++, and Perl

Education:
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, Mansfield PA   May 20XX (anticipated)
   Degree: Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems, IS concentration
   3.65/4.00 GPA

Corning Community College, Corning, NY   Fall 2007-Spring 2008
   Earned 21 credits, general studies

Relevant Coursework:
Business Programming   Systems Analysis   Networking
Assembly Language   Database Systems   Operations Management

Major Project:
"*An Analysis of Verbal Typography by FaceBook Users as Entering Freshmen*" Research project for Senior Capstone course. This was a mixed-methods effort using frequency pattern analysis and content structures coding.

Relevant Employment Experience:
Computer Assistance Center, Mansfield University   May 2009 to present
   User Support Specialist
      - Train, troubleshoot and problem solve for network users
      - Install various applications, including Windows XP, NT, 98, MS Office
      - Virus eradication and conduct upgrades
      - Run data reports based on queries

Mickey's Mac World, Hornell, NY   January to May 2009
   Customer Service Clerk
      - Assist customers in selecting computer systems
      - Demonstrate various applications to customers
      - Provide general office support

Additional Employment:
First United Church, Bolivar, NY   2001 to 2004 (summers)
   Youth Activities Director
      - Plan weekly activities for ages 6 to 12
      - Organize monthly field trip (museums, playground, bowling, etc.)
      - Supervise annual fund raiser (bake sale/car wash)

Skills:
- Microsoft Office (all applications, including PowerPoint, Excel, Word)
- Programming: VisualBasic, C++, Java, ColdFusion, Adobe, PhotoShop, Perl

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Monique Mountie

40 Chesterfield Ave. Mansfield PA 16933
mmountie11@mounties.mansfield.edu   607-555-1234

Summary of Qualifications:
- Experience with varied applications in PC and Mac environments.
- Advanced knowledge of computer applications including MS Office, C++, and Perl

Education:

Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, Mansfield PA   May 20XX (anticipated)
    Degree: Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems, IS concentration
    3.65/4.00 GPA

Corning Community College, Corning, NY   Fall 2007-Spring 2008
    Earned 21 credits, general studies

Major Project:

"*An Analysis of Verbal Typography by FaceBook Users as Entering Freshmen*" Research project for Senior Capstone course. This was a mixed-methods effort using frequency pattern analysis and content structures coding.

Computer Skills:
- Fully proficient in Windows 98, 2000, NT, XP and Mac applications
- Programming languages: C++, VisualBasic, Java, ColdFusion
- Database management in Access-based functions
- Web applications, including desktop publishing

Leadership:
- President, Computer Science Club, Mansfield University
- Team Lead, Senior Project, Advanced Information Systems and Integration
- Group Leader, Vacation Bible School, Raleigh, NC

Customer Service:
- User Support Specialist with troubleshooting, user training, software installations
- Customer Service Clerk, Mickey's Mac World

Communication:
- Proficient with public speaking
- Strong group leader
- Excellent desktop publishing/editing abilities

Employment History

Computer Assistance Center, Mansfield University   May 2005 to present
User Support Specialist Mickey's Mac World, Hornell, NY   January to May 2005
    Customer Service Clerk
First United Church, Bolivar, NY   2001 to 2004 (summers)
    Youth Activities Director

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Monique Mountie

40 Chesterfield Ave. Mansfield PA 16933

mmountie11@mounties.mansfield.edu   607-555-1234

References

Dr. Digit Analog, Chair

Dept. of Computer Science

Mansfield University

221 Elliott Hall

Mansfield, PA 16933

570-662-XXXX

Ms. Shelly Computer, IT User Support Manager

Campus Technologies Division

Mansfield University

G004 Memorial Hall

Mansfield, PA 16933

570-662-XXXX

Ms. Mickey Mac, Owner

Mickey's Mac World

123 Main Street

Hornell, NY 14843

607-587-XXXX

Rev. George Begood

First United Church

345 East Street

Bolivar, NY 14715

607-588-XXXX

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Powerful Resume Language

How you express yourself verbally – orally and in writing – has tremendous impact on the impression you create. If you use language imprecisely, incorrectly, or immaturely, those same adjectives may be applied to you.

A few pointers for resume language:
- ✓ Don't write in full, complete sentences. Phrases, key words, and bullets are preferred.
- ✓ Eliminate personal pronouns (I, me, mine).
- ✓ Use buzzwords, technical jargon, and correct names (i.e. "MS Word, not "word processing").
- ✓ Use action verbs to describe your achievements and experiences.

Communication/People Skill

Advertised	Corresponded	Incorporated	Mediated	Reconciled
Announced	Debated	Influenced	Moderated	Recruited
Arbitrated	Developed	Interacted	Negotiated	Referred
Articulated	Directed	Interrogated	Observed	Reinforced
Collaborated	Discussed	Interpreted	Outlined	Reported
Communicated	Drafted	Interviewed	Participated	Responded
Composed	Edited	Involved	Persuaded	Solicited
Conferred	Elicited	Joined	Presented	Specified
Consulted	Enlisted	Judged	Promoted	Summarized
Contacted	Expressed	Lectured	Proposed	Synthesized
Conveyed	Formulated	Listened	Publicized	Translated
Convinced	Furnished	Marketed	Published	

Creative Skills

Acted	Customized	Fashioned	Initiated	Modified
Adapted	Designed	Formulated	Innovated	Performed
Authored	Displayed	Illustrated	Integrated	Photographed
Composed	Entertained	Imagined	Invented	Revitalized
Conceptualized	Established	Implemented	Launched	Shaped
Condensed	Exhibited	Improvised	Modeled	Sketched

Data/Financial Skills

Accounted for	Budgeted	Forecasted	Prepared	Reduced
Adjusted	Calculated	Formulated	Programmed	Retrieved
Administered	Computed	Generated	Projected	Tabulated
Allocated	Conserved	Logged	Qualified	Tracked
Analyzed	Documented	Marketed	Quoted	Transacted
Appraised	Equated	Measured	Reconciled	Transferred
Audited	Estimated	Netted	Recorded	
Balanced	Figured	Planned	Reported	

Helping Skills

Accommodated	Arranged	Educated	Furthered	Rehabilitated
Adapted	Collaborated	Enabled	Guided	Resolved
Advocated	Contributed	Encouraged	Insured	Simplified
Aided	Counseled	Ensured	Intervened	Supplied
Alleviated	Demonstrated	Expedited	Motivated	Supported
Answered	Diagnosed	Fostered	Referred	Volunteered

Management/Leadership Skills

Administered	Delegated	Hired	Navigated	Reviewed
Analyzed	Developed	Hosted	Overhauled	Secured
Approved	Directed	Improved	Oversaw	Selected
Attained	Diversified	Incorporated	Planned	Strengthened
Authorized	Employed	Increased	Presided	Suggested
Chaired	Enforced	Initiated	Produced	Supervised
Conceptualized	Established	Inspected	Recognized	
Consolidated	Expanded	Instituted	Recommended	
Contracted	Governed	Managed	Reorganized	
Converted	Handled	Merged	Replaced	
Decided	Headed	Motivated	Restored	

Organizational Skills

Approved	Coordinated	Obtained	Registered	Supplied
Arranged	Corrected	Operated	Reserved	Standardized
Catalogued	Corresponded	Ordered	Responded	Streamlined
Categorized	Distributed	Organized	Restructured	Systematized
Charted	Incorporated	Prioritized	Reviewed	Updated
Classified	Inspected	Processed	Routed	Validated
Coded	Logged	Provided	Scheduled	Verified
Collected	Maintained	Purchased	Screened	
Compiled	Monitored	Recorded	Submitted	

Research Skills

Analyzed	Detected	Examined	Inspected	Searched
Collected	Determined	Experimented	Interviewed	Summarized
Compared	Diagnosed	Explored	Investigated	Surveyed
Concluded	Discovered	Extracted	Located	Synthesized
Conducted	Documented	Formulated	Observed	Systematized
Correlated	Evaluated	Gathered	Predicted	Tested
Critiqued	Equated	Identified	Reviewed	Theorized

Teaching Skills

Adapted	Corrected	Enforced	Instilled	Simulated
Advised	Critiqued	Evaluated	Instructed	Stimulated
Assessed	Developed	Facilitated	Lectured	Taught
Assigned	Disciplined	Guided	Motivated	Tested
Clarified	Enabled	Individualized	Persuaded	Trained
Coached	Encouraged	Inspired	Rewarded	Tutored

Technical Skills

Adapted	Computed	Engineered	Overhauled	Standardized
Applied	Conserved	Executed	Programmed	Transmitted
Assembled	Constructed	Fabricated	Regulated	Trouble-shot
Automated	Converted	Fortified	Remodeled	Upgraded
Built	Designed	Graphed	Repaired	Utilized
Calculated	Determined	Installed	Restored	
Calibrated	Devised	Operated	Specialized	

What about e-language? Language evolves and changes, and technology is accelerating how our language is transformed. While it's perfectly acceptable (expected, in fact) to use abbreviated words, emoticons and other neo-symbols when you're texting, if you do this on a resume, you're making a BIG mistake. Just because e-mail or other forms of e-communication is convenient, that is not an excuse for improper use of the language. How you use language reflects on your professionalism. Don't expect an employer to be impressed with your texting skills. And don't expect them to be willing to translate e-language to conventional use. They won't have the patience for it.

Cover Letters

They are useful for these reasons:
- Specifies the job to which you're applying.
- Provides a quick introduction to the skills you have that meet the employer's needs.
- Demonstrates you have done some research into the organization and know something about the company and the position available.
- Expresses a sense of your personality and writing style, which can't be done with just a resume.

For these reasons, cover letters are a valuable tool. On the other hand, some cover letters never get read because they are just one more piece of paper that a busy recruiter or hiring manager doesn't have time to read.

Pay close attention to the language of the job announcement/posting. Mirror that language in your cover letter (but don't parrot it). Remember: the reader is looking for a "fit" into the existing team.

Some job announcements will require a cover letter (also sometimes called an inquiry, interest or introduction letter). If it's required, send one. If it's not required, the choice is entirely up to you.

The samples provided here are very standard and they should be used only as starting point for you to begin writing your own. Cover letters need to be in your voice, balanced with a professional tone.

Sample Cover Letter 1: In response to a job announcement; with an achievement focus

Your Contact Information (cut and paste the heading from your resume)

Date

Address of Reader (to whom you are writing)

Dear Mr./Ms. _____: (if you don't know the name of the person, don't use a salutation)

Please accept this letter as application for the position of Assistant Manager of New Shoes of America. This position was advertised in the May 4th Sunday edition of the New Mansfield Times.

By May 22, 2*** I will have earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, with a GPA of 3.55/4.00. For three years I have worked part-time as Kitchen Manager at Long's Riverview Inn. On several occasions I have teamed with the Assistant Manager to provide special services for weddings, graduation parties and large corporate events. While at Mansfield University, I was President of the Marketing Club. During my second year, our group was able to raise $1,000.00 for Meals on Wheels and increase club enrollment by 50%. My restaurant experiences, education and leadership activities show my enthusiasm, dedication and creativity, qualities needed for any managerial position.

I would like the opportunity to personally discuss my qualifications with you at your convenience. Please contact me at the phone number provided on my resume, included. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here
Your name

~~~~~~

Sample Cover Letter 2: Applying for a specific position; with a credentials focus

Your Contact Information (cut and paste the heading from your resume)

Date

Address of Reader (the person to whom you are writing)

Dear Mr./Ms. _____: (if you don't know the name of the person, don't use a salutation)

Please accept this resume in response to the job announcement I received through the Career Center at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. My career goal has always been to work with preschool aged children, and I would appreciate being considered as a candidate for the position of Assistant Director of Young Minds Daycare.

You will note from my enclosed resume that I have many of the skills and abilities outlined in your job description. Please consider the following:
- Bachelors degree in Elementary Education; PA State Teacher Certification
- Two years experience as a professional nanny, Rochester, NY
- Practicum experience in daycare setting
- CPR certification
- Supervision experience
- Confident in my written and spoken communication skills
- Elective courses in education and learning disabilities

While in college, I volunteered with College Peer and with Literacy Volunteers and often provided childcare to professors' families near campus. All these experiences have reinforced my desire to work with children.

I would be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this position with you. I will contact you within two weeks to confirm receipt of my application and to see if we can arrange an appointment. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here
Your name

Enclosure: Resume

~~~~~~

Sample Cover Letter 3: Prospecting for a job, internship or seasonal work

Your Contact Information (cut and paste the heading from your resume)

Date

Address of Reader (the person to whom you are writing)

Dear Mr./Ms. _____: (if you don't know the name of the person, don't use a salutation)

While visiting your website I reviewed your company description, goals and mission and learned that you sponsor internships. I am inquiring as to the possibility of obtaining a summer (or just "position") position as an intern. If you are offering internships (or "if there is an opening"), please consider me an enthusiastic and qualified candidate.

I am currently finishing my second year at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania majoring in Business/Travel and Tourism. I have experience in Consumer Psychology, Marketing and Business Essentials. For the past two summers, I have worked for the Park District in Western New York as an assistant in the Youth Activities department. I am particularly proud of my involvement with the Summer Reading Rally program, which placed second in a state-wide youth education contest. As part of the team, I was responsible for promotional marketing and event scheduling.

As an intern, I will bring my skills, education and dependability to your company, while learning about many different aspects of the hospitality industry.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I would welcome the opportunity to interview with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here
Your name

Enclosure: Resume

The Resource Room in the Career Center has many, many books with hundreds of sample letters to study for ideas. Come on in!

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Job Hunting

Getting Started: Set your Attitude

Focus on "industry" instead of by company, product, job function or geography. You may find other options that you didn't know existed. Examples of industries are health care, construction, insurance, education, government, service, hospitality, entertainment, non-profit, financial services.

Read the entire job description, not just the title. Don't apply if you don't meet at least 80% of the requirements!

Keep good records. Create a job search folder so you can keep track of what you've applied for, the responses you've received, interviews you've been on, and where you are in the process.

Finding a job is a job... A college degree doesn't guarantee you anything, but with one, you have an advantage over those who don't: You have knowledge, problem solving skills, critical thinking abilities and persistence.

Mountie Career Connection, **Mansfield University Online Job Board:**
http://career.mansfield.edu

Simply go to the website, register (for alumni) or login using your active directory password (for current students), upload your resume and start job hunting! This job board is used by all the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education campuses, so literally hundreds of jobs are posted there by hundreds of employers.

➢ **A few words about your electronic profile and your job hunt:**

By now, you've probably heard about the concerns being raised by social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and YouTube. With technology comes opportunity… and it's up to you to decide how smart you're going to be with that technology. Some people feel that social networking sites are just for fun, a way to meet other people, blog your thoughts, vent your frustration, or simply have some fun. That's all true.

The problems occur when users naively assume that what it posted on "their" pages is private… **nothing is private if it's posted on the internet**. If you allow one friend to your page, and your friend allows three other people to her page, there's a breach in your so-called security. Everything you post online—pictures, blogs, reactions to other people's postings—is available to a savvy employer. Your images, your language, and your escapades are available for scrutiny by any potential employer who wants to look for it.

Career Centers across the country are now actively warning students: Don't post anything on a social networking site that would compromise your employability.

At Mansfield, the Career Center staff has seen employers cancel selection interviews based on a student's Facebook posting; we've seen employers rescind offers of jobs because of what they saw on Facebook. And yes, employers DO have the right to consider information that YOU posted on the public internet. It is fair, and it is legal. We're not against social networking sites. They can be a lot of fun. Just be smart about using them, and how they can hurt your career.

Job Hunting Strategies:

Career Center: job postings, on campus job fairs, employer interview days, access to regional colleges' career events… **start with us.**

Networking: Family, friends, classmates, faculty, staff, former bosses. Tell people you are looking; ask them for leads about jobs. *Networking is the #1 way people get hired*. There is NO OTHER METHOD MORE EFFECTIVE THAN NETWORKING!

Mansfield University faculty and alumni: Your faculty is often a great source for job leads because they often have long-term relationships with different employers and MU alums. You should also get involved with the MU Alumni Association, which is a great way to network with our graduates.

Traditional Media: Newspaper (the Sunday section is best for job opportunities), radio, and local TV cable access channel.

Professional Organizations/Licensing Agencies: Similar to networking, but with a professional focus. People who belong to these organizations are very active with their profession. In addition, these groups host their own job posting boards for members only.

Employment Agencies: You might also consider applying to work for an employment company, which then tries to place you with their client companies. You can experience a lot of temp work, but it's a good way to broaden your network, sharpen your skills and learn new ones.

Nontraditional methods work too. Think about volunteering. You won't make much money, but you will meet people and this can be a way to network your way to a job. Great jobs can be found in the non-profit sector (working for charities, government). Not everyone is suited for a corporate career; maybe you are one of them.

Internet: Used strategically, the Internet is terrific for job searching. If you focus your search toward your major and the most relevant industries, you may have pretty good luck. If you use the big boards (www.hotjobs.com; www.monster.com) you'll be swimming in a very large ocean. Use the big boards to study current hiring trends and what employers are generally seeking.

The CC has a list of job search websites for each major on campus. Come get your copy!

Campus Career Events

Throughout the year, the Career Center hosts employers who conduct **campus recruiting visits**. Usually regional employers, although some are national companies, they represent a wide variety of industries, including manufacturing, business, health, education and technology. Some companies offer information sessions, which are general meetings open to interested students to learn about the company. Company representatives make the presentations and usually hold a question and answer session as well.

Other times, company representatives host **interviewing days**, where pre-selected candidates are interviewed for positions. The jobs are announced through academic departments and through the CC website. Interview dates are posted on the Career Center website (http://career.mansfield.edu). To get an interview appointment, contact us by phone at 570-662- 4133.

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Even if the company isn't exactly what you are looking for, if they have opportunities for your major (or closely related to it), you should interview. Why? Just like riding a bike, or learning to drive stick shift—you get better with practice. Interviewing is a skill; one that improves with more experience. Besides, the recruiter may pass your resume on to a colleague…and they may be interested in you.

You should prepare yourself for an on-campus interview just as you would if it were taking place at the company's office. Dress right; prepare your answers; have extra copies of your resume; research the company. This is a real interview…job offers are made at campus interviews.

Another option is for you to attend **job fairs** (also called careers days, festivals, expos). The Mansfield University Career Center hosts a Health Care Job Fair (fall semester) and an Annual Job/Internship Fair (spring semester). As a Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education student, you are welcome to attend job fairs at other System campuses, too.

When you attend a job fair, always…
- Dress professionally. You are making an impression; recruiters expect you to be dressed correctly.
- Bring at least 20 copies of your resume, with references attached. Employers collect resumes to review later.
- The hosting college should provide a directory of participating employers at the door. Use it.
- Be strategic. Find out which employers are looking for your major and go to them first.
- Be personable. Recruiters at job fairs meet hundreds of people a day. You need to stand out and be memorable (in a good way). Don't just present your resume and explain what you're looking for---everyone else is doing that. Figure out a way to make yourself distinct from everyone else.
- Be patient. Large job fairs mean standing in line for a long time. Use that time to listen to what others are saying, plan your own "sales pitch", or make new contacts with others waiting.

A final word about career events like job fairs: Every time you go through one, you'll get better at it. Try to approach each one as a chance to improve your communication skills, make a new contact and expand your network. If they call to say you didn't get an interview, ask what you need to do to make yourself more marketable. A good recruiter will tell you— so listen & learn from them.

Networking

The Big Secret*: Over 60% of jobs are filled through personal or professional contacts—not through a want ad, an internet posting or a job fair. So, what does this mean for you? Simply, you need to activate and sustain a professional network. A network is a collection of people you know who can provide job leads and career advice throughout your work-life.*

A network is not just who you know, but who knows you and what they know about you. Think about all the people you know. Family, friends, classmates, housemates, co-workers, former employers, people you go to church with, or people where you volunteer. Each of these individuals can be a link in your network chain. Don't overlook MU: beyond the Career Center, you have faculty and staff who can also serve as network contacts. Build good relations!

How do I start my network?
- **Let people know you are looking for a job*, and what type of job you want*.** A network isn't much good if it isn't directed toward a goal. Give people copies of your resume. If you want to make it really easy, create some business cards for yourself (name, contact info, school, degree, major) and hand them out whenever you meet people who might be links in your network.

- **Stay active**. Get involved in the community. Be a volunteer. The more people you meet, and make a good impression on, the better your chances. Someone you've impressed will tell someone else who knows someone else and then someone else hears good things about you…
- **Remember that every time you step outside, someone is watching you**. Look and act nice all the time. Negative impressions are hard to overcome. Stop cussing; communicate as an adult.
- **Join a Professional Organization**. You can give yourself a real advantage throughout your career lifespan if you join and actively participate in Professional Organizations. Professional Organizations can offer you several advantages, such as a network of professionals to use as mentors and colleagues, advance knowledge of industry trends, and opportunities to serve your chosen career field. Many groups offer free or deeply discounted student memberships, resume and credential referral services, and job notices. Who knows? You might just end up working for a professional organization, as a lobbyist, a scientist or a policy maker.

The Interview: Time to Shine

Step 1: What to wear. Like it or not, clothes say a lot about who you are. They send messages about you, your motivation, professionalism and judgment. Some studies indicate that an employer makes a judgment about you within the first 15 seconds… and your clothing is the primary messenger.

An interview is a professional meeting, not a date. Dress accordingly.

General Hints
- Wear conservative interviewing attire. It's always better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- Have fresh breath and clean teeth; do not have gum or candy in your mouth.
- Have clean, recently cut and neatly brushed hair. If you have long hair, neatly pull it back.
- Use antiperspirant. Do not use perfume or cologne. Your interviewer may be allergic.
- Polish your shoes.
- Clean-shaven is best, but if you have facial hair, it should be neatly trimmed.
- Carry a pen, paper, extra resumes, etc. in a portfolio or briefcase. Leave the backpack at home.
- Minimize jewelry, makeup, hair products. No piercings except small earrings.
- Shut off your cell (not just on vibrate!). Whoever is calling can wait.
- Make sure clothing is clean, pressed and in good repair.

For Women:
- Neatly trimmed nails with clear polish is advised.
- A basic, tailored suit in a plain color such as black, blue or gray is always a good investment. Pant suits are perfectly acceptable, and may present a more gender-neutral image (skirts are feminizing).
- Skirts should be at the knee when you sit down, nothing shorter. Ever.
- Avoid tight clothing or anything revealing. Your body shape should not be highly evident.
- Skin-toned hosiery is best.
- Choose shoes with a lower heal (2" maximum). Be sure you can walk in them—some interviews may involve a tour of the facility!
- Avoid looking like a pack mule: carry one portfolio (some have small pockets for you to carry breath mints and your car key—not the full key chain). Leave the purse at home.

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For Men:
- A suit in a dark color (gray, black, blue are always safe choices)
- Coordinate with a solid dress shirt (not a polo style!) of white, beige, gray or blue. Color is ok, but not neon and no wild prints.
- Choose an interesting tie (but still in good taste). This is how you can express your personality.
- Shoes say a lot: black or deep brown leather wingtips or loafers. No hikers, sneakers or sandals.
- Take everything out of your pockets—keys, change, etc., that will jingle.
- Clean, trim and buff your fingernails.
- A small tie clip is appropriate; maybe a lapel pin, but not both. Go easy on the bling factor.

What is "business professional" and "business casual" for work? Each organization defines professional/formal and casual dress differently. In fact, one company's "business casual" can be another's "business professional"!

Business Professional/Formal: <u>Men</u>: a suit, with tie, button-down shirt, black shoes (wingtips preferred), gold watch, one ring (wedding or class), black socks. <u>Women</u>: a suit; coordinating blouse, low heels (pumps), understated jewelry, hose, minimal makeup, controlled hair.

Business Casual: <u>Men</u>: khakis or cords are fine, sport coat (or nice sweater), tie is optional; loafers or more casual shoe (never sneakers unless that's the "code" in the office). Sometimes, polo or collared knit shirt is acceptable. <u>Women</u>: trousers/dress pants or khakis; cardigan or fashion jacket; colored tights ok; flat shoes are fine. Skirts should still be at the knee or below. Blouses/tops should be conservative in cut and fabric; avoid sleeveless.

Step 2: Research the Company. Learning about the company is essential to a successful interview. If you don't know the basics about an employer, most of your interview time will be used by the recruiter having to explain things to you. Failure to do your homework before an interview can quickly turn off interviewers. They will question the enthusiasm of a student who didn't bother to find out basic information. The best sources of information are a company's website, annual reports, employment brochures, and news articles. Even a simple Google search can uncover a wealth of information.

Facts to learn when you are researching an organization:
- Size
- Name/position of the interviewer
- Owner/Founder
- How long it has been in business
- Products/Services
- Is the company expanding or merging?
- Location(s)
- What is the future of the company?
- Is the outlook good for growth
- Any recent industry news

Step 3: Get Ready for the Interview Questions. Take some time before the interview to think about yourself. What are your likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses? Why did you choose your major? In an interview, you should be able to answer these questions with one to two well-thought-out sentences, but don't sound over-rehearsed. Avoid answering with a yes/no, but also avoid being long-winded.

Prepare a few stories or examples that show your ability to work in a team, your work ethic, determination, willingness to learn, etc. Often during the interview you will be asked **situational questions** that may start out, "tell me about a time when" or "share an example of." Don't use negative examples. Always turn potential weaknesses into opportunities to develop. Be prepared for the unexpected. They may ask you to take a test, demonstrate your ability at a particular skill, or present an impromptu speech.

Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself. (Work related answers only…not how many children are in your family, etc. Focus on two or three "stars" about your qualifications.)
- What are your short and long-term career goals?
- Why do you think you would be successful in this job?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- Why are you interested in this job/position? Why did you choose to interview with us?
- Why did you choose your college major? What courses did you like best? Least? Why?
- What have you learned from past work experience?
- What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?
- Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
- What jobs have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?
- How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies? (Be careful with this one… they simply want to know how you unwind, not details about the family vacation!)
- What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- What is your ideal career?
- Tell me exactly what about this job seems most interesting to you.
- Give me an example of a time when you worked as part of a team. What did you like about that? What didn't you like?
- What was your biggest challenge at school, and what did you do about it?
- Tell me about a project you worked on that you are most proud of.
- Can you think of an example when you had to use creativity to solve a problem or to overcome a work-related obstacle? How did it turn out?
- Tell me about a time when you failed or didn't achieve your goal.
- Describe for me your experience in a leadership position.
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult team member or co-worker. What did you do? What were the results?

Sample Questions You Might Want To Ask the Interviewer

Asking questions at the end of the interview shows the company that you are interested. It is your chance to gather important information about the job to help you decide if it is right for you. If this is your first interview with the firm, it is not the time to ask questions about salary. Never be the first to bring up compensation issues.

- What are the responsibilities for this position?
- What is a typical day like in the department?
- What are some immediate goals for this department? How do you see my abilities adding to the team?
- If I were hired, would I have a mentor? What is the company's training or orientation for new employees?
- How would I be evaluated? Is there a formal review process?
- What sort of additional training should I consider to better prepare myself if I were to be hired?
- What is the breakdown of individual work time vs. team work time?

Not having any questions will hurt you as much as a few bad answers to their questions. If you don't have any questions, you are clearly saying you aren't interested and don't really care about the job.

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Unusual Interview Situations: What Do I Do?

Sometimes, you might be asked to participate in a unique or non-standard interview situation, such as a phone interview or a group interview. Sometimes, you may have to deal with illegal or inappropriate questions. Here are some tips for handling these situations.

Phone Interviews: Employers try to avoid spending a lot of money on a hiring process if they can. It's much cheaper to conduct a phone interview than to fly you in, pay for lodging and meals and use a lot of human time during an interview. So, if you have a phone interview scheduled:
- ✓ Have your resume in front of you. You can then refer directly to it during the conversation, and it will serve to remind you of your skills/qualifications.
- ✓ Dress up. Studies show that people perform better when they dress the part.
- ✓ Stand up. You will speak more intelligently, more seriously and use an elevated vocabulary than if you're slouching in a chair or on the couch.
- ✓ Face a blank wall and have no distractions. This will force you to concentrate on the conversation, and you'll be able to hear the vocal cues from your interviewer. One of the disadvantages in phone interviews is that you can't see your interviewer so you can't see the nonverbal feedback (facial expressions, pen tapping, smiling, nodding), so you need to really tune into to the vocal cues.
- ✓ Just like a "regular" interview, you should have your responses ready and your own questions for them prepared.

Group Interviews: Because teamwork is so important in any organization, many employers are using group interviews to judge a person's qualifications for a job. This is also time-efficient: Four people interviewing one person for one hour is much more efficient than four individual one-hour meetings. A group interview can be a little intimidating but try to:
- ✓ Speak to everyone when you answer each question, with a slight emphasis of attention directed to the person who asked the question.
- ✓ Watch the nonverbal cues carefully. One person may fully "get" your answer, but someone else may not. Check to make sure everyone understands.
- ✓ Listen for sub-text. A group interview is a good indication for you about how well the team operates right now, and what type of person they need to round out the team.
- ✓ As you are introduced to the group, jot each person's name down in a small sketch of how they are seated in front of you… then use their names! Etiquette demands that you use "Mr." or "Ms." unless they tell you to use their first name.

Illegal/Inappropriate Questions: This is a tricky area, because you have the right to decline to answer these questions, but the reality is that your refusal may cost you the job. Most of the time, interviewers ask inappropriate questions simply because they don't know any better. How do you know if it's an illegal question? Generally, if the question is seeking information related to gender, religious practices, sexual orientation, age or physical disability, or marital status, it's probably illegal. Remember, though, that some jobs do require employees to be capable of lifting 50 pounds, or able to work on Saturdays. If the interviewer can explain how the question directly relates to the job requirements, then it is probably a legal question. Essentially, you have four choices:
- ✓ Answer the question even if you believe it is illegal. Don't make an issue of it.
- ✓ Ask the interviewer to clarify how the question relates to the job function.
- ✓ Explain that you are uncomfortable with that question but answer it anyway.
- ✓ State that you believe the question is illegal and decline to answer.

What about compensation?

You should know what you are worth walking in the door. Get a good sense of the going rate for someone with your qualifications by doing some research on the internet (www.salary.com, www.glassdoor.com, and www.salarywizard.com are pretty good.) However, what you think you should earn and what the employer is willing to pay may be quite far apart. Factors that cause this difference are geography (rural vs urban, northeast vs southwest), the employer's industry and how the interviewer perceives your learning curve.

Salary is important, but you also need to look at the entire compensation package which may include health/dental/vision/life insurance, retirement plan, benefit time, etc. Generally, if the value of the benefits adds 12-15% value to your base salary, that's a good deal. For example, if your base salary is $30,000 and the benefits added value is 13%, that means you are actually "earning" $33,900. You don't have to spend your take-home money on health insurance, life insurance, etc., because the company does that for you. It's true that you need take home pay to meet your obligations, but what you don't have to pay for is "money in the bank", too.

Step 4: Follow Up. Within two days after your interview, send a thank you note (either electronic directly to those who interviewed you, or on paper). It does make a difference. Here's a **true** story to illustrate:

Two candidates were interviewed for one position. Both met all the criteria for education and work experience; both had excellent references; both had excellent skills; both interviewed very well. The recruiter and the manager struggled with the decision and decided to let it ride a few days, after which they held a phone conference. During the conversation, the recruiter checked her mail. In it was a thank you note from one candidate. She told the manager and read the note to her. "Well," said the manager, "that's it for me. If he cares enough to write a note, just as a courtesy, he's our guy. That note tells me he'll catch the details and follow through. And he's got good customer service skills. Call him—make him the offer." This is a true story.

For the price of a stamp, he landed at $60k/annual salary job.

Write the thank you note!

Sample Thank You Letter

Your Contact Information (cut and paste header from your resume)

Date

Addressee (the person who interviewed you)

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you on December 1, 2***. The information you shared with me was excellent and gave me an opportunity to learn more about your company. I am convinced that I can be a genuine asset in moving toward here you would mention some specific goal or project which was discussed during the interview. I am excited about the possibility of applying my education and experience to the position we discussed (or name the position).

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Summary Concepts of *The Step-by-Step Go-to Guide*

The Career Center should be on your list of <u>essential resources</u>: we can help you with career exploration, resource books, resume reviews, personal appointments, mock interviews, recruiter days, Job Fairs and more. Why wouldn't you give yourself an advantage?

Resumes *can* be two pages, and should be written to appeal to the reader's needs (not yours).

Cover letters should be written strategically. Think carefully about how you meet the employer's need.

Job searches combine networking with tools such as the internet. Don't rely on the internet alone. Volunteer, serve an internship… build your contacts.

Expand your job search to industries, not just job titles.

Prepare for your interview carefully: dress, research, rehearse.

Thank you notes are absolutely required.

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