

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE RESUME AND COVER LETTER

The task of writing a resume may seem overwhelming if you are unfamiliar with this type of document, but there are some easily understood techniques that can and should be used. This section was written to help you understand the purpose of the resume, the different types of resume formats available, and how to write the sections of information traditionally found on a resume. We will present examples and explanations that address questions frequently posed by people writing their first resume or updating an old resume.

Even within the formats and suggestions given below, however, there are infinite variations. True, most resumes follow one of the outlines suggested below, but you should feel free to adjust the resume to suit your needs and make it expressive of your life and experience.

### WHY WRITE A RESUME?

The purpose of a resume is to convince an employer that you should be interviewed. You'll want to present enough information to show that you can make an immediate and valuable contribution to an organization. A resume is not an in-depth historical or legal document; later in the job search process you'll be asked to document your entire work history on an application form and attest to its validity. The resume should, instead, highlight relevant information pertaining directly to the organization that will receive the document or the type of position you are seeking.

We will discuss four types of resumes in this chapter: chronological resume, functional resume, targeted resume, and the broadcast letter. The reasons for using one type of resume over another and the typical format for each are addressed in the following sections.

## THE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

The chronological resume is the most common of the various resume formats and therefore the format that employers are most used to receiving. This type of resume is easy to read and understand because it details the chronological progression of jobs you have held. (See Exhibit 2.1.) It begins with your most recent employment and works back in time. If you have a solid work history, or experience that provided growth and development in your duties and responsibilities, a chronological resume will highlight these achievements. The typical elements of a chronological resume include the heading, a career objective, educational background, employment experience, activities, and references.

### The Heading

The heading consists of your name, address, and telephone number. Recently it has come to include fax numbers and electronic mail addresses as well. We suggest that you spell out your full name and type it in all capital letters in bold type. After all, *you* are the focus of the resume! If you have a current as well as a permanent address and you include both in the heading, be sure to indicate until what date your current address will be valid. The two-letter state abbreviation should be the only abbreviation that appears in your heading. Don't forget to include the zip code with your address and the area code with your telephone number.

### The Objective

As you formulate the wording for this part of your resume, keep the following points in mind.

**The Objective Focuses the Resume.** Without a doubt, this is the most challenging part of the resume for most resume writers. Even for individuals who have quite firmly decided on a career path, it can be difficult to encapsulate all they want to say in one or two brief sentences. For job seekers who are unfocused or unclear about their intentions, trying to write this section can inhibit the entire resume writing process.

Recruiters tell us, time and again, that the objective creates a frame of reference for them. It helps them see how you express your goals and career focus. In

Exhibit 2.1

Chronological Resume

DAVID ADAM BAKER

Apartment 6  
Boston University  
Boston, MA 02123  
(617) 555-7500  
(until May 1995)

229 Kelton Street  
Brighton, MA 02135  
(617) 555-8841

OBJECTIVE

A career in publishing, initially as an editor and ultimately as a managing editor.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Communications  
Boston University  
May 1995  
Minor: English  
Overall GPA 3.2 on a 4.0 scale

HONORS/AWARDS

Dean's List, Fall Semester 1994  
*Who's Who Among Universities and Colleges*, 1993-95  
The *BU Daily Student Reporting Award*, 1994

RELATED COURSES

Publishing Law  
Ethics in Publishing  
Media and the Marketplace  
Creative Writing

EXPERIENCE

Tutor, Academic Support Services, Boston University. Part-time, 1992-95.  
Taught students basic composition skills, organizing material, writing effective openings and conclusions.  
Staff Assistant, Little, Brown & Co., Inc., Boston, MA. Summers, 1992-94  
Editorial department, trade hardcover division. Proofread and edited manuscripts for publication.

continued

continued

Staff Assistant, *Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. Part-time, 1992-93  
Work-study job as one of five assistants for a major newspaper.  
Assisted travel editor screening freelance submissions and press releases. Editing and proofreading.

ACTIVITIES

Yearbook Production Staff, Boston University, 1992-present.  
Evening with an Author Program, 1992-present. Arrange for guest speakers, act as escort, coordinate accommodations and transportation.

REFERENCES

Both personal and professional references are available upon request.

In addition, the statement may indicate in what ways you can immediately benefit an organization. Given the importance of the objective, every point covered in the resume should relate to it. If information doesn't relate, it should be omitted. With the word processing technology available today, each resume can and should be tailored for individual employers or specific positions that are available.

**Choose an Appropriate Length.** Because of the brevity necessary for a resume, you should keep the objective as short as possible. Although objectives of only four or five words often don't show much direction, objectives that take three full lines would be viewed as too wordy and might possibly be ignored.

**Consider Which Type of Objective Statement You Will Use.** There are many ways to state an objective, but generally there are four forms this statement can take: (1) a very general statement; (2) a statement focused on a specific position; (3) a statement focused on a specific industry; or (4) a summary of your qualifications. In our contacts with employers, we often hear that many resumes don't exhibit any direction or career goals, so we suggest avoiding general statements when possible.

**1. General Objective Statement.** General objective statements look like the following:

- An entry-level educational programming coordinator position
- An entry-level marketing position

This type of objective would be useful if you know what type of job you want but you're not sure which industries interest you.

**2. Position-Focused Objective.** Following are examples of objectives focusing on a specific position:

To obtain the position of Conference Coordinator at State College

To obtain a position as Assistant Editor at *Time* magazine

When a student applies for an advertised job opening, this type of focus can be very effective. The employer knows that the applicant has taken the time to tailor the resume specifically for this position.

**3. Industry-Focused Objective.** Focusing on a particular industry in an objective could be stated as follows:

To begin a career as a sales representative in the cruise line industry

**4. Summary of Qualifications Statement.** The summary of qualifications can be used instead of an objective or in conjunction with an objective. The purpose of this type of statement is to highlight relevant qualifications gained through a variety of experiences. This type of statement is often used by individuals with extensive and diversified work experience. An example of a qualifications statement follows:

**A degree in communications and four years of progressively increasing job responsibility within the publishing industry have prepared me to begin a career as an editor with an organization that values hard work and dedication.**

**Support Your Objective.** A resume that contains any one of these types of objective statements should then go on to demonstrate why you are qualified to get the position. Listing academic degrees can be one way to indicate qualifications. Another demonstration would be in the way previous experiences, both volunteer and paid, are described. Without this kind of documentation in the body of the resume, the objective looks unsupported. Think of the resume as telling a connected story about you. All the elements should work together to form a coherent picture that ideally should relate to your statement of objective.

## Education

This section of your resume should indicate the exact name of the degree you will receive or have received, spelled out completely with no abbreviations.

The degree is generally listed after the objective, followed by the institution name and address, and then the month and year of graduation. This section could also include your academic minor, grade point average (GPA), and appearance on the Dean's List or President's List.

If you have enough space, you might want to include a section listing courses related to the field in which you are seeking work. The best use of a "related courses" section would be to list some course work that is not traditionally associated with the major. Perhaps you took several computer courses outside your degree that will be helpful and related to the job prospects you are entertaining. Several education section examples are shown here:

**Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication Studies**

UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, December 1994

Minor: Community Health

**Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication Disorders,**

specializing in industrial settings, Tufts University, Medford,

MA, May 1995

**Bachelor of Arts Degree in Health Communications,**

Columbia University, New York City, NY, May 1995

An example of a format for a related courses section follows:

RELATED COURSES	
Campaign Promotions	Public Relations
Public Speaking	Group Interactions
Intercollegiate Forensics	Problem Solving

## Experience

The experience section of your resume should be the most substantial part and should take up most of the space on the page. Employers want to see what kind of work history you have. They will look at your range of experiences, longevity in jobs, and specific tasks you are able to complete. This section may also be called "work experience," "related experience," "employment history," or "employment." No matter what you call this section, some important points to remember are the following:

1. **Describe your duties** as they relate to the position you are seeking.

2. **Emphasize major responsibilities** and indicate increases in responsibility. Include all relevant employment experiences: summer, part-time, internships, cooperative education, or self-employment.
3. **Emphasize skills**, especially those that transfer from one situation to another. The fact that you coordinated a student organization, chaired meetings, supervised others, and managed a budget leads one to suspect that you could coordinate other things as well.
4. **Use descriptive job titles** that provide information about what you did. A "Student Intern" should be more specifically stated as, for example, "Magazine Operations Intern." "Volunteer" is also too general; a title like "Peer Writing Tutor" would be more appropriate.
5. **Create word pictures** by using active verbs to start sentences. Describe *results* you have produced in the work you have done.

A limp description would say something like the following: "My duties included helping with production, proofreading, and editing. I used a word processing package to alter text." An action statement would be stated as follows: "Coordinated and assisted in the creative marketing of brochures and seminar promotions, becoming proficient in WordPerfect."

Remember, an accomplishment is simply a result, a final measurable product that people can relate to. A duty is not a result, it is an obligation—every job holder has duties. For an effective resume, list as many results as you can. To make the most of the limited space you have and to give your description impact, carefully select appropriate and accurate descriptors from the list of action words in Exhibit 2.2.

### Exhibit 2.2

#### Resume Action Verbs

Achieved	Collected	Converted
Acted	Communicated	Coordinated
Administered	Compiled	Corrected
Advised	Completed	Created
Analyzed	Composed	Decreased
Assessed	Conceptualized	Defined
Assisted	Condensed	Demonstrated
Attained	Conducted	Designed
Balanced	Consolidated	Determined
Budgeted	Constructed	Developed
Calculated	Controlled	Directed

continued

Documented	Learned	Received
Drafted	Lectured	Recommended
Edited	Led	Recorded
Eliminated	Maintained	Reduced
Ensured	Managed	Reinforced
Established	Mapped	Reported
Estimated	Marketed	Represented
Evaluated	Met	Researched
Examined	Modified	Resolved
Explained	Monitored	Reviewed
Facilitated	Negotiated	Scheduled
Finalized	Observed	Selected
Generated	Obtained	Served
Handled	Operated	Showed
Headed	Organized	Simplified
Helped	Participated	Sketched
Identified	Performed	Sold
Illustrated	Planned	Solved
Implemented	Predicted	Staffed
Improved	Prepared	Streamlined
Increased	Presented	Studied
Influenced	Processed	Submitted
Informed	Produced	Summarized
Initiated	Projected	Systematized
Innovated	Proposed	Tabulated
Instituted	Provided	Tested
Instructed	Qualified	Transacted
Integrated	Quantified	Updated
Interpreted	Questioned	Verified
Introduced	Realized	

Here are some traits that employers tell us they like to see:

- Teamwork
- Energy and motivation
- Learning and using new skills
- Demonstrated versatility
- Critical thinking
- Understanding how profits are created
- Displaying organizational acumen

Communicating directly and clearly, in both writing and speaking  
Risk taking

Willingness to admit mistakes

Manifesting high personal standards

## **SOLUTIONS TO FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS**

### **Repetitive Employment with the Same Employer**

**EMPLOYMENT:** **The Foot Locker**, Portland, Oregon. Summer 1991, 1992, 1993. Initially employed in high school as salesclerk. Due to successful performance, asked to return next two summers at higher pay with added responsibility. Ranked as the #2 salesperson the first summer and #1 the next two summers. Assisted in arranging eye-catching retail displays; served as manager of other summer workers during owner's absence.

### **A Large Number of Jobs**

**EMPLOYMENT:** Recent Hospitality Industry Experience: Affiliated with four upscale hotel/restaurant complexes (September 1991–February 1994), where I worked part- and full-time as a waiter, bartender, disc jockey, and bookkeeper to produce income for college.

### **Several Positions with the Same Employer**

**EMPLOYMENT:** Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Burlington, VT, 1991–94. In four years, I received three promotions, each with increased pay and responsibility.

**Summer Sales Coordinator:** Promoted to hire, train, and direct efforts of add-on staff of 15 college-age route salespeople hired to meet summer peak demand for product.

**Sales Administrator:** Promoted to run home office sales desk, managing accounts and associated delivery schedules for professional sales force of ten people. Intensive phone work, daily interaction with all personnel, and strong knowledge of product line required.

**Route Salesperson:** Summer employment to travel and tourism industry sites using Coke products. Met specific schedule demands, used good communication skills with wide variety of customers, and demonstrated strong selling skills. Named salesperson of the month for July and August of that year.

## **QUESTIONS RESUME WRITERS OFTEN ASK**

### **How Far Back Should I Go in Terms of Listing Past Jobs?**

Usually, listing three or four jobs should suffice. If you did something back in high school that has a bearing on your future aspirations for employment, by all means list the job. As you progress through your college career, high school jobs may be replaced on the resume by college employment.

### **Should I Differentiate between Paid and Nonpaid Employment?**

Most employers are not initially as concerned about how much you were paid. They are anxious to know how much responsibility you held in your past employment. There is no need to specify that your work was volunteer if you had significant responsibilities.

### **How Should I Represent My Accomplishments or Work-Related Responsibilities?**

Succinctly, but fully. In other words, give the employer enough information to arouse curiosity, but not so much detail that you leave nothing to the imagination. Besides, some jobs merit more lengthy explanations than others. Be sure to convey any information that can give an employer a better understanding of the depth of your involvement at work. Did you supervise others? How many? Did your efforts result in a more efficient operation? How much did you increase efficiency? Did you handle a budget? How much? Were you promoted in a short time? Did you work two jobs at once or 15 hours per week after high school? Where appropriate, quantify.

### **Should the Work Section Always Follow the Education Section on the Resume?**

Always lead with your strengths. If your past work closely relates to the employment you now seek, put this section after the objective. Or, if you are weak on the academic side but have a surplus of good work experiences, consider reversing the order of your sections to lead with employment, followed by education.

### **How Should I Present My Activities, Honors, Awards, Professional Societies, and Affiliations?**

This section of the resume can add valuable information for an employer to consider if used correctly. The rule of thumb for information in this section is

to include only those activities that are in some way relevant to the objective stated on your resume. If you can draw a valid connection between your activities and your objective, include them; if not, leave them out.

Granted, this is hard to do. Center on the championship basketball team or coordinator of the biggest homecoming parade ever held are roles that have meaning for you and represent personal accomplishments you'd like to share. But the resume is a brief document, and the information you provide on it should help the employer make a decision about your job eligibility. Including personal details can be confusing and could hurt your candidacy. Limiting your activity list to a few very significant experiences can be very effective.

If you are applying for a position as a safety officer, your certificate in Red Cross lifesaving skills or CPR would be related and valuable. You would want to include it. If, however, you are applying for a job as a junior account executive in an advertising agency, that information would be unrelated and superfluous. Leave it out.

Professional affiliations and honors should *all* be listed; especially important are those related to your job objective. Social clubs and activities need not be a part of your resume unless you hold a significant office or you are looking for a position related to your membership. Be aware that most prospective employers' principle concerns are related to your employability, not your social life. If you have any publications can be included as an addendum to your resume.

The focus of the resume is your experience and education. It is not necessary to describe your involvement in activities. However, if your resume needs to be lengthened, this section provides the freedom either to expand on or mention only briefly the contributions you have made. If you have made significant contributions (e.g., an officer of an organization or a particularly long tenure with a group), you may choose to describe them in more detail. It is not always necessary to include the dates of your memberships with your activities the way you would include job dates.

There are a number of different ways in which to present additional information. You may give this section a number of different titles. Assess what you want to list, and then use an appropriate title. Do not use extracurricular activities. This terminology is scholastic, not professional, and therefore not appropriate. The following are two examples:

**ACTIVITIES:** Society for Technical Communication, Student Senate,  
Student Admissions Representative, Senior Class Officer

**ACTIVITIES:** Society for Technical Communication Member  
Student Senator  
Student Admissions Representative  
Senior Class Officer

The position you are looking for will determine what you should or should not include. *Always* look for a correlation between the activity and the prospective job.

## How Should I Handle References?

The use of references is considered a part of the interview process, and they should never be listed on a resume. You would always provide references to a potential employer if requested to, so it is not even necessary to include this section on the resume if room does not permit. If space is available, it is acceptable to include one of the following statements:

**REFERENCES:** Furnished upon request.

**REFERENCES:** Available upon request.

Individuals used as references must be protected from unnecessary contacts. By including names on your resume, you leave your references unprotected. Overuse and abuse of your references will lead to less-than-supportive comments. Protect your references by giving out their names only when you are being considered seriously as a candidate for a given position.

## THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

The functional resume departs from a chronological resume in that it organizes information by specific accomplishments in various settings: previous jobs, volunteer work, associations, etc. This type of resume permits you to stress the substance of your experiences rather than the position titles you have held. (See Exhibit 2.3.) You should consider using a functional resume if you have held a series of similar jobs that relied on the same skills or abilities.

### Exhibit 2.3

#### Functional Resume

CLAIRE BEST

Student Apt. 24  
Florida Atlantic University  
Boca Raton, FL 33424  
(407) 555-1222  
(until May 1995)

1505 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33423  
(407) 555-3345

#### OBJECTIVE

An entry-level assistant account executive position that allows me to show my initiative and use my copywriting and design ability.

continued

continued

## **CAPABILITIES**

Creative Copywriting  
Team Player  
Design Techniques

## **SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**COPYWRITING:** Created headlines and leads for national advertising campaign; wrote copy for print and direct mail advertising for magazine subscriptions; researched competitive products and services; wrote and designed flyers for bookstore events; helped select photographs, line drawings, and other illustrations for variety of print ads.

**TEAM PLAYER:** Collaborated with co-workers and professionals in other departments on national advertising campaign. Worked closely with designers, artists, and photographers. Participated in account meetings.

**DESIGN TECHNIQUES:** Familiar with computer graphics, CAD, and desktop publishing programs. Assisted in layout and design of various print and direct mail advertisements.

## **AWARDS**

Graduated with honors in Communications.  
Nominated to National Honor Society.  
Received Outstanding Part-Time Employee of the Year Award.  
Awarded commendation by Junior Achievement in high school.

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

Account Executive Intern, M & L Design Studio, West Palm Beach, FL. Summers 1993-1994.  
Clerk and Assistant Event Coordinator, FAU Bookstore, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL. 1992-present.

## **EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Arts in Business Communications  
Minor in Graphic Design  
Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL. May, 1995

## **REFERENCES**

Provided upon request

## **The Objective**

A functional resume begins with an objective that can be used to focus the contents of the resume.

## **Specific Accomplishments**

Specific accomplishments are listed on this type of resume. Examples of the types of headings used to describe these capabilities might include sales, counseling, teaching, communication, production, management, marketing, or writing. The headings you choose will directly relate to your experience and the tasks that you carried out. Each accomplishment section contains statements related to your experience in that category, regardless of when or where it occurred. Organize the accomplishments and the related tasks you describe in their order of importance as related to the position you seek.

## **Experience or Employment History**

Your actual work experience is condensed and placed after the specific accomplishments section. It simply lists dates of employment, position titles, and employer names.

## **Education**

The education section of a functional resume is identical to that of the chronological resume, but it does not carry the same visual importance because it is placed near the bottom of the page.

## **References**

Because actual reference names are never listed on a resume, this section is optional if space does not permit.

## **THE TARGETED RESUME**

The targeted resume focuses on specific work-related capabilities you can bring to a given position within an organization. (See Exhibit 2.4.) It should be sent to an individual within the organization who makes hiring decisions about the position you are seeking.

## **The Objective**

The objective on this type of resume should be targeted to a specific career or position. It should be supported by the capabilities, accomplishments, and achievements documented in the resume.

## Targeted Resume

THOMAS WESLEY

Student Apt. 2A  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80231  
(303) 555-2400  
(until May 1995)

2342 East 30th Avenue  
Fort Collins, CO 80232  
(303) 555-6262

### JOB TARGET

Promotional campaign manager with local or state service organization

### CAPABILITIES

- Research and analyze target audience
- Collaborate with copywriters and designers
- Coordinate efforts with local and national media
- Organize related events with speakers and presentations
- Familiar with a variety of computer software

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Several articles published in local and national newspapers
- Reached fund-raising goal for local humane shelter
- Maintained a 4.0 average throughout college

### WORK HISTORY

- 1994-present Assistant Campaign Manager, Fort Collins Big Brothers/Big Sisters
  - Organized promotional events, assisted manager
- 1992-present Public Relations Assistant, Community Hospital
  - Part-time community service work
- 1992-1994 Peer Counselor, College Counseling Center
  - Provided academic and career counseling
- 1990-92 Orderly, Community Hospital
  - Part-time work assisting medical staff

continued

continued

### EDUCATION

1993  
Bachelor of Arts in Communications  
Colorado State University  
Emphasis: Health Care

### Capabilities

Capabilities should be statements that illustrate tasks you believe you are capable of based on your accomplishments, achievements, and work history. Each should relate to your targeted career or position. You can stress your qualifications rather than your employment history. This approach may require research to obtain an understanding of the nature of the work involved and the capabilities necessary to carry out that work.

### Accomplishments/Achievements

This section relates the various activities you have been involved in to the job market. These experiences may include previous jobs, extracurricular activities at school, internships, and part-time summer work.

### Experience

Your work history should be listed in abbreviated form and may include position title, employer name, and employment dates.

### Education

Because this type of resume is directed toward a specific job target and an individual's related experience, the education section is not prominently located at the top of the resume as is done on the chronological resume.

## THE BROADCAST LETTER

The broadcast letter is used by some job seekers in place of a resume and cover letter. (See Exhibit 2.5.) The purpose of this type of document is to make a number of potential employers aware of the availability and expertise of the job seeker. Because the broadcast letter is mass-mailed (500-600 employers), the amount of work required may not be worth the return for many people. If you choose to mail out a broadcast letter, you can expect to receive a response from 2-5 percent, at best, of the organizations that receive your letter.

This type of document is most often used by individuals who have an extensive and quantifiable work history. College students often do not have the



**Exhibit 2.5**

**Broadcast Letter**

**JULIA S. CLARK**  
455 Lake Drive  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 555-2975

April 21, 1995

Ms. Rhonda Howell, Director  
Outpatient Services  
Chicago City Hospital  
34000 Lincoln Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Howell,

As a certified speech pathologist with a master's degree from Cornell University, I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of patients in a variety of settings. I am able to adapt to different environments and put my skills and abilities to immediate use.

I am writing to you because your hospital may be in need of an experienced certified speech pathologist with my years of experience, education, and training. If so, you may be interested in some of my accomplishments.

Evaluated and treated patients at the Cornell University Medical School Hospital.

Provided counseling, instruction, and referral services to patients and family members.

Supervised bachelor's level speech pathologists working in the public school district.

I received my BA in communications from Ithaca College in 1990 and my master's in communication disorders from Cornell in 1992.

continued

continued

It would be a pleasure to review my qualifications with you in a personal interview at some mutually convenient time. I will call your office at the end of next week to make arrangements. I look forward to discussing career opportunities with Chicago City Hospital.

Sincerely,

Julia S. Clark

credentials and work experience to support using a broadcast letter, and most will find it difficult to effectively quantify a slim work history.

A broadcast letter is generally five paragraphs (one page) long. The first paragraph should immediately gain the attention of the reader and state some unusual accomplishment or skill that would be of benefit to the organization. The second paragraph states the reason for the letter. Details of the sender's work history are revealed in the third paragraph. Education and other qualifications or credentials are then described. Finally, the job seeker indicates what he or she will do to follow up on the letter, which usually is a follow-up call 1-2 weeks after the letter is sent.

**RESUME PRODUCTION AND OTHER TIPS**

If you have the option and convenience of using a laser printer, you may want to initially produce a limited number of copies in case you want or need to make changes on your resume.

Resume paper color should be carefully chosen. You should consider the types of employers who will receive your resume and the types of positions for which you are applying. Use white or ivory paper for traditional or conservative employers, or for higher-level positions.

Black ink on sharply white paper can be harsh on the reader's eyes. Think about an ivory or cream paper that will provide less contrast and be easier to read. Pink, green, and blue tints should generally be avoided.

Many resume writers buy packages of matching envelopes and cover sheet stationery that, although not absolutely necessary, does convey a professional impression.

If you'll be producing many cover letters at home, be sure you have high-quality printing equipment, whether it be computerized or standard typewrit-

et equipment. Learn standard envelope formats for business and retain a copy of every cover letter you send out. You can use it to take notes of any telephone conversations that may occur.

If attending a job fair, women generally can fold their resume in thirds lengthwise and find it fits into a clutch bag or envelope-style purse. Both men and women will have no trouble if they carry a briefcase. For men without a briefcase, carry the resume in a nicely covered legal-size pad holder or fold it in half lengthwise and place it inside your suitcoat pocket, taking care it doesn't "float" outside your collar.

## THE COVER LETTER

The cover letter provides you with the opportunity to tailor your resume by telling the prospective employer how you can be a benefit to the organization. It will allow you to highlight aspects of your background that are not already discussed in your resume and that might be especially relevant to the organization you are contacting or to the position you are seeking. Every resume should have a cover letter enclosed when you send it out. Unlike the resume, which may be mass-produced, a cover letter is most effective when it is individually typed and focused on the particular requirements of the organization in question.

A good cover letter should supplement the resume and motivate the reader to review the resume. The format shown in Exhibit 2.6 is only a suggestion to help you decide what information to include in writing a cover letter.

Begin the cover letter with your street address 12 lines down from the top. Leave three to five lines between the date and the name of the person to whom

### Exhibit 2.6

#### Cover Letter Format

Your Street Address  
Your Town, State, Zip  
Phone Number  
Date

continued

continued

Name  
Title  
Organization  
Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

**First Paragraph.** In this paragraph, state the reason for the letter, name the specific position or type of work you are applying for, and indicate from which resource (career development office, newspaper, contact, employment service) you learned of the opening. The first paragraph can also be used to inquire about future openings.

**Second Paragraph.** Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services, and what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate. Try not to repeat the same information found in the resume.

**Third Paragraph.** Refer the reader to the enclosed resume for more detailed information.

**Fourth Paragraph.** In this paragraph, say what you will do to follow up on your letter. For example, state that you will call by a certain date to set up an interview or to find out if the company will be recruiting in your area. Finish by indicating your willingness to answer any questions they may have. Be sure you have provided your phone number.

Sincerely,

Type your name

Enclosure

you are addressing the cover letter. Make sure you leave one blank line between the salutation and the body of the letter and between each paragraph.

After typing "Sincerely," leave four blank lines and type your name. This should leave plenty of room for your signature. A sample cover letter is shown in Exhibit 2.7.

The following are guidelines that will help you write good cover letters:

1. Be sure to type your letter; ensure there are no misspellings.

**Exhibit 2.7**

**Sample Cover Letter**

146 E. Las Olas Road  
Tempe, AZ 85284  
(602) 555-3333  
November 29, 1995

Alison Kahn  
Director of Personnel  
Southwest Advertising  
600 Main Street, Suite 205  
Tempe, AZ 85284

Dear Ms. Kahn:

In May of 1996 I will graduate from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications. I read of your opening for an assistant account executive in *The News* on Sunday, November 28, 1995, and I am very interested in the possibilities it offers. I am writing to explore the opportunity for employment with your company.

The ad indicated that you were looking for creative individuals with high energy and good communication skills. I believe I possess those qualities. Through my work with the babysitting service I started, I learned the importance of a good imagination and maintaining a positive attitude toward the children and their parents. In addition to the various communications classes in my academic program, I felt it important to enroll in some art and computer courses such as photography, computer graphics and computer-assisted design. These courses helped me become comfortable in my interactions with other people and with the world of advertising in general. These traits will help me to represent Southwest Advertising in a

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As you will see by my enclosed resume, I worked on the campus newspaper for three years selling advertising space. This position provided me with experience dealing with customers and their needs and allowed me to see how both sides function together.

I would like to meet with you to discuss how my education and experience would be consistent with your needs. I will contact your office next week to discuss the possibility of an interview. In the meantime, if you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at my home, (602) 555-3333.

Sincerely,

Robin Wolfe

Enclosure

2. Avoid unusual typefaces, such as script.
3. Address the letter to an individual, using the person's name and title. To obtain this information, call the company. If answering a blind newspaper advertisement, address the letter "To Whom It May Concern" or omit the salutation.
4. Be sure your cover letter directly indicates the position you are applying for and tells why you are qualified to fill it.
5. Send the original letter, not a photocopy, with your resume. Keep a copy for your records.
6. Make your cover letter no more than one page.
7. Include a phone number where you can be reached.
8. Avoid trite language and have someone read it over to react to its tone, content, and mechanics.
9. For your own information, record the date you send out each letter and resume.